

# India and Australia sign a Framework Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

Institutional level MOUs were also exchanged between India and Australia's university sectors to promote research and academic collaborations

Scope of Australia India Education Council widened to also include cooperation in skill development

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India and Australia signed a **Framework Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Qualifications** that will help ease the mobility of students and professionals between the two countries. The agreement was signed following a bilateral meeting in New Delhi today between India's Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and the Australian Education Minister Mr. Jason Clare. This agreement is part of the commitment by Prime Ministers of both countries at the 2nd India-Australia Virtual Summit held on 21st March 2022, wherein they had agreed to establish a Joint Taskforce for mutual recognition of qualifications. Secretary, School Education, Shri Sanjay Kumar; Secretary, Higher Education, Shri Sanjay Murthy and Secretary, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari attended the meeting.

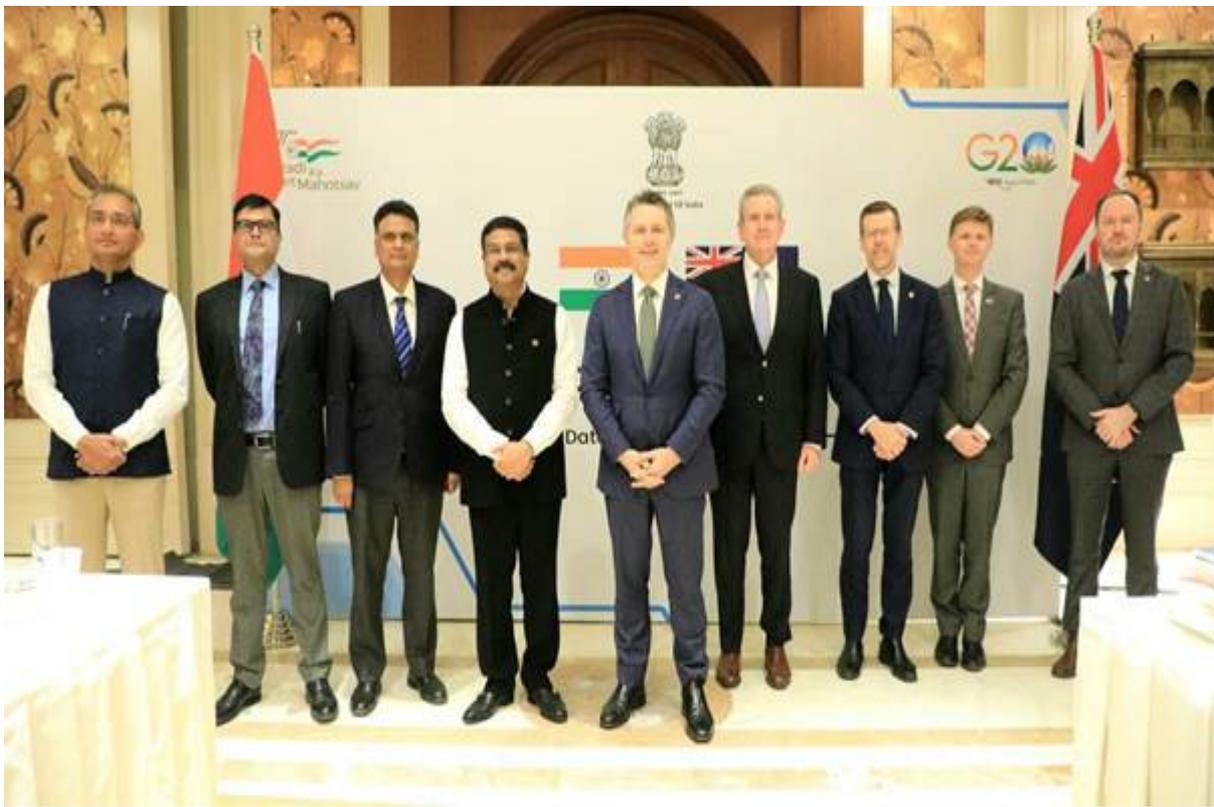
A Task Force was accordingly set up consisting of senior officials of education and skill ministries and regulators on both sides. It has come up with a comprehensive mechanism that covers both education and skill qualifications of the two countries and will help facilitate two way mobility of young people for education and employment purposes by mutually recognizing various levels of education and skill qualifications.



While addressing media, Shri Pradhan said that Australia and India are aligned to making the knowledge pillar a key aspect of the bilateral relationship. He informed that both the countries agreed to create new frameworks of partnership to take our bilateral relations to new heights. He expressed his happiness that, as suggested by India, the scope of Australia India Education Council (AIEC) has been widened to also include cooperation in skill development. Shri Pradhan also invited Minister for the 7th Australia India Education and Skill Council (AIESC) meeting to be held in September and for the G20 Education Ministers' Meeting in June this year.

