

# EDUCATIONPLUS

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Similarly, spaced repetition, where information is revisited over time, has

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The concept of self-determination theory explains that when students feel a sense of autonomy and competence in their learning, they engage more deeply. Educators can cultivate this by designing activities that provide choice, encourage problem-solving, and relate lessons to real-world applications. Furthermore, tapping into stu-

When educators use narratives, case studies, and real-life applications, students are more likely to internalise concepts and recall them later. Additionally, incorporating active learning strategies, such as discussions, role-playing, and experiential learning leads to stronger cognitive connections than passive lecture-based approaches.

### Assessments

The way assessments are framed also matters; instead of high-stakes exams that induce anxiety, incorporating low-stakes, frequent quizzes has been found to reinforce learning while reducing stress. Even the physical layout of a classroom – arranging seating to encourage collaboration rather than isolation – can significantly impact student participa-

By leveraging behavioural science principles, universities and institutions can build better classrooms that not only enhance learning outcomes but also empower students with the cognitive and emotional skills necessary for lifelong success.

The writer is the Director,  
Management Development Institute  
(MDI), Gurgaon.



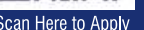
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Karan Mehta

The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) has changed how students apply for undergraduate courses in India. With over 280 universities accepting CUET scores, this single exam has become the key for entry into some of the most sought-after colleges in the country. While the competition is intense, focused and strategic preparation can help one succeed.

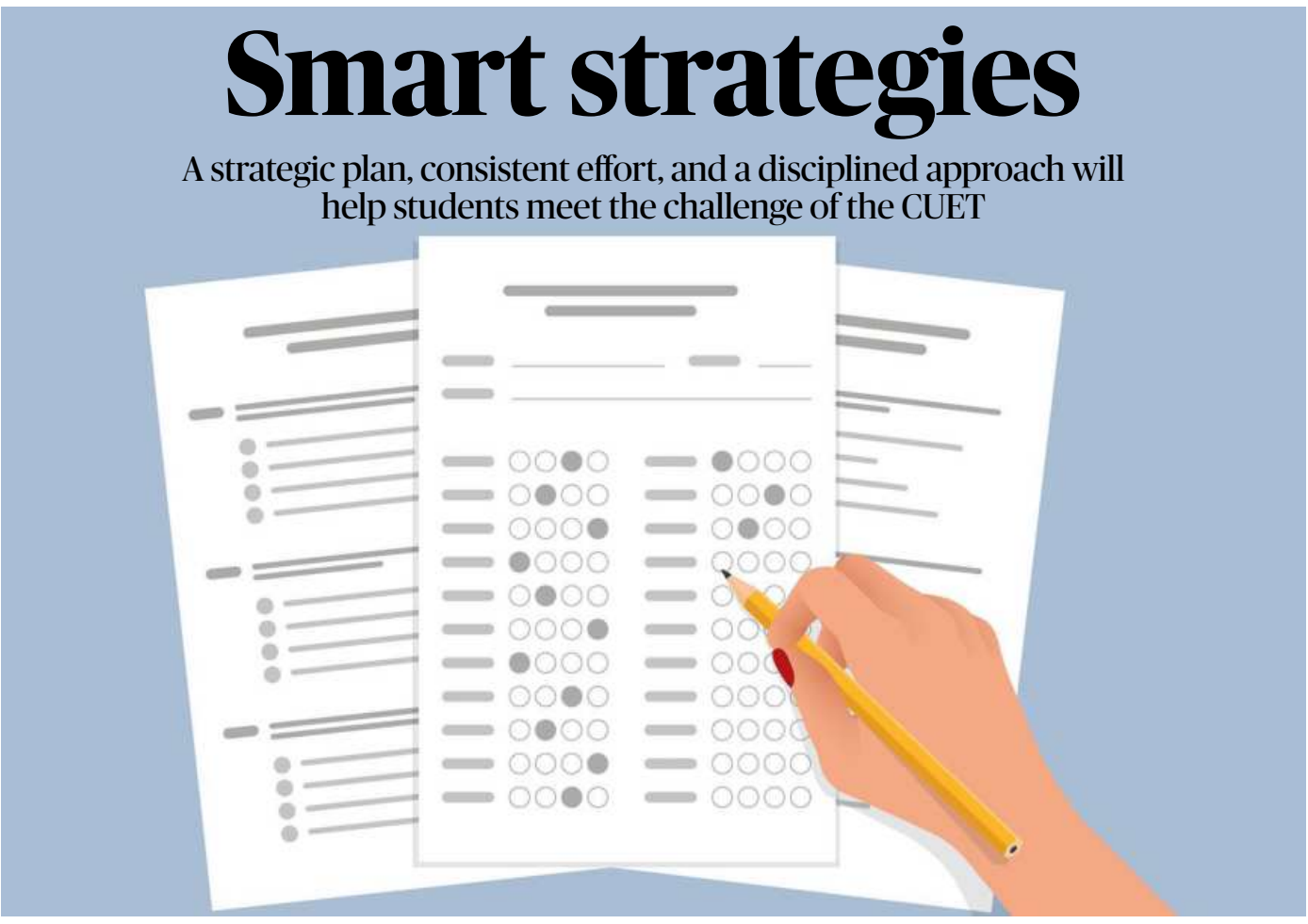
**Structure and syllabus:** The CUET consists of three major sections: Language, Domain Subjects, and General Aptitude (GAT). Before jumping into preparation, understand the syllabus for each section and identify which topics carry more weightage. A clear understanding of the exam pattern

