



**Erasmus Mundus Programme**

**Project UNIQUE**  
University Quality Exchange

**Focus Group Report**

WP 1 – Needs Analysis

**Birla Institute of Management Technology**  
**Dr. Rahul Singh, Dr. Anuj Shrama, Prof. Nimisha Singh**

## Short Summary of the Focus Group Interview

The focus group interview invited discussion on various points indicated through questions. This process also served as information dissemination on various aspects of internationalization of the institute. It also generated interest among participants to know more about the European system and ways to align two different systems to give more international exposure to students by means of identifying gaps and problems. It is observed that there are differences in the systems, gaps in operations and some of the gaps, identified, may be worked out through a careful effort. There seemed willingness in the faculty and administration to find more details and plan of execution to make the comparability more effective and efficient.

### List of Participants

1. *Dr H Chaturvedi, Director*
2. *Dr Anupam Varma, Deputy Director and Chairperson of PGDM-IB program*
3. *Dr Shri Prakash, Professor of Eminence*
4. *Dr K C Arora, Professor and Registrar*
5. *Dr J Shettigar, Professor and Chair of Retail*
6. *Ashok Malhotra, Professor and Chair of PGDM program*
7. *N N Sharma, Associate Professor and Chairperson of SDP program*
8. *Dhruv Chak, Professor and Area Head- Marketing, Business Communication*
9. *Dr A K Dey, Professor and Area Head- Operations Management*
10. *Dr G D Sardana, Professor and Chairperson- Centre for Management Cases*
11. *Dr L Ramani, Associate Professor*
12. *Eugene Rubene, Assistant Professor*
13. *Dr Sangeeta Shukla, Assistant Professor*
14. *Manoj Pandey, Associate Professor*
15. *Rajeev Sharma, Assistant Professor*
16. *Dr Anuj Sharma, Associate Professor*
17. *Prof. Nimisha Singh, Assistant Professor, Student Exchange In-charge*
18. *Prof. Arindam Deb, Assistant Professor*
19. *Dr Rahul Singh, Associate Professor and Head of International Office*

## Detailed Description of each Question

### 1. Which factors influence the higher education standards in your country and in your university?

Factors influencing higher education standards in India

- First, Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) is responsible for higher education in India; there are 16 agencies under MoHRD which are engaged in regulating HE. On technical education, regulatory agencies like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of technical education (AICTE) give norms and quality standards which institutions need to follow. In addition, accreditation agencies NAAC and NBA have prescribed quality standards that institutions need to follow in order to get accredited.
- Faculty quality, training, culture, commitment and ability to teach varies drastically from region to region in the country
- Leadership, governance, and support from institution and stakeholders
- Student quality, education background, economic background
- Research scope and quality has high inequality
- Duration of bachelors program is 3- 5 years, depending on domain
- Academia- industry/outside connect and connect to larger (international) world

Factors influencing higher education standards at BIMTECH

- Teaching quality and pedagogy
- Student diversity and cultural orientation
- Student intake process
- Student mentoring
- Interaction with stakeholders and governance
- Quality of academia industry interface and encouragement for research
- Infrastructure facility, use of technology

### 2. How important is the comparability of higher education standards around the world for your university? If yes, why is it important for your university?

VISION: To be known for developing ethical global leaders and entrepreneurs striving for sustainability and inclusive growth.

With BIMTECH's vision to develop global leaders, comparability of higher education standards is important for finding equal standards. Connecting and comparability with global institutes also helps in benchmarking institute's practices and internationalization of the institute. Meeting students and faculty from other countries enhances competitiveness at global level. To achieve this, institute has been actively engaged in faculty and student exchange, conducting joint research, executing joint projects & conferences and running joint academic programs.

- Comparability in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, credit system, grading system, academic term duration, and award of degree
- Research quality comparability
- Legal aspects of awarding degree i.e. requirement to be fulfilled to receive degree
- Scale of importance is high because of execution process, we have to deliver with help of comparability scales.

