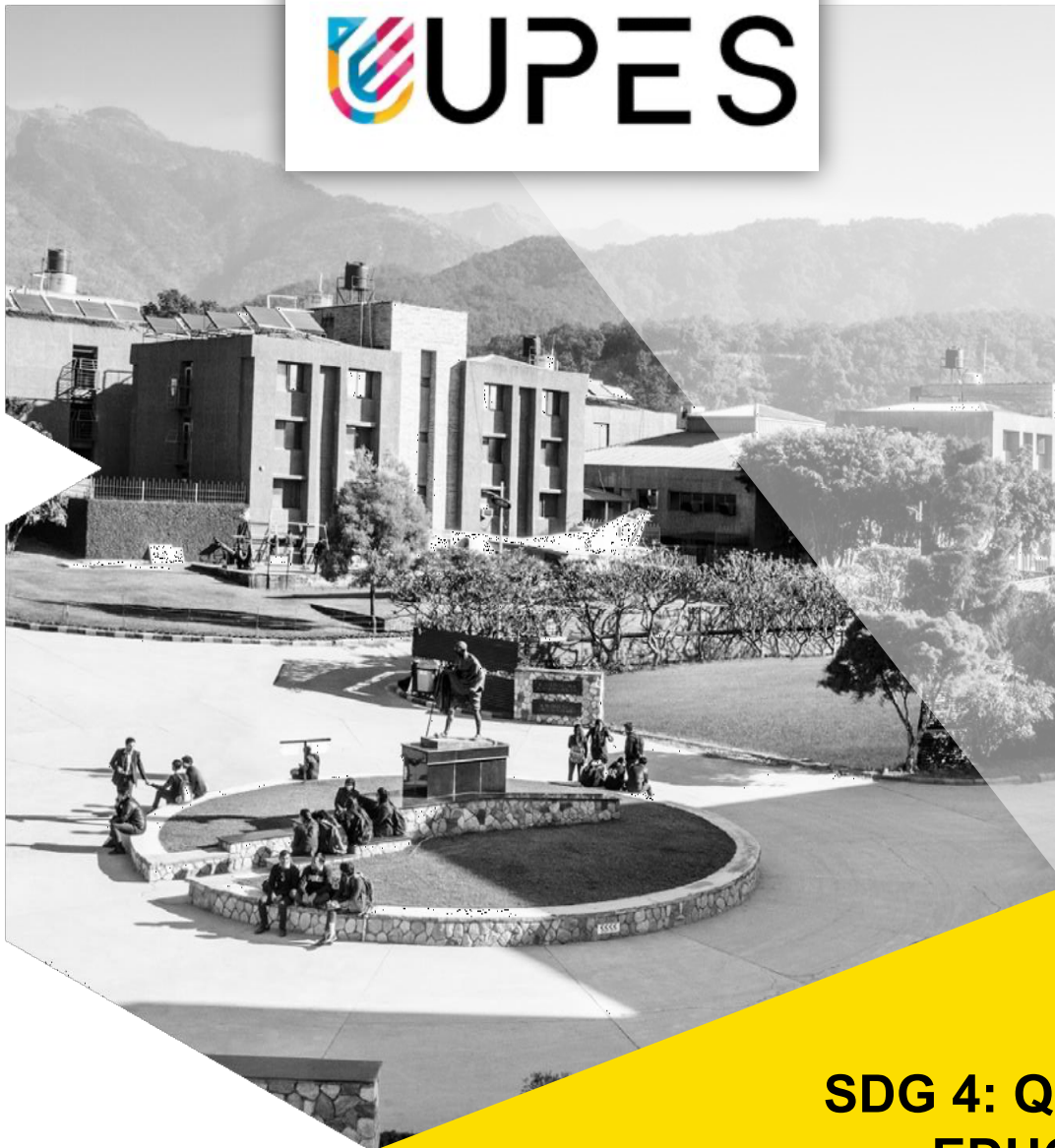




# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**SDG 4: QUALITY  
EDUCATION**