helps set realistic goals and track progress efficiently.

**Strengths and weaknesses:** Begin by evaluating which areas you're confident in and which need more attention. This self-assessment forms the backbone of your study plan. Prioritise weak topics early while continuing to polish your strengths through practice and revision.

**Daily goals:** Consistency is key when time is limited. Create a daily schedule that divides your time between all three sections. Ideally, allocate around two hours to language, three hours to domain subjects, and three hours to general aptitude. Break your study sessions into manageable chunks and set daily or weekly targets to stay on track.

**Three-phase approach:** In the first 10 days, revise grammar



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rules, vocabulary, and comprehension for the language section. Go through NCERT summaries and quick video explainers for domain subjects and brush up on formulas and reasoning tricks for the GAT. From Day 11 to 20, shift your focus to high-weightage topics and practise with targeted questions. This is also the time to begin topic-wise mocks daily to simulate exam conditions and improve speed and accuracy. In the final 10 days, immerse yourself in solving 10-20 questions from earlier papers. Take 3-4 mocks for each subject and 15-20 full-length mocks. Analyse your results to identify weak areas and revise them thoroughly.

Apart from these keep these four tips in mind:

- **Start mocks early:** Don't wait to finish the

entire syllabus before attempting mock tests. Start early to identify knowledge gaps and get used to the exam pattern.

- **Make smart notes:** Create concise, to-the-point notes during your preparation as quick-reference guides during revision.
- **Revise regularly:** Daily revision helps retain concepts and reduces last-minute stress.
- **Rest and recharge:** Adequate sleep and short breaks are essential. A tired mind cannot perform well, no matter how much you study.

Cracking CUET 2025 is challenging but far from impossible. With a strategic plan, consistent effort, and a disciplined approach, you can make the most of the time you have.

The author is the Co-founder of Toprankers



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CAREER CUES  
Richa Dwivedi Saklani

Boards, entrance exams, extended essays, internships ... Grade 12 demands discipline and the key lies in planning your timeline. The first of a three-part series, looks at applying to the U.S.

April to June

**Make lists:** Build a longlist of about 20 colleges from the over 150 universities. Then shortlist them with a balanced number of Reach, Match, and Safety colleges. Explore aspects such as class size, location, fee and funding options, smaller liberal arts colleges versus large public or private universities ... Give yourself time for a deep dive and make a thought-out list.

**Tests:** Take the IELTS or extra attempts on the SAT or ACT. Complete all tests by the summer.

**Deepen your profile:** Do an internship or an in-depth summer programme that relates strongly to the area you are applying for in college.