The signing of G-to-G mechanism for mutual recognition of qualifications, the announcement of the IEIF Critical Skills Project and 11 institutional MoUs mark a landmark moment in educational relations between India and Australia. The developments today will create more opportunities for two-way mobility of students and professionals for the purpose of education and employment, and pave the way for making education the biggest enabler in taking India-Australia bilateral relationship to greater heights realise shared aspirations.

The Ministers had good conversations on further deepening our long-standing bilateral relations, invigorating our vibrant partnership and boosting engagements in education, skill development, deep-tech research and areas of mutual interest.



Addressing the joint media briefing, the Australian Education Minister Mr Jason Clare said that Australia is very keen to broaden the partnership between the two countries in the field of education as well as skilling. He further added that the agreement signed today will make it easier for students to study in each other's countries and also provide recognition to various levels of education and skill qualifications. Appreciating the National Education Policy brought out by India, the Australian Minister said that it is breath-taking in scope and will transform India by giving a big push to jobs, businesses, economic productivity and creating opportunities in all areas. He said that India has set the target of providing 50% of its youth with either higher education or skill education by 2035 and Australia would be privileged to partner with India in this program. The Australian Universities are enthusiastic to work with their Indian counterparts through the mechanism of joint/dual degrees or twinning of institutes that has been recently facilitated under NEP2020. Australia wants to take forward the depth and seriousness of relationship between the two countries by fostering partnership in the education sector, the Australian Minister reiterated.

Replying to media queries, Mr Clare said that the Australian government will be contributing 1.89 million dollars for running skills programme in India in the area of agriculture which is a critical sector for India. He further informed that Australia is working on top priority basis to clear the pendency of education visas for Indian students. Mr Clare expressed his gratitude to Shri Pradhan for the kind welcome and hospitality and said that he looks forward to their meeting later in the year.

In today's bilateral meeting the two sides also discussed issues like promoting student mobility and enhancing research and academic collaborations between Indian and Australian universities through the mechanism of Joint/ Dual/ Twinning degrees that have been brought in recently under NEP2020.



In recent years, Australia has become one of the preferred destinations of Indian students for pursuing higher studies, and even more so for gaining vocational skills. There are talks to facilitate more Australian students to come to India especially for both short and longer-term study, internships and research. There is immense potential between institutional collaboration between India and Australia especially in Higher Education, Skill development and training. Government of India has unrolled several initiatives to facilitate partnership with foreign institutions especially in the field of Higher education by facilitating Joint/Dual Degree programs. Australia is also a key partner in skill development and vocational training and both countries are working together on capacity building and training, identifying opportunities in key sectors for closer skill cooperation with a particular focus on new-age courses as per the changing needs and demographics across both the Nations. Following NEP 2020, India has come up with new initiatives for promoting internationalization of

education that include regulations for Joint/ Dual/ Twinning degrees and a draft regulation for setting up campuses of foreign universities in India. In addition, GIFT City in Gujarat has been opened up to foreign universities free from domestic regulations. Australian universities are actively exploring establishing campuses in GIFT City.

A number of **institutional level MOUs** were also exchanged between India and Australia's university sectors today, which will promote research and academic collaborations between the two countries in several key sectors. The higher education sectors of both India and Australia are excited to partner with each other as evidenced by the large delegation from Australia. These institutions are driving the bilateral cooperation between India and Australia across a wide range of fields – from bio-innovation to law to industry solutions.

Australian Education Minister Mr. Jason Clare is on a visit to New Delhi from February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to March 4, 2023 to facilitate India-Australia relations in the field of education. This is Minister Clare's first overseas visit since becoming Education Minister and he aims to build upon the success of Union Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan's visit to Australia in August 2022. He has come with a large delegation of vice chancellors of key Australian universities, five peak groups and a regulator. India and Australia already share very strong ties in the education sector. Education is also a very important pillar of India – Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Minister Clare's visit is an important step in taking these relationships forward.

Minister Clare and his delegation also interacted with leading education business and industry representatives at an event organized by FICCI yesterday. The visiting Australian Vice Chancellors participated in a round table to discuss "The changing face of higher education in India: Future directions and opportunities". They also participated in a round table in UGC today to discuss initiatives for internationalization of education under NEP 2020 today.

Minister Clare and his team also visited Sri Venkateswara College, Delhi University and Kendriya Vidyalaya, Delhi Cantt yesterday. Former Australian cricket captain Adam Gilchrist was also a part of the delegation. The Minister and his team interacted with students at both institutions, played a friendly cricket match at the college, saw some innovations from school students in the Atal Tinkering Lab at Kendriya Vidyalaya and savoured cultural performances by students.

The two ministers also visited India Gate together last night. They took a walk through Kartavya Path and saw the Australian Dominion Column outside North Block which was gifted by Australia to India. It features a wattle blossom and has "Australia to India MCMXXX" inscribed on it. It is one of the four columns presented by dominions under British Empire as a symbol of friendship and unity.

Minister Pradhan and Minister Clare reaffirmed their commitment to enhance institutional collaboration and two-way mobility by exploring the delivery of transnational education in the higher education, skills and research sectors.

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