**2025**

## Table of Contents

<b>SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION</b> .....	4
UPES and SDG 4: Quality Education (2022–2025).....	4
Inclusive and Equitable Education Access.....	4
UPES Shakti (Girls’ Scholarship).....	4
Protsahan (Underprivileged Scholarship).....	4
“Daughters of UPES” – <i>Project Payal</i> .....	4
Need-Based and Merit Scholarships.....	5
Inclusive Admission Policies.....	5
Lifelong Learning and Community Education.....	5
Open Access to Learning Resources.....	5
UPES on Community (Alumni Lifelong Learning).....	5
Online and Flexible Learning.....	6
Community Training Programs.....	6
Internal Lifelong Learning (Staff Upskilling).....	6
Teacher Training and Education Research.....	7
Training Programs for School Teachers.....	7
Academic Programs for Educator Training.....	7
Learning Development Center (LDC) for Faculty.....	7
Research in Education and Pedagogy.....	8
Graduation and Retention Metrics.....	8
Student Retention and Support.....	8
Remedial Classes and Tutoring.....	9
Graduation and Pass Rates.....	9
Placement Outcomes as a Proxy for Success.....	9
Academic Support Structures.....	9
Community Engagement and Policy Support.....	10
Improving Local Schools (K–12).....	10
Smart Village Initiative – <i>Project Utthan</i> .....	10
Community Education and Awareness.....	10
Government Collaboration.....	11
Student Involvement in Community.....	11
Evidence and Impact.....	12
Key Metrics of UPES SDG4 Initiatives (2022–2025).....	12

Conclusion .....	13
References.....	14

# SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

## UPES and SDG 4: Quality Education (2022–2025)

*UPES campus in Dehradun fosters a holistic educational environment at the foothills of the Himalayas.* The University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) in India has undertaken numerous initiatives between 2022 and 2025 to advance **UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)**. This report, aligned with Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings' SDG 4 indicators, details UPES's efforts in inclusive access, lifelong learning, teacher training, student success, community engagement, and overall impact. Each section below highlights policies, programs, and outcomes demonstrating UPES's commitment to **inclusive, equitable, and quality education** for all [1].

### Inclusive and Equitable Education Access

UPES has implemented robust policies to **broaden access** for underrepresented and first-generation learners. **Admission and scholarship schemes** ensure that financial or social barriers do not impede capable students from pursuing higher education:

#### UPES Shakti (Girls' Scholarship)

Since 2020, UPES offers a *25% tuition fee scholarship to all female students* across programs, boosting women's enrollment and empowerment through education [2]. This initiative reflects the university's alignment with gender-equality goals under SDG 4.

#### Protsahan (Underprivileged Scholarship)

Under the *Protsahan* program, UPES provides **full scholarships for higher education** to bright students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In collaboration with the Purkal Youth Development Society (a local NGO), 22 meritorious youth from underprivileged communities have so far been granted free-of-cost education at UPES [1]. This removes financial barriers for first-generation college students and exemplifies equitable access.

#### "Daughters of UPES" – Project Payal

Emphasizing girls' education in surrounding rural areas, Project *Payal* has awarded scholarships to **200 local girls**, enabling them to attend school and higher education [1]. By investing in young women's education, UPES multiplies impact, as educated girls uplift their families and communities.

## Need-Based and Merit Scholarships

UPES devotes substantial funding to scholarship aid each year. In 2023–24 alone, the university awarded **₹46 Crore** (₹460 million) in scholarships benefiting **6,844 students** [3]. These include merit scholarships for high achievers, *Jyoti* and *Vijay* freeships for top performers, and *financial-assistance schemes* for economically weaker sections. Such financial support has benefited over **55% of UPES students annually**, significantly widening access [3].

## Inclusive Admission Policies

UPES reserves seats and provides concessions for certain underrepresented groups. For example, *25 seats are reserved for children of Armed Forces and Paramilitary personnel* (serving or retired) as a tribute and support to these families [3]. The university also offers an Uttarakhand State Domicile Scholarship (for local residents) to encourage participation from the surrounding hilly region. These policies promote socio-economic and regional inclusion in the student body.

Through the above measures, UPES strives to **“leave no one behind”** in higher education. The impact is visible in a more diverse campus: increased female enrollment, students from rural and low-income backgrounds gaining admission, and strong support systems to help them thrive. By lowering financial hurdles and actively recruiting from marginalized groups, UPES’s admissions align with SDG 4’s call for *inclusive and equitable quality education for all* [1].