July to August

**Connect with the school counsellor:** School often reopens with a clear agenda on completing your requests for Letters of Recommendation and sharing your college lists. Align with your school calendar to keep you (and your counsellor's) sanity and pressure levels manageable!

**Letters of Recommendation (LoRs):** U.S. universities require you to submit one counsellor recommendation and up to two LoRs from subject teachers. Choose teachers who have seen you grow as a student and truly understand your unique strengths. Fill in a "brag-sheet" or a form that details your academic and extra-curricular achievements so that these can be added to your LoR. Make sure your LoR reflects those achievements

## Mission admission

A guide for Class 12 students planning to study in the U.S. on navigating the academic year

that you intend to showcase in your applications and align your LoR story with the one you hope to pitch to universities.

**Create accounts:** For Common Application, Coalition Application and the University of California (UC) applications, so that you can collate your deadlines and essay prompts.

**Start writing:** Writing a Common Application essay requires introspection, story-telling and multiple rounds of feedback and refining. Try to finish before your mid-year exams.

**Board projects:** Crafting a research-based academic project in your area of interest is often the pinnacle of your academic maturity and independence. Align your topic with your college application story and the courses you are targeting. Research to create a unique and original story.

September to November

**Finalise college list:** Bring your longlist down to a manageable 10 or 12 (UC application count as one). Schools often need you to close your application list and plan so that they can send your transcripts and LoRs in time.

**Predicted grades:** Most schools plan mid-year assessments for Class 12 in September or October. While each gives weightage to multiple factors when predicting your grades, a good performance in the mid-year exams can help you lift your scores.

**Activity list:** The Common App allows you to present 10 activities in 150 characters each. Choose the right ones and present them effectively.

**Supplementary essays:** A good supplementary essay takes in-depth research and multiple drafts.

Those aiming for early deadlines will have to spend the autumn break researching colleges and crafting essays.

**Maximise early applications:** Apart from your ED (if you are doing one), apply early to at least one dream and one safety option so that you have some good news by New Year.

**December to February Pre-board exam:** Many schools allow requests for revision of predicted grades if students perform well in the November-December assessments. So double down on these.

**Check college-specific portals:** Each college will set up an account on their application portal for you to track your application progress, complete submission of any material, test scores or school transcripts, and send additional material. Check your accounts regularly.

**Apply for regular decision:** Most universities have their regular deadlines between January 1 and 15.

Stretch yourself and apply to dream and target universities.

**Schedule interviews:** Many colleges offer alumni interviews for prospective students to give you a better picture of the institution. Take every opportunity that comes your way.

March to May

**Assess your offers:** Tabulate the pros and cons of each offer. Connect with students in each university to get the full picture of student life, academic environment and prospects.

**Letters of Continued Interest (LOCI):** For colleges that have put you on their waitlist, share your latest achievements and underline your keenness to study there.

If colleges don't ask for an LOCI, they will have an online waitlist form on the portal for you to complete.

**Accept offers:** Most universities have a May 1 deadline, so make sure you accept your offers in time and request an i-20 from the one you finally choose.

**Apply for accommodation:** Campus accommodation is limited, so apply early to have a shot at your preference.

**Visa application:** Reach out to visa professionals to complete your documentation and apply well in time.

*With inputs from Kritika Malhotra*

The writer is Founder and CEO, Inomi Learning, a Gurugram-based career and college guidance firm. info@inomi.in

Sriram Balaji  
Srinivas Padmanaban  
Srivatsav Kannan

The Change It Challenge 2025 was not just a competition; it transformed the way we think about research and international collaboration. Our journey to Melbourne, participating in the challenge and our learnings has set us on a path to create real-world impact.

The lush greenery on one side and the city skyline on the other one at Melbourne International Airport took us by surprise. The facilities at Monash University – the stock market simulation lab, multimedia spaces – were astounding. For the Change It Challenge, we chose to address a critical environmental issue: methane emissions from livestock farming, which is a significant contributor to climate change.

