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Erasmus+ National Policy Reviews 2024 Bangladesh

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Bangladesh

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University Grants Commission (UGC)

This national policy review provides a detailed analysis of Bangladesh's educational policies and their alignment with the Erasmus+ programme. It offers official, first-hand information into the country's engagement with Erasmus+ from 2021 to 2024, highlighting opportunities for improvement and identifying strategies to enhance integration and outcomes. Prepared and submitted by the Erasmus+ National Focal Point, this review contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen international cooperation and to maximise the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme in Bangladesh.

Reviews of policies, initiatives, projects, and/or stakeholders

In Bangladesh, Education is managed by two main ministries: the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. These ministries work with various departments, directorates, and independent organisations. This review specifically looks at higher education in Bangladesh.

Ministry of Education (MoE)

Two divisions have been created within the Ministry of Education: The Secondary and Higher Education Division and the Technical and Madrasha Division. The Secondary and Higher Education Division is responsible for developing policies, planning, monitoring, evaluating, and implementing educational plans and programmes beyond the primary level, including secondary and higher education. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh oversee the management and supervision of educational institutions under their respective jurisdictions.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE)

This Directorate is headed by a Director-General responsible for the administration, management, and control of post-primary secondary and higher education, including Madrasha and other special types of education. It is assisted by subordinate offices located at the division and district levels, along with project offices in Upazilas.

University Grants Commission (UGC)

The UGC was established on 16 December 1972. It was created according to the Presidential Order (P.O. No 10 of 1973) of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The UGC is the apex and statutory body of all universities in Bangladesh. The primary objectives of the Commission are to supervise, maintain, promote, and maintain standards as well as quality in all the public and private universities in Bangladesh. UGC assesses the funding needs of public universities and advises the government on various issues related to HE in Bangladesh. In short, UGC plays advisory, supervisory, and regulatory roles for all HEIs. As the apex and statutory body in the field of University Education in Bangladesh, UGC's vision is to ensure and enhance the HE quality.

www.ugc.gov.bd

Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC)

Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) was established in 2017, and is dedicated to:

- Enhance the confidence of the stakeholders about the quality of higher education in Bangladesh

by ensuring best practices in HEIs with integrity, transparency, accountability, and credibility by internationally acceptable quality assurance practices. This will be achieved through implementing accreditation standards, a self-assessment process, and compliance monitoring.

- Facilitate the capacity building of HEIs to meet quality assurance and accreditation standards and make greater contributions to the country's sustainable socioeconomic development.

<https://bac.portal.gov.bd>

National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM)

This Academy is the apex training institution under the MoE, responsible for providing foundation training to BCS (general education) cadre officers. It also provides in-service training to senior educational administrators and secondary and higher secondary school teachers.

<http://www.naem.gov.bd>

National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB)

This Board is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Education (MoE). It is responsible for the development of curriculum, production, and distribution of textbooks at primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels.

<http://nctb.gov.bd>

Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS)

BANBEIS is responsible for collecting, compiling, and disseminating educational information and statistics at various levels and types of education. It is the main body of the MoE, responsible for collecting and publishing educational data and statistics. It functions as the Ministry's Educational Management Information System (EMIS). It is also the National Coordinator of RINSACA (Regional Informatics for South & Central Asia).

<https://banbeis.gov.bd>

Directorate of Inspection and Audit (DIA)

The Directorate of Inspection and Audit (DIA) is responsible for conducting inspections and audits to improve the quality of education in non-governmental secondary schools.

<http://www.dia.gov.bd>

Education Boards

Eight Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education and one Vocational and Technical Board are responsible for conducting public examinations, such as those for Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate levels. The Boards are also responsible for recognising non-government and private-sector educational institutions.

Non-Governmental Teachers' Registration & Certification Authority (NTRCA)

The NTRCA was established in February 2005 to examine the registration of successful candidates eligible for appointment in non-government educational institutions. The government created the NTRCA to improve the teaching quality of non-government secondary, graduate, and post-graduate level teachers, excluding public and private universities.

<http://www.ntrca.gov.bd>

Prime Minister's Education Assistance Trust

The Prime Minister's Education Assistance Trust helps students who can't afford education due to financial difficulties. It also provides financial support to academically talented but financially disadvantaged students.

<http://www.pmeat.gov.bd>

Legislative reforms and/or policies that have been put in place in the past three years or that are still being discussed

The GST (Graduate Selection Test)

Bangladesh's Graduate Selection Test exam system is a centralised admission process for public universities, overseen by the UGC. Currently, twenty universities participate in the GST, and starting in 2024, all public universities will adopt this system. The exam, held once a year around August or September, allows students to apply to multiple universities with a single test, eliminating the need to take separate entrance exams for each university.

Study Loan for Higher Education

Bangladesh Bank does not directly provide student loans. Instead, it offers refinance facilities to commercial banks, allowing them to borrow money at a lower interest rate. These banks can then lend to students at a reduced interest rate, making education loans more affordable.

The loan amount and repayment terms will vary depending on the commercial bank. However, most banks offer loans up to BDT 20 lakh with repayment terms of up to five years. There is an ongoing initiative by the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh to launch study loans for students who cannot continue their studies in higher education institutions in Bangladesh.

Initiatives and/or programmes that have been launched in the past three years

Establishment of the Branch Campus of the overseas universities

The Government of Bangladesh passed the Cross Border Higher Education Policy in 2014 (known as CBHE Policy-2014) to create highly ranked university Campus or Branches in Bangladesh. Though the government kept it postponed for about 5 years now it is working under the jurisdiction of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh.

Projects which are examples of good practice that have been launched in the past three years

The Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP)

This World Bank-funded project aims to improve the quality and relevance of higher education in Bangladesh. The project has been running from 2008 to 2019 and has made significant progress in several areas.