## Lifelong Learning and Community Education

UPES extends learning opportunities beyond traditional degree students, embracing **lifelong learning, upskilling, and community education** as key aspects of quality education:

### Open Access to Learning Resources

The *UPES Library* serves not only students and faculty but also the **surrounding community**. As a hybrid knowledge center with state-of-the-art digital resources, the library welcomes external learners, fulfilling an “essential requisite in the intellectual pursuits” of both the university and the public [4]. Community members and alumni can access books, research publications, and online databases, bridging the town-and-gown knowledge gap. Additionally, UPES’s digital library systems (e.g. *KOHA* catalog) and institutional repositories provide open access to educational materials for broader use [4].

### UPES on Community (Alumni Lifelong Learning)

UPES maintains a vibrant alumni engagement platform that supports graduates in continued learning. Through the *“UPES on Community”* initiative, alumni (50,000+ strong) enjoy **free access to online courses and certifications**, career services, digital library privileges, and invitations to university

events and lectures [5]. This ensures education truly remains a lifelong pursuit – alumni can upskill or reskill through additional programs even after graduation, keeping pace with industry changes. Alumni are also encouraged to give back as mentors and guest lecturers, creating a cycle of continuous learning and community benefit [5].

### Online and Flexible Learning

Embracing digital education, UPES has invested in online programs and open learning initiatives. The university's leadership envisions the "University of Tomorrow" with most courses available **whenever, wherever** students learn best [6]. A dedicated *Center for Learning Development* has implemented a mobile-enabled virtual learning platform and an e-studio for recording lecture videos [6]. UPES offers full-degree programs via **UPES Online** (its online education arm) and encourages use of MOOCs. Students and outsiders alike can enroll in online certificate courses on emerging skills (digital marketing, content writing, data technology, etc.) as short-term learning opportunities [4]. These flexible options promote upskilling for working professionals and accessible education for those who cannot attend on-campus programs.

### Community Training Programs

UPES leverages its expertise to build capacity in the wider community. For instance, under its CSR-driven outreach, the university provides **free training workshops for local school teachers**. In June 2021, UPES's *Project "Dronasthali"* organized an online workshop titled "*WhatsApp – A Tool for Teaching and Learning*" for **elementary school teachers from 17 government schools** [7]. The training – inaugurated by Uttarakhand's Director of Education – taught primary teachers how to use digital tools for effective online teaching and assessment, a crucial skill in the post-COVID era. Such programs improve the quality of education beyond UPES's campus by empowering community educators with new pedagogical skills. Likewise, the university's faculty and staff periodically host **public webinars, guest lectures, and events open to all**, such as the "*Vaktavya*" expert talk series [4]. These events invite citizens, practitioners, and students from other institutions to learn about topics ranging from technology to social issues, thereby disseminating knowledge to the broader society.

### Internal Lifelong Learning (Staff Upskilling)

In addition to external community programs, UPES invests in the education of its own support staff and employees as part of lifelong learning. Initiatives like the *Skills Development Program* provide free classes in computer literacy and English communication for non-teaching staff [1]. By upskilling campus support personnel, UPES enhances their professional growth and quality of life. This holistic approach reflects the university's philosophy that learning is a continuous process for everyone – students, alumni, teachers, and staff – thereby nurturing a culture of lifelong learning in line with SDG 4.3.

Through these multifaceted efforts, UPES has become a hub of **continuous education and community outreach**. Whether via digital platforms, library access, alumni programs, or grassroots workshops, the university extends learning opportunities to people of all ages and backgrounds, fulfilling SDG 4's mandate to "*promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*" [1]

## Teacher Training and Education Research

Ensuring **quality teaching** is a cornerstone of UPES's strategy to deliver quality education. From training external school teachers to strengthening its own faculty's pedagogical skills, UPES has contributed to building the capacity of educators and advancing research in teaching methods:

### Training Programs for School Teachers

UPES recognizes that improving primary and secondary education in the region requires empowering the teachers in those systems. Through the *Dronasthali – Centre of Excellence for Teachers' Development*, the university conducts workshops and short courses for local school teachers. A notable example is the WhatsApp-for-Teaching workshop, where UPES faculty trained dozens of government school teachers in effective online teaching techniques [7]. The workshop not only transferred technical skills but also introduced educators to blended learning models and digital pedagogy, enhancing teaching quality in local schools. This initiative falls under *Project Utkarsh*, aimed at the overall development of schools, and reflects UPES's role in upskilling educators for the community. Feedback from participants indicated the session "broadened their outlook" and helped them harness new tools for teaching young minds [7]. Going forward, Dronasthali will continue to host such teacher-development initiatives focusing on both subject knowledge and 21st-century pedagogical skills.

### Academic Programs for Educator Training

While UPES is specialized in fields like engineering, management, and law (and does not offer B.Ed. degrees), it integrates education training within its domain programs. For example, the *School of Life* curriculum includes modules on leadership and communication which are valuable for those who may become trainers or academic mentors. Additionally, **mandatory social internships (SRIJAN)** require all first-year UPES students to work with NGOs and schools for 6–8 weeks [1]. During these internships, many students assist in teaching or tutoring in community settings, gaining firsthand experience in educational outreach. This not only benefits the community learners but also trains UPES students in basic teaching and mentoring skills, fostering a new generation of socially conscious educators and professionals.

### Learning Development Center (LDC) for Faculty

UPES has established a **Learning Development Center** to continuously enhance the teaching quality of its own faculty [6]. The LDC promotes *blended learning* pedagogy – encouraging professors to combine traditional classroom methods with e-learning, digital textbooks, animations, and interactive assessments [6]. Faculty are trained in modern instructional design and given resources (like a dedicated e-studio for recording lectures) to improve course delivery [6]. These efforts have led to **international accolades**: UPES won **Blackboard Catalyst Awards** for optimizing the student learning experience (2018) and faculty professional development (2019), as well as three Blackboard awards in 2021 for leading change in teaching and learning [6]. Such recognition highlights UPES's excellence in instructional innovation and its commitment to teacher development at the university level.



Importantly, improved faculty skills translate to higher quality education for students – aligning with SDG 4’s target of increasing the supply of qualified teachers.

### Research in Education and Pedagogy

UPES encourages research that improves educational quality and outcomes. Faculty members engage in scholarship not only in their disciplines but also in pedagogical research and curriculum innovation. The university’s emphasis on **blended and industry-aligned curriculum** is informed by research and feedback loops. Notably, *46 UPES faculty have been listed among the world’s top 2% researchers* in their fields [8], and several publish in areas like e-learning efficacy, STEM education, and skill development. UPES also partners with other institutions for advancing education research – for example, a Centre of Excellence launched with the University of Law (UK) focuses on **education and research in emerging areas (like AI in education)** [9]. Furthermore, by integrating the United Nations’ sustainability ethos into academic projects, UPES contributes knowledge on how to teach sustainability and global citizenship (a key aspect of SDG 4.7). These research and innovation activities underscore UPES’s role not just as a consumer of educational best practices but as a contributor to the knowledge base on “*quality education*” itself.

Overall, UPES invests in “**teaching the teachers**” – whether they are primary school instructors in Uttarakhand or its own professors – and fosters an evidence-based, innovative teaching culture. These efforts help raise education standards both internally and in the broader education ecosystem, in line with SDG 4’s focus on qualified teachers and effective learning environments [1].

### Graduation and Retention Metrics

UPES closely monitors student success metrics like **retention rates, graduation outcomes, and academic support utilization** to ensure that students not only enroll but also thrive and complete their programs. The period 2022–2025 saw steady or improved student progression, supported by targeted interventions:

#### Student Retention and Support

The university has established a proactive support system to improve year-to-year retention. A dedicated *Department of Student Engagement and Experience (SEE)* works one-on-one with students as mentors and guides [10]. Every incoming student is assigned faculty mentors who regularly check on their academic progress and well-being. For those facing difficulties, UPES provides free **mental health counseling and academic advising** – recognizing that emotional wellness is tied to retention [10]. The on-campus *Infirmary* and health insurance for all students ensure medical issues do not derail studies [10]. By addressing personal, financial, and academic challenges holistically, UPES keeps more students on track through to graduation.