Since we come from farming communities, we drew inspiration from our backgrounds to create a cost-effective method to purify biogas by using red soil as an ad-

### YOUNG ACHIEVERS

## Boost for farmers

Three students from Coimbatore on how they won Monash University's Change It Challenge



(From left) Sriram Balaji, Srivatsav Kannan, and Srinivas Padmanaban focused on addressing methane emissions from livestock farming. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND FREEPIK



sorbent to remove hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S), making biogas a more viable energy source for farmers. The idea was not an abstract notion; it was something we could relate to as it has affected our families and communities.

At Monash, we got the opportunity to engage with academic experts, fellow participants, and researchers from across the world. Our key learn-

ing was the importance of scaling solutions. For instance, we noticed that other teams, like the one from Indonesia, had developed websites and partnered with organisations to take their innovations further. This reinforced the idea that innovation is as much about execution and impact as it is about ideation. Our education would, of course, over-

shadow everything else, leading to a bridging of the gap between knowledge and its application while solving problems.

After winning the Change it Challenge, we have been motivated to take our project beyond the prototype stage. We are now looking to collaborate with NGOs and research institutions to expand the reach of our solution and take it to

more communities. Witnessing firsthand the dedication required to turn an idea into reality has inspired us to pursue innovation not just for competitions but for a tangible, long-term impact.

For aspiring participants in global challenges, the crucial thing is knowing the problem properly. Self-questioning and continuous improvement are critical for individual growth. Innovative ability comes from queries, persistence, and a knack for spotting knowledge gaps.

Back in India, we are armed with not just a prize but a will to make an impact through our solutions. Looking back at our experience in Australia, it was more than just about competing. It was about learning, incubating ideas, and seeing new possibilities. This challenge, in a very fundamental way, changed how we think about innovation and reignited our passion for problem solving

The writers are students of The Indian Public School, Coimbatore.

Balasundaram Athreya

The wealth management industry is poised for significant growth, with the global market projected to reach a staggering \$158.70 trillion by 2028. In India, this sector is experiencing a boom fuelled by rising affluence, increased disposable incomes, and a growing awareness of financial planning. This presents exciting career opportunities, but aspiring wealth managers must navigate a landscape rapidly evolving due to technological advancements. Here are some career options:

**Financial Analyst:** Typically requires a strong educational foundation in Finance, Economics, or Maths, with emphasis on data analysis and analytical capabilities. The entry-level role offers valuable experience in developing foundational knowledge, including research, data analysis, and financial reporting. Success relies on proficiency in tools like Excel, SQL, and Python, as well as strong analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to effectively communicate and present findings.

**Client Service Associate (CSA):** While a Bachelor's degree in any field is sufficient, strong customer service and communication skills are essential. CSAs typically possess exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, a strong customer service orientation, and excellent

## Finance forward

With rising affluence and growing awareness of financial planning, the wealth management sector is booming.



require strong business development and client management skills, and in-depth knowledge of financial markets and products.

**HealthTech Professional:** With backgrounds in technology, Finance, or Data Science, they are keen to apply technology to the financial sector. Financial Technology (FinTech) is a growing field and skills include proficiency in programming languages such as Python and R, strong data analysis and machine learning knowledge, and an understanding of financial markets and evolving technology trends.

Qualifications

A successful career in wealth management in India requires a strong foundation, typically starting with a Bachelor's degree in Finance, Economics, or Business. Advanced degrees like an MBA in Finance or MS Finance provide deeper insights. Key certifications such as CFA, CFP, and Certified Wealth Manager (CWM) are valuable, while Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) and National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) certifications are essential to navigate the sector. In today's tech-driven world, proficiency in Data Analytics, AI, and fintech and understanding and adapting to new technologies is essential for success.

The writer is President, Manipal Academy of BFSI.





Soma Basu  
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Design is changing the world, whether one notices it or not, says Don Norman, American researcher and author popularly known as the man who designs designers. “To address every challenge of modern living, from climate change to resource scarcity and social inequities, it has become necessary to rethink education with human-centred designs. Achieving this requires a new way of seeing the world.”

Norman, whose approach expands the scope of Design from private profit to public good and who guides designers and innovators worldwide to create intuitive and functional products, was in India a few months ago to meet faculty and vice-chancellors of Indian universities. His aim: to convince people that empathy-driven education that encourages students to be critical and independent thinkers and prepares future leaders who can transform the world for the better.

