

UK minister in city to discuss education ties

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UK Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts, was in Pune on Tuesday to discuss India-UK education ties. "We are trying to rope in some British and Indian universities to provide joint DPhil degrees to students to increase the number of Indian students coming to the UK for studies and the number of British students coming here," said Willetts. The minister also visited Delhi and Bangalore.

Willetts met Cabinet minister Kapil Sibal and academicians from the three cities to discuss UK's course of action regarding education ties with India. "After meeting Kapil Sibal, I found that he is very keen on a two-way flow of students in post-graduate courses between the two countries. We are trying to come up with a venture where students will be able to get joint DPhil certificates. We are in talks with British universities and will try to work this



UK Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts, and British Deputy High Commissioner, Western India, Peter Beckingham, in Pune on Tuesday

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out in a year or two," added Willetts.

British Deputy High Commissioner of Western India, Peter Beckingham, who accompanied Willetts said Britain will try to create awareness among students about the education opportunities in India. "Almost 40,000 students go to the UK for various courses, the number of British

students coming to India is roughly 500. This may be due to lack of awareness and the fact that students are not sure about the worth of a degree from India in Britain," said Beckingham.

They also pointed at the bogus Britain colleges that cheat foreign students. "There are many students who come to Britain to get good education but end up working due to some bogus colleges. We will try to police such colleges so that the dreams of students are not shattered," added Willetts.

When asked why he included Pune in his itinerary, Willetts said, "Almost 40% of the foreign students who come to India are in Pune. I also had interesting meetings with researchers at Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER) and National Chemical Laboratory which have links with universities across the world. We are aiming at getting in more lecturers and researchers from Britain and shared research projects."