

**Directorate of Academic Affairs
GITAM Deemed to be University**

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International Academic Collaboration: Twinning/ Joint Degree/ Dual Degree/ Semester Abroad (Student Exchange) Programme (IAC)

Policy Document

Purpose

GITAM, deemed to be University (GITAM) is keen on providing its students with international exposure and global opportunities. Also, UGC has mandated all eligible Indian Universities to engage in academic collaboration with Foreign Higher Educational institutions (HEI) as per the provisions of the University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree, and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2022 through the circular dated 05 May 2022.

Policy Overview

International Academic Collaboration (IAC): Dual Degree programme/ Joint Degree programme/ Twinning programme/ Semester Abroad (Student exchange) programme is an educational opportunity facilitated by GITAM to allow students to spend a specific duration (depending on the type of collaboration) in a Foreign HEI during their period of Study.

Participating in IAC can be a life-changing experience for many students and can have a positive impact on their personal and professional development. It is a way to combine academic pursuits with cultural exploration and global engagement.

Students need to meet certain academic requirements to be eligible for the program, and they may be required to take courses relevant to their discipline. Credits and Grades earned through the IAC shall be transferred to GITAM or transferred from GITAM to the foreign HEI as per the norm and the student will be awarded a degree accordingly.

Primary objectives

- **International Experience:** To provide students with the opportunity to gain international academic exposure leading to a degree depending on the type of collaboration (Dual/Joint/Twinning Programme).
- **Cultural Immersion:** To allow students to immerse themselves in a new culture, language, and environment, which can be a transformative experience. Exposure to a cross-cultural, multinational environment will help them develop a broader understanding of global dynamics and intercultural communication skills.
- **Academic Enrichment:** To offer students the chance to take courses or engage in academic projects in Foreign HEIs that can broaden their academic horizons and enhance their learning. This exposure can be intellectually enriching and might open doors to further academic opportunities, including direct admission to higher studies at the same university or others.
- **Global Networking:** To enable students to build international networks and make connections with students and professors from around the world.



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- **Personal Growth:** To promote personal growth and independence, as students have to adapt to a new environment and navigate different systems. Living and studying abroad can boost a student's self-confidence and independence.
- **Resume Enhancement:** To enhance students' resumes by demonstrating their adaptability, global perspective, and willingness to embrace new challenges.
- **Career Opportunities:** International experience is often highly valued by employers in India and overseas, as it demonstrates adaptability, cross-cultural competence, and a global perspective.

Provisions of Collaboration

IAC shall provide Twinning Programme, Joint Degree Programme, Dual Degree Programme, and Study Abroad (Student Exchange) Programme in collaboration with any Foreign HEI subject to meeting the eligibility conditions as mentioned in the University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign HEI to offer Twinning, Joint Degree, and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2022 and the amendments thereon.

- Board of Management / Academic Council approval for the collaboration with foreign HEI
- The programmes should be offered through an active MoU for collaboration including the purposes and related provisions of collaboration, with the foreign HEI; and the foreign HEI should figure in the top 1000 of Times Higher Education or QS World University ranking at the time of application as prescribed by the relevant statutory body.
- Four types of collaborative programmes are allowed such as the Twinning Programme, Joint Degree Programme, Dual Degree Programme, and Study Abroad (Student Exchange) Programme
- Twinning Programme
 - It is a collaborative arrangement whereby students enrolled with GITAM may undertake their programme of study partly in India, complying with relevant UGC Regulations, and partly in the Foreign HEI
 - The credits earned by the student from the Foreign HEI shall not exceed 30 % or 40 % of the total credits for the programme (applicable as prescribed by the relevant statutory body).
 - The degree offered under such twinning programmes shall be awarded by GITAM only.
- Joint Degree Programme
 - The curriculum shall be designed jointly by GITAM and Foreign HEI and, upon completion of the programme, the Degree shall be awarded by GITAM and the collaborating Foreign HEI with a single Certificate.
 - The students must earn at least 30% of the total credits each from GITAM and Foreign HEI and shall not exceed 40% of the total credits from the foreign HEI, in the AICTE-approved programmes effective from 2024-25 admitted batch onwards,
- Dual Degree Programme
 - A programme jointly designed and offered by GITAM and Foreign HEI in the same disciplines/subject areas and at the same level.
 - The degrees for such programmes shall be conferred by GITAM and Foreign HEI, separately and simultaneously, upon completion of the degree requirements of both institutions. This shall not be construed as two-degree



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programmes either in separate disciplines, subject areas, or at different levels being pursued simultaneously.

- The students must earn at least 30 percent of the total credits from GITAM.
- Study Abroad (Student Exchange) Programme
 - It is a collaborative arrangement, whereby the students enrolled in GITAM may be allowed to study in one of the partner institutions, to complete a portion of the programme or internship.
 - The duration of the programme may typically of one or two semesters.
- All four programmes should be offered in the conventional mode and not in the online mode.
- Courses completed at GITAM should not be repeated in the foreign HEI for any of the programmes. Board of Studies (BoS) certification for non-overlapping in courses is mandatory.
- GITAM shall issue a transcript for the courses completed in the foreign HEI, with a remark indicating that the student has studied certain courses at the foreign HEI. The foreign HEI shall issue a similar transcript.
- Students who are unable to complete the Twinning / Joint degree programme requirements with foreign HEI may exit the programme following the procedure at the respective foreign HEI and can continue with the programme in GITAM as a regular programme. However, no relaxation will be given either in terms of credit requirements for registration or for the award of the degree or fee concession.
- The UGC nomenclature shall be followed in naming the Degree
- Credits earned in both GITAM and foreign HEI shall be counted towards eligibility for the degree.