“Hidden rules of design are changing the way we live, work and play,” he said during a chat after his visits to institutions such as BML Munjal University

(BMU), Gurugram; BITS Design School, Mumbai; and The Design Village, Noida, among others. A staunch believer in “the change we create today shapes tomorrow”, he emphasised the need for students to champion designs for peoples’ good by following broad academic options.

In India, design was introduced as a modern profession in the 1950s when Prime Minister Nehru committed himself to the country’s industrial development in a broad way of finding one’s own solution. He did not want to lose on quality of life in the rush towards rapid industrialisation, wrote industrial designer S. Balaram in the journal *Design Issues* in 2008.

In the 1970s, Indian designers and educators pushed for Design to have a bigger role in national policymaking but the Ahmedabad Declaration of 1979 that wanted to bring designers into critical policy making remained a non-starter. With the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) focusing on liberal arts, universities are again recognising the vibrant spirit of the discipline and exploring collaborations between the department of Liberal Studies, and



Schools of Law, Management, Science, Engineering and technology.

Small interactions lead to greater organic growth, enhancing both engagement and reach, says Norman, adding, “We cannot go on building technology that does not understand people. We must expand the role of Design across nation-building ambitions. Design assumes that we can craft objects, services, experiences, and systems that are more humane and acknowledges the interplay between design thinking and making.”

As universities re-imagine their curriculum by integrating local and global challenges, Norman offers some suggestions. “Students should be put together in a cohesive team to do a project that is interesting. They have to be provided with tools to understand societal issues and innovative solutions that usher change. The proper educa-

tion is to know finance, technology, art and history, and work with different people with different skills.”

According to him, the interconnectedness in Liberal Arts is missing in India because of the dominating culture of ‘specialisation’. “The education system is concentrated on making students specialists in one subject. Often, they do not quite know what they are learning and why are they learning so much. There is too much rote learning; instead of testing what students have learned, they seem to be learning what is being tested.”

Indian universities have to move towards collaboration. For instance, History and Philosophy can be clubbed together instead of being two different subjects under different streams. Or to understand climate change, one needs to know Chemistry, History, Geography, Economics, and human behaviour. “Students should understand how subjects are related to each other and how things come together to fit in. Design is a way of thinking that can be applied to any problem; it is about building, constructing and collaborating,” said Norman, emphasising that education has to move beyond conventional frameworks to cultivate intellectual agility, ethical reasoning, and adaptability.

“Higher education is not just a means to employment, financial and social success, but a space to develop critical thinkers, empathetic leaders, and socially responsible individuals.”

The essence of liberal studies is to create informed, self-reflective individuals who question fearlessly and are change-makers with a deep human connect. “Education serves its purpose when it is a vehicle for meaningful engagement with society, socially responsible actions and impactful contributions.”



**I scored 84% overall in Class 12 (87% in Physics, Chemistry, and Maths) in 2024. I am currently contemplating my options for higher studies, as I do not intend to pursue engineering. What are the potential fields that may align with my interests and academic background?**  
Anshul

Dear Anshul,

Hope your gap year has been useful and productive. In Pure Sciences, you can pursue a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Physics, Chemistry, or Mathematics or specialise in programmes like Data Science and Analytics, Statistics, Forensic Science, Aviation or Aeronautical Science.

Other options depending on your interest include Architecture (B.Arch) or Nautical Science or the Merchant Navy, Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) or Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Design (B.Des) or take the exams for the National Defence Academy.

Reflect on what truly excites you. Do you enjoy problem-solving, research, or creative pursuits? What are your long-term aspirations and goals? Identify your strengths and weaknesses and shortlist a field that aligns with your skills and allows you to develop new ones.

**I am doing B. Tech Food Technology in a renowned institute. I am passionate about the field. I don't think I will make it to a big company during placements. What options**

## Don't limit yourself

### Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

**do I have? Mifra**

Dear Mifra,

Don't limit yourself to the traditional placements. Focus on building a strong skillset and explore diverse opportunities. Leverage your degree across diverse industry roles like food processing and manufacturing (quality control and assurance, production, management, R&D, product development), food safety and regulatory affairs, food analysis and testing, food packaging, food marketing and sales or entrepreneurship.

