

UQ IITD PhD Scholars met Indian Minister of Education:

The UQ–IITD Research Academy Joint PhD scholars, Ms. [Satorupa Karmakar](#) and Mr. [Harshal Verma](#) met with the Hon. [Dharmendra Pradhan](#), India's Minister for Education along with other Indian PhD students from other Group of Eight (Go8) universities, during his visit to Sydney in October 2024.

The Minister was interested to meet PhD students and to hear how research in Australia differs from that in India. His plans for the Indian research environment seek to deliver cutting-edge technologies and research capable of adding value to India and the country's economy.

Ms Satorupa Karmakar is pursuing research on "Examining community resilience to fire in informal settlements," under the supervision of Associate Professor [David Lange \(The University of Queensland\)](#) and Associate Professor [Upasna Sharma \(Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi\)](#) shared that the UQ–IITD Research Academy has provided an exceptional academic journey.

"What stands out is encouragement to push boundaries and take on new challenges, whether in academic pursuits or intellectual endeavors. The interdisciplinarity of the program provides a concoction of research and technical aptitude and the skills provided are broadening my knowledge base," Satorupa said.

"Being exposed to both Indian and Australian research environments has been particularly enlightening. While the academic approaches differ somewhat between the 2 countries, this diversity has strengthened my development as a researcher," said Satorupa.

[Harshal Verma](#) is supervised by Professor [David Williams](#) and Dr. [Partha Narayan Mishra \(The University of Queensland\)](#), and Professor [Bappaditya Manna \(Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi\)](#) is close to completing his joint PhD on 'Utilization of Mining Wastes as Backfill Material for Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) Walls'.

"Australia's mining sector is at the forefront of adopting automation and innovation. Exposure to the Australian mining industry can benefit me as a mining engineer by providing hands-on experience with cutting-edge technology, and insight into sustainable mining practices that reduce environmental impact," Harshal said.

"The experience of studying across 2 cultures has enriched my perspective, allowing me to adapt to varied working environments and collaborate effectively with international teams. This dual experience has not only broadened my technical knowledge but has strengthened my adaptability and global outlook."

"The Minister's interest in my research reinforced the importance of cross-cultural collaboration in addressing urban challenges. The networking opportunities and discussion about novel research prospects have helped me envision clearer pathways for contributing to future urban resilience initiatives across both nations," Satopura said.

Harshal said that engaging directly with leaders from other universities and addressing the Indian Minister provided a unique situation to discuss the role of research in driving innovation and strengthening India-Australia collaborations.

The UQ–IITD Research Academy (www.uqiitd.org) is an unincorporated joint venture established in the year 2018 between The University of Queensland (UQ) and the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD). This collaboration aims to support research impact and build a long-term, sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnership with both institutions. The Academy represents an innovative partnership that aims to develop a substantial transnational collaborative research program with the flagship initiative of a joint PhD program involving all faculties and research institutes at both institutions.