

## Foreign Educational Campuses

*Mains Syllabus: GS II - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

### Why in the News?

Recently, Five foreign educational institutions have been granted letter of intent to set up branch campuses in India.

### What are the benefits of establishing foreign campuses in India?

- **Access to World Class Education** - Setting foreign campuses in India enable students to access a world-class education at home without travelling abroad, avoiding the stringent visa restrictions, and making higher education more affordable.
- **Fulfilling Higher Education Demand** - India has a growing demand for higher education, with a large population of young people (52%) under the age of 30.
- A rising middle class willing to invest in premium education creates a substantial market for foreign universities.
- **Capacity Development of Home Institutions** - Collaborating with Indian institutions can enhance research capabilities, lead to innovative solutions, and attract talent and funding, thereby fostering a vibrant academic and research environment.
- **Healthy Competition** - Foreign campuses will provide a healthy challenge to domestic premier institutions like IITs, IIMs, NITs and push them to increase their capabilities.
- **Human Capital Development** - Foreign universities can contribute to the skill development of Indian students by offering programs aligned with global industry standards and creating partnerships with industries for internships and practical training.
- **Promote Bilateral Collaboration** - Foreign campuses will encourage cooperation between countries through joint high tech research programs in defence, biotech, aerospace.

#### Existing Foreign Campuses in India

- Deakin University and the University of Wollongong — in Gujarat's GIFT City
- U.K.'s University of Southampton in Gurugram, near Delhi.

#### Upcoming Campuses in Mumbai

- University of York
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Western Australia
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Italy's Istituto Europeo di Design (IED)

## Government Initiatives

- **New Education Policy (NEP) 2020** - It aims to attract foreign universities and simplify regulatory processes through incentives like tax benefits and easier land acquisition.
- **UGC Guidelines** - In July 2023, the University Grants Commission (UGC) released guidelines for the internationalization of higher education in India.
- These guidelines, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aim to facilitate the entry of top global universities into India and promote academic collaborations.

## What are the challenges of foreign campuses in India?

- **Inadequate Information Transparency** - Admissions were announced often before essential details, such as information about the faculty and other key elements, were made publicly available.
- **Uncertain Global Political Landscape** - Changes in the policies of the foreign institution's home country, might affect their function in India.
- **Competitive Domestic Higher Education Landscape** - India already boasts renowned public institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).
- A growing number of elite and semi-elite private universities in India now offer joint and double-degree programmes in collaboration with foreign institutions.
- **Low Ranking Foreign Institutions** - Most of the institutions seeking to enter the Indian market are not top-tier schools in their own countries.
- In India, they risk being seen as just one among several "elite" options available to students.
- **Narrow Academic Focus** - These branch campuses follow a market-driven model, offering programmes in high-demand fields such as business, computer science, and data analytics.
- While this approach may be financially strategic, the narrow academic focus risks making them indistinguishable from India's better-performing private colleges and universities.
- **Establishing Clear Academic Identity** - Without a clear identity, they risk being perceived as little more than diploma mills, ultimately undermining the reputation of the very universities they represent.
- Most of the branches already established or planning to be established are not comprehensive universities with diverse offerings and research focus, but rather are small specialised schools.
- **Disproportionate Reliance On Marketing Strategies** - Flashy campaigns without academic depth or meaningful student engagement will not build lasting trust.
- Students and parents are increasingly examining publicly available information on faculty credentials, curriculum design, industry relevance, and student support systems.
- **Insufficient Campus Infrastructure** - Most of these branch campuses operate out of vertical buildings, often renting space.
- While such structures may offer operational efficiency, they often lack the vibrancy, openness, and spatial identity characteristic of traditional Indian universities.

## What lies ahead?

- The establishment of foreign university branch campuses in India marks a significant milestone in the higher education landscape.
- India will need to carefully evaluate whether a particular branch proposal is suitable for local needs, and whether it is from a foreign institution that is attractive.
- Collaboration with foreign universities can be promoted alongside as done in the case of IIT Delhi with the University of Queensland and IIT Bombay with Monash University.
- If foreign universities wish to be perceived as full-fledged institutions, they must invest in essential “soft” infrastructure as well.

## References

1. [The Hindu | The real challenges of foreign campuses](#)
2. [Deccan Herald | Foreign Universities in India](#)

