

RMIT BRINGS A SLICE OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION TO INDIA'S HILL STATIONS

EXPORT CASE STUDY | DECEMBER 2019

RMIT has been holding a series of Summer Schools in India's north and is considering a Winter School in the south.

Melbourne's RMIT is a global university of technology, design and enterprise. With a top 50 ranking in the QS Top 50 under 50, and a position in the top 100 in the latest Times Higher Education University Impact rankings, RMIT is a young university with top-level academic credentials.

Melbourne in the mountains

The hill stations of northern India may seem like unlikely locations to hold Australian university summer school programs in biotechnology and nanoscience but that's exactly what RMIT has been doing, each Indian summer, since 2017. In June of that year, RMIT launched the first program in the Himalayan foothills town of Mussoorie.

The program saw 25 high-performing students and five teachers from Delhi and the National Capital Region participate in intensive science-focused study and workshops. RMIT experts shared their subject specialisation and exposed students to enquiry-based learning methodologies. The high-achieving students from Years 11 and 12 had shown a keen interest in the subjects being taught at the summer school and were considering further study in Australia or other overseas locations.

RMIT wanted to provide a learning experience that mirrored what life would be like on its Melbourne campus. For instance, the university elected to hold the summer school program in the cool hill stations of India's north to mimic Melbourne's winter weather in June. This area is home to some of India's most highly regarded schools and academies, both private and public. The peaceful setting also allowed students to immerse themselves in the experience of RMIT education and life.



Indian students engaged in a RMIT Summer School workshop.

'RMIT University's summer school program will provide students with world-class teaching in exciting subject areas. I look forward to spending time with India's finest and brightest young minds.'

Tom Gifford, Assistant Director, International Student Recruitment, RMIT

Being away from home and spending time with Australian academic and university staff helped create a genuinely Australian learning experience.

Australian expertise meets Indian interest

The RMIT summer school program demonstrates how a well-considered and executed initiative can create impact and outcomes in various ways.

Students have spoken of the friendliness of the staff and the deep expertise and academic quality of the RMIT team. Others have spoken of the way the programs exposed them to not only an Australian education, but the Australian lifestyle. Some students reported having changed their minds about studying in another country after attending one of



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RMIT's summer schools, indicating a clear preference for an Australian education. One student's sister applied to RMIT for a Master's degree and is now studying there based on the experiences of her sibling in the hill stations of India.

The teaching faculty who joined the summer schools have also gained a great deal. As Professor Peter Smoker, an expert in biotechnology and program coordinator for RMIT's Master of Biotechnology reveals: 'I get a lot of satisfaction knowing that I am helping to shape the next generation of biotechnologists.'

Looking ahead to the future

RMIT has run summer schools in India for three successive years. In 2020, it plans to repeat the initiative but with more subject areas and concurrent teaching sessions for a larger cohort of students. RMIT is also considering a winter school to be held late in 2020 in south India.

Focusing on targeted work in research, executive education and study collaborations, Austrade's network across India and the region has been supporting Australia's university sector outreach and initiatives in India.

Austrade worked closely with RMIT to deliver the summer school programs. Austrade helped coordinate the events, from outreach through to the careful selection of local schools, including prestigious Indian institutions and Indian outposts of international schools. The involvement of Austrade also provided additional credibility to the programs, particularly with parents, as the badge of government in India can often be reassuring.

South Asia and India in particular represent the key growth market globally for Australia's education services exports. India is the world's fastest-growing large economy and has more tertiary-age people than any other country. Furthermore, there is increasing interest in and awareness of Australia's quality education among the rising middle class in India. With a clear path to global jobs, further education gained in Australian universities is increasingly valued by this audience.

RMIT also understands the scale of opportunity presented by a changing India. University commencements by Indian students have been outpacing overall market growth rates since 2016.

The nature of interest in an Australian education is also changing. Whereas Indian students at RMIT were previously fewer in number and typically pursuing postgraduate study, today they are not only greater in number but more likely to undertake undergraduate studies. Indian students are increasingly aware that an Australian university education can help them have interesting and rewarding global careers.

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- › win productive foreign direct investment
- › promote international education
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