

# SECURE A CAREER FOR the next 40 years without leaving the country



In conversation with Professor Hew Gill,  
President & Provost,  
Universal College Bangladesh

**The Daily Star (TDS):** Universal College Bangladesh (UCB) has garnered a reputation for itself over the years. What are your organisational missions, and how would you describe the institution?

**Hew Gill (HG):** We are the first institution in Bangladesh to be given permission by the government to offer international higher education qualifications. At the moment, we

more competitive. This approach alleviates concerns about visa, travel, and living expenses, allowing students to complete everything right here in Dhaka while receiving the same quality education as they would in Australia or the UK. Additionally, our programmes particularly enable HSC students to obtain the necessary qualifications to either enter universities directly or complete their international degrees right here in Bangladesh. This is a unique offer; no one else is providing this kind of opportunity here.

**TDS:** Kindly give us a brief overview of the different courses offered by UCB. What makes them different from the courses available at other universities in Bangladesh?

**HG:** We offer four degrees from the University of London, provided under the academic direction of the London School of Economics. These degrees are in Business & Management, Accounting & Finance, Economics, and Finance. Bangladeshi students can complete all three years of these degrees right here in Bangladesh. By special agreement with the University of London and the London School of Economics, we also offer a programme called CHES (Certificate of Higher Education in Social Sciences), which enables HSC students to join directly.

Provided they pass CHES, they can gain direct entry to the second year of the degree. CHES is essentially a pathway programme, but at the same time, it covers the content of the first year. Normally, HSC students would need to complete some kind of foundation to gain direct admission into world-ranked universities. However, with the CHES programme, they can complete this in the same time as the first year and then move directly into the second year, making it a total of three years after HSC.

What's unique about us? Our international curriculum ensures that Bangladeshi students are studying the very latest in their chosen field of study. At the end of it, they receive a qualification recognised worldwide, without question. A college education from the London School of Economics or Monash will open doors to any university for a Master's and also provide a competitive edge in terms of employability. Moreover, everything we do is directly aligned with our partners, applying the same policies, procedures, teaching techniques, exams, and marking standards, all of which are checked by our partners.

**TDS:** How do your students perform compared to students doing the same courses overseas? How do Bangladeshi

students find studying an international curriculum?

**HG:** Bangladeshi students are performing exceptionally well. I had the privilege of attending our last Monash convocation and proudly reported to representatives from Monash and the Australian High Commissioner that our students are performing better than students in Australia. Our foundation programme has a 97% pass rate, with over 60% of our students achieving top grades. In our Monash continuation degree pathway programme, we have a 100% pass rate. We are extremely proud of this, and it demonstrates the remarkable capabilities of Bangladeshi students—they are among the best in the world. More importantly, we conduct student surveys, which reveal that our students are overwhelmingly satisfied, with ratings of 4.8 out of 5.

**TDS:** How do your courses prepare students for further study and employment? What difference do international qualifications make in the Bangladeshi job market?

**HG:** Most young Bangladeshis do not realise how valuable they are in Bangladesh with an international education. They often believe that their value lies in going overseas. However, if you go to places like London, Sydney, or Melbourne, you become just another English speaker. Staying in Bangladesh with an international education allows you to communicate with multinational companies on equal terms while understanding the local culture, language, and business landscape—qualities that foreign businesses increasingly need. As a former international entrepreneur and banker, I found individuals with global knowledge to be invaluable. These skills

not only secure top salaries now but will also be essential as Bangladeshi businesses expand internationally in the future. Our programmes equip students with critical thinking, language proficiency, and an understanding of global business structures, making them highly employable and valuable in both local and international markets. So, if you're a student today, you'll be extremely valuable to foreign businesses for the next 20 years and to Bangladeshi businesses looking to expand overseas in the following 20 years. Thus, your entire career over the next 40 years, with an international education, is likely to be very successful.

**TDS:** In your opinion, how much have you been able to achieve your organisational aspirations since inception? Can you also share a bit about the future plans for UCB?

**HG:** We have achieved quite a lot in the last year. We doubled our student numbers, launched four new University of London degree programmes, and are preparing to offer more in collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire, who sent a team here in July for an inspection. We have already passed the accreditation validation and received 11 commendations for excellence—the highest number ever awarded to any institution, including their partners in the UK. We have also improved our academic performance. Next year, we plan to expand into areas such as Fashion Design, Psychology, and Communications, and we're also developing STS Knowledge City, a 10,000-seat campus offering a broad range of international programmes.

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offer qualifications from Australia and the UK, and we'll be expanding the number of qualifications from different countries over the next year. Our mission is to give Bangladeshi students the opportunity to access world-class international programmes right here in Bangladesh, in a way that is much



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