Here are some of the key impacts of HEQEP on higher education in Bangladesh:

- **Improved infrastructure:** HEQEP has helped to improve the infrastructure of HEIs in Bangladesh, including the construction of new buildings, the renovation of existing buildings, and the provision of new equipment and technology.
- **Strengthened research capacity:** HEQEP has helped to strengthen the research capacity of HEIs in Bangladesh. This includes the provision of training for faculty members, the development of research centres, and the support of collaborative research projects.
- **Improved teaching and learning:** HEQEP has helped to improve the teaching and learning environment in HEIs in Bangladesh. This includes the development of new curricula, the provision of training for faculty members, and the use of new teaching methods.

- **Increased student access:** HEQEP has helped to increase student access to higher education in Bangladesh. This includes the provision of scholarships and loans, the expansion of distance learning programmes, and the establishment of new universities.
- **Enhanced governance:** HEQEP has helped to enhance the governance of HEIs in Bangladesh. This includes the development of new policies and procedures, the strengthening of internal audit mechanisms, and the promotion of transparency and accountability.

HEQEP has also had several positive impacts on the graduates of HEI in Bangladesh. Graduates are now better equipped to meet the demands of the job market. They are also more likely to be innovative and entrepreneurial.

Overall, HEQEP has had a significant positive impact on higher education in Bangladesh. The project has helped to improve its quality and relevance, strengthen research capacity, improve teaching and learning, increase student access, and enhance governance.

However, some challenges still need to be addressed. For example, the quality of teaching and learning in some HEIs is still not up to par. Additionally, the number of high-quality faculty members needs to increase. Despite these challenges, HEQEP has significantly improved higher education in Bangladesh. The project has laid the foundation for further development and improvement in the years to come.

The Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) project

The HEAT project is a World Bank-funded project that aims to accelerate and transform higher education in Bangladesh. It is the project that the government has taken after the HEQEP project. The UGC has implemented the project since July 2023.

The HEAT project has many objectives, including:

- Improving the quality and relevance of higher education in Bangladesh
- Strengthening research capacity in higher education institutions
- Increasing student access to higher education.
- Enhancing the governance of higher education institutions

The HEAT project is being implemented through some activities, including:

- Providing funding for the development of new curricula, the renovation of existing buildings, and the provision of new equipment and technology.
- Supporting faculty development programmes and research projects.
- Expanding distance learning programmes and establishing new universities.
- Developing new policies and procedures to strengthen the governance of HEIs

This project is expected to have a significant impact on higher education in Bangladesh to help improve the quality and relevance of higher education, strengthen research capacity, increase student access, and enhance governance.

The HEAT project is still in its early stages of implementation. However, the UGC has already made some progress in implementing it. For example, the UGC has developed a new curriculum framework for higher education institutions in Bangladesh and launched several faculty development programmes and research projects.

Implementing all objectives is expected to take several years. However, the UGC is committed to implementing the project and improving higher education in Bangladesh.

Here are some specific examples of how the HEAT project is being implemented:

- The UGC is providing funding to universities to develop new curricula in key areas such as engineering,

science, and technology

- The UGC is supporting faculty development programmes on topics such as research methodology and teaching skills
- The UGC is expanding distance learning programmes to make higher education more accessible to students in rural areas
- The UGC is working with universities to develop new policies and procedures to strengthen governance

The HEAT project is a significant investment in Bangladesh's future of higher education. It is expected to help produce more skilled and qualified graduates who can meet the demands of the job market and make higher education more accessible to all Bangladeshi citizens.

Key players and networks (stakeholders) at the national level (or at the regional level with a national component)

The key players and stakeholders at the national level of UGC are:

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| • Ministry of Education | • Vocational education institutions | • Professional bodies |
| • University Grants Commission | • Teacher training institutes | • Student organisations |
| • Public universities | • Research institutes | • Civil society organisations |
| • Private Universities | • Employers' association | • International development partners |
| • Technical education institutions | | |

They play a vital role in the development of higher education in Bangladesh, working together to set policies, develop curricula, provide funding, and support R&I.

Some of the specific roles that each stakeholder plays in the HE system in Bangladesh are:

- **MoE:** Responsible for setting the overall policy direction for higher education in Bangladesh. It also provides funding to public universities and other higher education institutions.
- **UGC:** The apex body for higher education in Bangladesh. It is responsible for regulating and developing HEIs. It also provides funding to universities and other HEIs
- **Public universities:** Main providers of higher education in Bangladesh. They offer a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a variety of disciplines.
- **Private universities:** They play an increasingly important role in the HE system in Bangladesh, offering a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes
- **Technical education institutions:** They offer programmes that train students for specific jobs and trades.
- **Vocational education institutions:** Offer programmes that train students for specific jobs and trades.
- **Teacher training institutes:** Train teachers for primary and secondary schools.
- **Research institutes:** Conduct research in a variety of disciplines.
- **Employers' association:** They work with the government and other stakeholders to ensure that graduates have the skills and knowledge that employers need.
- **Professional bodies:** They work with the government and other stakeholders to ensure that professionals have the skills and knowledge needed to practice their professions.
- **Student organisations:** They work with the government and other stakeholders to improve the HE quality and to ensure that students have the support they need to succeed.
- **Parent's associations:** They work with the government and other stakeholders to ensure parents have a

voice in decision-making.

- **Civil society organisations:** They work on various issues related to higher education such as access, quality, and governance.
- **International development partners:** Provide funding and technical assistance to support the development of higher education in Bangladesh.

These stakeholders work together to ensure that Bangladesh's higher education system is responsive to the country's needs and produces graduates who can contribute to the country's development.