What about further studies: M.Tech M.Tech in Food Technology or MBA in Food and Agribusiness Management or specialised certifications such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), food safety, or quality management.

Build your network by attending conferences, and workshops and seek internships or part-time work to gain practical experience. Connect with other students and professionals on LinkedIn. Highlight your technical and soft skills, showcase your projects and relevant experience and be proactive in your job search. You can also consider government jobs in agencies such as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) that hire food technologists.

**I am in the second year of B.A. Humanities. My interest in Sociology has grown during my UG. I am torn between pursuing my M.A. immediately after**

**graduation and taking a gap year to prepare for the UPSC exams. What should I do? What are my potential career paths? Indhuja**

Dear Indhuja,

Weigh the pros and cons and work on a cost-benefit analysis before deciding. Evaluate your strengths. Are you a self-directed learner who can thrive in a gap year or do you perform better in a structured environment? Managing both M.A. and UPSC requires strength, determination and exceptional time management skills.

If you lean towards the UPSC, then a time-bound gap year is better, as it allows you to cover the vast syllabus and practise for the exam. This may require financial resources for coaching, study materials and a plan that you can follow. You do not want to end up wasting time and resources. If you prefer a career in sociology, doing an M.A. will provide a strong academic foundation for research, teaching, or other careers. It will also be beneficial for the UPSC exam, especially if you choose Sociology as an optional subject.

Apart from the Civil Services, potential career paths include academia and research, social work and development, journalism and media, human resources, market research and analysis, urban planning and policy analysis.

**I am a B.Sc. Agriculture graduate. I attempted the**

**UPSC once but didn't get through. I am preparing again but lack the previous consistency. What can I do to regain it? Keerthana**

Dear Keerthana,

Reflect on what is going on and what you want in the long term. Revisit the initial reasons for taking the UPSC. Work on a vision board of your goals and the impact you want to make. Be aware of the be challenges and set realistic expectations. Focus on improving your weaknesses. Set sustainable and consistent habits. Create a detailed study schedule by breaking down the syllabus into smaller, manageable tasks with specific time slots for each subject and activity. Ensure that your schedule includes breaks for exercise, and relaxation. Set daily and weekly goals to give you a sense of accomplishment and stay on track.

If you are struggling with gadget addiction, lock them away or hand them to someone during 'study time' and reward yourself with screen time you achieve the goal. Check out the Pomodoro Technique (study for spurts of 25 minutes and take a five-minute break). This can help maintain focus and prevent burnout. Get enough sleep, eat a healthy diet, and exercise regularly. Allow time for hobbies and social activities.

Talk to friends, family, or mentors about your struggles and consider joining a study group or an online forum for support and motivation.

**Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.**

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to [eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com](mailto:eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com) with the subject line Off the Edge

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**Deadline:** April 30  
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**Alliance University** invites applications for its UG programmes in Business, Engineering, Law, Liberal Arts, Design, Media Studies,

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**Deadline:** April 30.  
For programme details, eligibility criteria and other information, visit [apply.alliance.edu.in](https://apply.alliance.edu.in)

**IIT-Guwahati** invites applications for its B.S (Hons.) in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence.

**Eligibility:** Minimum 60% aggregate in Class 12 or equivalent from a recognised board with Maths as a compulsory subject.

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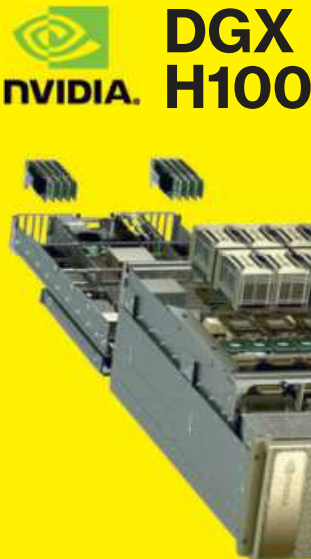
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## GLOBAL TIE-UPS IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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