**3. Is international cooperation with other countries essential for your university? Which facts illustrate that international cooperation is essential for your university? And why is it important for your university?**

- International cooperation helps in increasing the visibility, branding and recognition globally. Accreditation, as well as ranking of the institute requires international inputs such as involvement of faculty and students in exchange program, joint global research projects, joint global consulting projects, joint seminars etc. We are executing it with 5 global universities including FH Joanneum and University of Maryland.
- International cooperation is a priority in institute's vision and mission statement and started with establishment of International relations office in 2003.
- Activities engaging student help student in international perspective, personality development, understanding of international market, improving soft skills, working in cross cultural and virtual teams, time management, and understanding of different academic system followed at Partner University. This in turn would help students to find international internship and placement.
- Study needed to examine the impact on internship and final employment due to international mobility of students
- It is of high importance as we are guided by Vision and pursuing international accreditation which demand a clear direction and execution strategy for this.

**4. Where do you see problems and gaps in relation to different quality standards between the European Union and your own country?**

Gaps in relation to different quality standards can be expressed in terms of

- Program design, duration and work load during the program
- Pedagogy - EU is more lecture and tutorial based, BIMTECH is class discussions and case based
- Students quality is varying and comparability is difficult as in India more fresh graduates join masters program whereas in Europe students with work experience join masters program, undergraduate is similar usually
- Student intake criteria is different in different countries and in India
- Rigour by students' in academic life is different, frequency of monitoring varies
- Evaluation of learning outcome, grading system, credit system different

- Quality of teachers, their recruitment and appraisal
- Quality and focus of research is different and average is different in countries
- Coping ability and mechanism for work pressure
- Management of self by both groups are different
- Flexible academic system has a different meaning for different persons
- English is a challenge for students from non English speaking European nations, and local language in class or group work for Indian students

**5. How do you handle the comparability of student exchange (incoming & outgoings) currently? Do you think that your method applied is an effective one or do you see potential for improvement?**

- First assumption, partner university is accredited by an reputed agency or government means it is good quality institution, so students are accepted.
- Incoming students do not need test of admission and English as partner institution declares the nominations on the given conditions
- For incoming students, orientation is organized to brief them about BIMTECH culture and academic system to remove any confusion after first briefing by documents through partners
- For outgoing students, pedagogy and courses offered by partner institution is accepted by program
- Grading system is accepted and grades converted to BIMTECH system through a method designed for EU system. For other systems, there is different method.
- Student quality is accepted by partners so we do not need any additional process
- Improvement needed
  - Need to align the process of Information sharing like courses to be offered, academic year planning to match the system with partner institutes
  - Sometimes class teaching goes very Indian way by professors which is not suitable for exchange students
  - Faculty and other staff training to handle exchange students

**6. Do you think that quality indicators such as rankings are important to students when selecting a specific university for an exchange semester?**

- Quality indicators like ranking are important for incoming students as they have not seen the institute and ranking helps them to judge the institute where they go for exchange semester.
- However it is not an important criterion for outgoing students in the initial years of exchange but does impact student's their decision making in subsequent batches.
- Apart from ranking and accreditation, selecting an institute is based on feedback by senior students, courses offered at partner institute, location, expenses and exchange term duration.

**7. Where do you see the major challenges in aligning European and third country quality standards for international student mobility?**

In India there are only broad policy guidelines for quality measurement and every institute has its own teaching and assessment standards which results in difficulty in aligning the quality standards whereas in Europe there is a comprehensive quality standard system that is uniform at most places.

The major challenges for alignment for student mobility

- Quality indicators of European institution not known
- Quality of public and private institutions is not standardized in India and not known for Europe
- There is no common standard of quality indicators in India
- Different pedagogy, credit system, assessment methods for learning outcomes
- No standard credit transfer system in India
- Learning process depends on work culture, study culture and preparation for class by students
- Transparency in assessment and evaluation
- Different teaching learning process
- Cultural exposure and cultural sensitivity
- No single information exchange in India for higher education