



■ INTERVIEWS ■

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

In conversation with Tram Nguyen on the Monash-UCBD Partnership, the rising number of Bangladeshi students in Australia, and how Monash is shaping future-ready graduates.

CAMPUS DESK

Tram Nguyen, the Director of Marketing at Monash College, leads the development and execution of impact-driven marketing strategies to advance global education across the Asia Pacific region. With a career spanning across Southeast Asia and also in Australia, Tram brings deep expertise in international marketing, student recruitment, and global engagement.

In this interview with Campus, Tram reflects on the growing number of Bangladeshi students choosing Australia for their higher studies and how the Monash-UCBD partnership is supporting their journey.

Campus (C): Could you walk us through the current trend of Bangladeshi students going to Australia for their education?

Tram Nguyen (T): I think over the last four years, the number of Bangladeshi students in Australia has increased exponentially year on year. What's interesting is that the growth is spread across different sectors, with roughly an equal split between postgraduate and undergraduate students.

Then there are the students who are coming to Australia to learn at the vocational level, as well as students who are undertaking the pathway programmes. In terms of the actual numbers, our government data shows that in 2024, we had 13,000 Bangladeshi students commence their studies in Australia.

We've also seen an increase in Bangladeshi students coming to study with us at Monash. One of our growth ambitions is to make Monash degrees accessible to different markets, so partners like Universal College Bangladesh (UCBD) are important in our role in global education because we provide students with multiple options to get to the same destination. Students can come directly to Australia, or they can come through UCBD. The flexibility we offer is really important in driving the growth of students coming to Australia from a particular market.

C: Have you seen any changes in the perspective of students opting for global education?

T: There's definitely been a shift in how students prepare to go overseas for certain markets. They've really matured, and it's across a breadth of sectors. I think that access to high school education, as well, is a lot more diverse. There are a lot more opportunities for students to opt for global high

school qualifications, like Cambridge or the International Baccalaureate (IB). And with that comes diversity in the types of applications that we get.

C: Tell us about the initiatives of Monash College's global study opportunities for Bangladeshi students.

T: With the diversity in students coming through, you have students who have prepared very well and early on in their high school years. These students have also graduated high school with really strong results, and are ready to directly attend university. There are other students who don't take the traditional way of going to university. I think that's where the role of the college is quite distinct.

We're here to help students find a pathway to university, and it doesn't necessarily mean that they're behind their peers. It just means that they are taking a different pathway that's unique to their own needs.

What we've seen in the last couple of years is students opting for a university pathway, like the Foundation Programme, after they complete grade 11. This is really interesting to me because I think students are basically saying that they want to start the journey early. And I think that's really empowering.

C: What kind of differences do you notice in the national curricula while assessing admission seekers from around Asia, and where do Bangladeshi students stand in your assessment?

T: Students in Bangladesh — as well as those from Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific region — are very skilled in maths and STEM subjects compared to students in Australia and other countries. At Monash, we look at this as an advantage. And so, we have a programme that basically tests students when they come in through which we get to understand their level of expertise in mathematics.

C: What are some of the advantages that the Monash-UCBD collaboration offers to students to secure enrollment with renowned universities like Monash?

T: Depending on their goals, preferences, and readiness for university, students have multiple options to get to the same destination. So, having a partnership in the market here in Bangladesh means that students can start their university journey in a cost-efficient way while being close to their families.

The value of opting for a Monash pathway programme is the flexibility it offers. Once they finish their pathway programmes, students have the opportunity to choose

across different campus locations in Australia and Malaysia. This too is a unique opportunity for students, as pursuing a Monash degree in Malaysia is very different compared to pursuing a Monash degree in Australia. In fact, some students choose to attend both campuses; they start in Malaysia and then come to Australia, which I think is quite a unique proposition.

C: To secure a better future, why should Bangladeshi students choose Monash as a Higher education option?

T: Bangladeshi students should choose Monash as a higher education option for three reasons: the quality of the degrees, the overall student experience, and the innovative learning environment.

Firstly, Monash is part of the Group of Eight (Go8) universities in Australia. The Go8 is a coalition of Australia's leading research-intensive universities. The university is also very highly ranked in graduate employability globally. We have courses that are accredited by many global accrediting bodies. Our business school, in particular, is Triple Crown accredited, which is an accreditation awarded by respected bodies in the US, the UK, and Europe. Completing such programmes keeps your options open for job opportunities globally.

Monash also offers a dynamic student experience, both inside and outside of the classroom. We take pride in developing students academically, professionally, and personally. Our programmes are not just delivering academic content; they are giving students the opportunity, from day one, to experience much more, including unique internships, projects, global experience programmes, etc.

Students also engage with mentors and career coaches, all of whom come together to help them become well-rounded graduates and work-ready.

Our campuses are also innovative learning environments; they are built to be ecosystems bringing students together. The facilities available at our campuses enable students to learn in different environments. We have maker spaces, design studios, specialised research centres, and various labs and hubs. Besides, our largest campus — Clayton — is nestled in the Monash Technology Precinct, which is home to 13,000 companies. So basically, students are living and studying in an environment where they're interacting with industry leaders, researchers, and startups.

All these traits really help our students as they are not just learning within classrooms but also engaging with the material they're learning.