



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Edinburgh India Institute

The Edinburgh India Institute at the University of Edinburgh aims to encourage a greater awareness of India in Scotland, and to build Scotland's cultural, business and academic ties with India. The Institute will stage cultural events, attract high-profile speakers and encourage new research initiatives, student and staff exchanges that will deepen the many existing links between the two countries.

The principal remit of the Institute is to extend the University's links with India, including the promotion and development of the study of contemporary India – its politics, economics, society, history, language and culture – and to play its part in encouraging links between Edinburgh's scientists, engineers, medical and veterinary clinicians and researchers and their counterparts in India. The other objectives include:

- to be a bridge between Edinburgh and India, aiding understanding and facilitating engagement;
- to be the major point of reference for Indo-Scottish relations in the areas of education, business and culture;
- to help develop effective Indo-Scottish business, cultural and academic links;
- to build a programme of language training in major Indian languages;
- to work with University faculty and non-academics to develop greater awareness of India in Scotland and *vice versa*;
- to position the University of Edinburgh as a key actor in Indian-Scottish relationships, especially enhancing its relationships with undergraduates, postgraduates and alumni;
- to help create and sustain internships, research opportunities, faculty and student exchanges, and joint activities in teaching and learning.

As a first step to translating this into reality, the University created a visiting professorship in Contemporary Indian Studies, co-funded with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Professor Amita Batra from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, was the first holder of the chair, from January-May 2013. She gave her inaugural lecture on Tuesday 12 March on India's development prospects.

The launch of the Institute accompanied a series of events in India that brought together researchers from Edinburgh with leading Indian academics, which encouraged new collaborations between the University and partners across India.

These included a Particle Physics Symposium in Delhi; a Science Roadshow in Delhi, Pune and Chennai; an Informatics event in Coimbatore and the launch of the Centre for Brain Development and Repair in Bangalore. As a follow-up to these events in India, Edinburgh hosted the visit of a high-ranking delegation from Delhi University, including its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dinesh Singh.

Creating such links is hugely beneficial both to Scotland and India. Edinburgh is one of the world's leading research universities; the University of Edinburgh was ranked 17th in the world in the QS World Rankings 2013-2014. It has an impressive international outlook, with great strengths in many areas, including clinical medicine and veterinary medicine, engineering, social sciences, the humanities and computer science. Partnering these strengths with those of global leaders, such as those in Indian education and businesses, allows us to look jointly at solutions to some of the major global challenges, such as food scarcity, environmental change or disease burdens.

An excellent example of how our co-operations work is the Centre for Brain Development and Repair in Bangalore, which we recently launched in collaboration with the Institute of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine (inStem). This centre, which brings together leading researchers from Edinburgh and India in a joint laboratory, aims to study disabilities that arise from alterations in brain development, such as autism and dementia, which represent a growing public health issue in India. Another is the project, funded by the UK-India Education and Research Initiative – linking social scientists in Edinburgh with some in the Tata Institute for Social Sciences, focusing on issues of social marginalisation.

The Edinburgh India Institute intends to consolidate these, and build on the already existing strong relationships with staff in more than 50 leading Indian institutions, such as Delhi University, JNU, CMC Vellore and IIT Madras. One of the initiatives that the Institute will particularly look towards is encouraging split-site PhD agreements, where students take some of their degree in India and some at Edinburgh.

The EII is already heavily involved in extending student exchange—with Indian students thinking of coming to Edinburgh and with Edinburgh students wishing to go to India. A snapshot of such exciting initiatives includes:

- A group of students with varying degrees of disability from the University of Delhi visited the University of Edinburgh from 29 June to 7 July 2013.
- Up to 90 students and 10 faculty members from the University of Edinburgh took part in a joint educational tour – the 'College on Wheels' – with Delhi University (2-8 September 2013). Around 1,000 students and staff travelled by train for one week, into the cultural, economic and agricultural heartland of Punjab, allowing the participants to better understand the dynamics of the region's emerging economy, as well as its importance in terms of farming and heritage.
- A further innovative project took 25 Architecture and Urban Planning students along with 5 faculty members to Mumbai for 2 weeks in January 2014, to experience for themselves the challenges of planning an Indian metropolis.

- A group of students (Winners of the Great Debate and Essay competition, India) from the University of Delhi, Jadavpur University, University of Jammu, and the University of Kashmir are visiting Edinburgh on 28th February 2014, under the auspices of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The Edinburgh India Institute has a number of activities planned for the future to further our engagements with India; the immediate one being:

- The Edinburgh India Institute Inaugural Conference, 15-16 May 2014 at the John McIntyre Centre, Edinburgh. The theme of the conference is Innovative Engagement for Sustainable Development: the Edinburgh-India Story and the keynote address will be delivered by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India. Conceived as an interdisciplinary gathering of academics and researchers from medicine/veterinary medicine, science and engineering and humanities and social sciences from the University of Edinburgh and their counterparts in India, the conference aims to provide an exceptional opportunity for academic engagements and networking by showcasing and celebrating the University's longstanding work in India.

The Institute will also steer engagement with the local India-origin community in Scotland, with Edinburgh researchers who wish to develop joint programmes with Indian researchers and lecturers; and with national and local government in both Scotland and India.

In the long-term, we aim to be the major point of reference for Indo-Scottish relations in education, business and culture. We will help co-ordinate links with institutes of higher education in India, focusing on curriculum development, leadership, and the challenges of creating research-driven institutions. Staff from NUEPA (the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi) attended a course on educational leadership in the University's School of Education in early 2013; and a joint was conference was organised in NUEPA in September 2013 to discuss critical issues in Indian education. Some of these, it is hoped, will address the challenges of the Indian educational system, particularly in relation to creating a research-driven educational culture. Thus, our aspiration in the long-term is for the Edinburgh India Institute to become an inter-disciplinary centre of excellence in India studies and a leading reference point for Scottish-India relations.