Eligibility

All undergraduate and graduate students of GITAM on all campuses are eligible to enroll for programmes in IAC subject to the following:

- Undergraduate students should have completed at least two years of study while graduate students should have completed one year of study in GITAM.
- The students should have a minimum CGPA of 7 up to the last semester for which the results are declared and available.
- The students should not have any standing arrears at the time of submitting the application.
- The students should not have fee dues when submitting the application.
- The students should not have faced any disciplinary action in the past.
- The student should have a valid passport at the time of the interview for any programme in IAC
- The student should be able to meet the Travel and Living expenses on their own during the stay period, in addition to the Tuition fees and any other fees applicable.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria include the following aspects of the students.

- i. Academic performance
- ii. Attendance History
- iii. Communication skills



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- iv. Financial background to support the expenses
- v. Recommendation of the concerned department

Selection Procedure

- An information session will be conducted at the beginning of the programme and every semester by the Office of the Directorate of International Affairs (DoIA) in consultation with the Dean / Hol of the respective schools.
- An announcement/notification will be sent by the DoIA to all students informing them about the upcoming IAC programmes available and asking them to apply to the Office of DOIA subject to the eligibility conditions with all supporting documents and the prescribed application fee, which will be adjusted towards GITAM fees on submission of the transcript from the foreign HEI.
- A one-to-one counseling will be held for the registered students by the faculty members of the concerned department/school head.
- Shortlisted students will have a Personal Interview (Offline/Online) with the Director of DoIA
- DoIA will release a final list of selected students
- Fulfillment of the foreign HEI's eligibility and selection process
- Selected students should submit one self-undertaking for loss of property or life during their stay at the foreign HEI.

IAC Process flow

- Sensitizing the students about the opportunity by the office of DoIA
- Interested eligible students should apply through the proper channel after the intimation notification.
- Counselling and shortlisting by the respective schools
- Finalizing the selected candidates after a personal interview by DoIA
- Submission of self-undertaking by selected students
- Proceed to apply for admission to the concerned programme in IAC with the foreign HEI with the help of DoIA.
- Information sharing from DoIA to the Directorate of Academic Affairs (DoAA) on IAC actions, including student registration.
- Application by the student for credit requirements with the concerned BoS, if possible with the available courses in the foreign HEI for establishing credit equivalency subject to the following
 - The committee constituted for establishing equivalency shall include Two members from the School / Department of which at least one subject expert preferably a non-BoS member. Additionally, one nominee from DoAA will participate in the committee meeting.
 - Courses completed at GITAM should not be repeated in the foreign HEI. BoS certification for non-overlapping in courses is mandatory.



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- Course equivalency certification/ approval from the concerned BoS for the proposed courses in the foreign HEI shall be issued based on the committee's recommendation.
- The student should register with the Foreign HEI after receiving the admission offer letter.
- The student should share the admission offer letter with DoIA and complete the admission formalities with the foreign HEI.
- Apply for "On Duty Permission" with the concerned department for the duration of stay away from GITAM.
- The student should pay all the applicable fees in both Institutions.
- The student should follow the foreign HEI's rules and regulations and the foreign country's laws during their stay.
- The student should secure the minimum pass grade applicable in the foreign HEI.
- After completion of any programme through IAC, the student should report to DoIA and the respective academic department at GITAM.
- The student should submit the transcript for credit transfer within 10 days to the Department / School. If BoS approval is already obtained for the concerned courses, the student should request credit and grade transfer in the department office.
- If prior BoS approval is not obtained for the concerned courses for valid reasons, the student should apply for the same with a copy of the transcript and get the Credit and Grade equivalency.
- Credit and Grade equivalency should be established by the BoS (nominated committee) and the same should be recommended to the Directorate of Evaluation (DoE) through DoAA. Grade equivalency will be established as follows.
 - If the foreign HEI follows a 10-point scale for the grades, the same grade point can be accepted for transfer for each course.
 - If the foreign HEI follows a 4-point scale for the grades, it shall be converted into a 10-point scale. This converted grade can be recommended for grade transfer with or without moderation by the BoS. The grades can be converted into percentage marks using the formula, grade on 4.0 scale = $(\text{Percentage}/100) \times 4$ and then converted into a 10 point scale by dividing by 9.5.
$$10 \text{ point scale grade} = [(\text{grade on 4.0 scale} \times 100/4)/9.5]$$
- Grades transferred through the IAC programmes are included in the CGPA calculation for the student. However, in the transcript, the same shall be mentioned as transferred from the Foreign HEI.
- The student should continue the program for the GITAM programme degree's credit requirements if any, to graduate from GITAM.

