



**Breaking Boundaries: Interdisciplinarity, E-Learning, and Universities without Walls**  
**Project E-QUAL: Second Academic Conference**  
*January 7-8, 2016, Jadavpur University, Kolkata*

**Enhancing Quality, Access and Governance in Undergraduate Education in India**  
*Funded by European Commission: Lead Partner British Council India*

**Academic Partners: Ambedkar University Delhi University of Hyderabad Jadavpur University Shiv Nadar University University of Bologna Italy King's College London**

*Concept Note and Call for Papers*

The University, traditionally defined, is an institution that promises 'universal' or holistic education. Yet universities have failed to live up to this promise, first because they exist within well-defined physical spaces that admit only a small number of students and faculty, and second, because even within the university, disciplines and departments are strictly segregated.

In India, these limitations give rise to a very real and urgent crisis at the present time. Following upon the enactment of the Right to Education Act in 2008, India is committed to increasing its Gross Enrollment Ratio (of students in higher education) to around 30% by 2030 (from the present 19%). For this, it not only requires around 2000 universities, it also needs to ensure that the best institutions take the lead in disseminating higher education beyond the physical walls of the university itself. Secondly, if India is to innovate and provide leadership in emerging areas of global scholarship, universities must break free of the shackles of rigidly defined disciplines, and allow for greater creativity and curiosity. These two goals are part of the core mission of Project E-QUAL, focusing as it does on (a) technology enabled learning and (b) pilot courses in four interdisciplinary areas:

- **Critical Thinking and Knowledge Systems**
- **Cultural Studies**
- **Human Ecology**
- **Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Development.**

But the Indian higher education system does not reward interdisciplinarity, despite acknowledging its importance for research. Neither does it permit lateral mobility of students between Higher Education institutions, through credit transfer or shared degrees. By contrast, these are the most important features of the **Bologna Process** to which European universities are committed, part of the vision statement of Project E-QUAL. The advantages of the EU-India partnership and student and faculty mobility will be a primary concern of the 'Breaking Boundaries' Conference.



Our conference, '**Breaking Boundaries**', therefore, focuses on the core mission of Project E-QUAL: first, enhancing quality and access in higher education by creating '**blended**', **technology-enabled courses** at premier institutions that can be globally accessed, and second, focusing on **interdisciplinary areas** that dissolve the walls between disciplines and departments. We want to put the '**idea of the university**' itself to question, particularly in the current climate of urgent debate over higher education in India, unsatisfactory **university rankings**, problems of **social justice** and **access**, and a global **crisis of confidence** leading to public questioning of **the future of the university**. We will look at **the place of the university in the digital age**, at **the possibilities of e-learning** (including **emerging areas such as mobile learning**), set against **the problems of managing large student numbers** and providing **adequate instruction, care and evaluation/assessment in online or blended systems**. We invite papers under any of these broad areas or others that resonate with the theme of the Conference.

- The Crisis of the University
- The Knowledge Revolution and the Knowledge Economy
- Quality and Access in Indian Higher Education
- The Language/s of Higher Education
- Tech-Enabled Learning: Problems and Possibilities
- Paradigm Shift in Higher Education
- Are MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) the Solution?
- What do we mean by interdisciplinarity?
- Creativity and innovation in higher education
- Rethinking courses and curricula: specific case-studies
- The Price We Pay: Issues of Social Justice
- Dissolving Barriers: The Inclusive University
- New Humanities/ New Science/ New Technology: Vision for the Future
- The Virtual University
- Pedagogy in the Digital Age
- Europe and India: Learning from Each Other
- The Future of the University

Papers should be focused and specific. Presentations are restricted to 20 minutes of speaking time, followed by discussion. Abstracts (under 500 words) should be emailed to [projectequal2014@gmail.com](mailto:projectequal2014@gmail.com) by September 15, 2015, with cc to the undersigned. The Conference Committee will communicate its decisions by October 15, 2015.

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*Conference Convenors, Breaking Boundaries at Jadaupur 2016*