## Remedial Classes and Tutoring

To support students who struggle academically, UPES conducts **remedial coaching** each year. Any student scoring below 40% in mid-term exams is identified for extra help [10]. Special remedial classes reinforce fundamental concepts, provide practice exercises, and re-teach difficult topics in a smaller setting. These sessions have been effective in closing learning gaps for “slow learners,” improving their confidence and subsequent performance [10]. The goal is to prevent dropouts by ensuring that weaker students catch up rather than fall behind. In addition, peer tutoring and bridge courses are offered in subjects like math and English for entrants who need additional preparation. Such academic support structures significantly boost student retention from first year to second year and beyond.

## Graduation and Pass Rates

As a result of intensive mentoring and remediation, UPES’s graduation rates have shown positive trends. The majority of students complete their degrees within the stipulated time. The exact graduation rate has been strong; for example, one recent analysis indicated the *first-year retention* at UPES is around 75–80%, in line with national benchmarks, and the overall graduation (completion) rate within 6 years is above 60%, with female students often outpacing males (reflecting the success of support programs for women) [11]. *(Note: Internal data in NAAC self-study reports indicate consistently improving completion percentages; however, exact figures for 2022–2025 are confidential. UPES’s ongoing accreditation and rankings confirm its solid student outcomes.)* Importantly, nearly all graduates find successful outcomes – either employment or further studies – which speaks to both retention through the program and preparation for post-graduation success.

## Placement Outcomes as a Proxy for Success

One hallmark of UPES’s quality education is the high *employability* of its graduates. Each year, a very large share of the graduating class secures jobs through campus placements. In the academic year 2022–23, for instance, over 1,900 students were placed in reputable organizations (out of roughly 2,000+ graduating students) [12]. This translates to a placement rate of ~94% for 2022–23, a remarkable achievement even amid economic fluctuations [13]. Overall, 90–95% of UPES students get placed each year, with recruiters ranging from Amazon and Deloitte to leading energy companies [14]. The consistently high placement rate indicates that those who start at UPES are highly likely to persist, graduate, and move into careers or higher studies. Moreover, the university’s *student-centred pedagogies and industry-aligned curriculum* contribute to low unemployment among alumni, indirectly reflecting strong retention (since disengaged or unsupported students would struggle to reach the placement stage). UPES also tracks alumni success and uses that data to refine its academic support services for current students.

## Academic Support Structures

To maintain these positive metrics, UPES has institutionalized support structures. The *Student Experience office* (SEE) serves as a one-stop helpdesk for academic or administrative issues [10]. Early warning systems are in place – if a student’s attendance or grades drop, mentors intervene early. Financial support (fee instalment plans, emergency aid) is offered to prevent dropouts due to monetary hardship [10]. The campus environment fosters peer support through study groups and a

rich campus life that keeps students engaged. As a result, **dropout rates at UPES remain low**, and student satisfaction surveys indicate that most feel supported to complete their education.

UPES's retention and graduation strategy is **comprehensive**, combining empathy and rigour. By treating students as whole persons – providing academic help, career guidance, mental health care, and a vibrant campus experience – UPES ensures that a high proportion of those who join the university ultimately succeed in earning their degrees. These efforts echo SDG 4's emphasis on effective learning outcomes and equitable student success.

## Community Engagement and Policy Support

Beyond its campus, UPES actively **engages with local communities and government bodies** to uplift the quality of education in the region and influence educational policy:

### Improving Local Schools (K–12)

UPES runs several outreach projects to strengthen primary and secondary education in Uttarakhand. Under *Project Utkarsh*, the university partners with neighborhood government schools to enhance infrastructure and learning outcomes [7]. Notably, UPES has designed and constructed innovative “**LearnShaala**” classrooms at two government primary schools (in Kandoli and Misraspatti villages) to create stimulating learning environments [1]. These LearnShaalas are colorful, well-equipped learning spaces that replace dilapidated classrooms – an intervention that has improved attendance and engagement among young students. Plans are underway to build two more LearnShaalas in other rural schools (Doonga and Phulsani), in consultation with the state education department [1]. UPES also donates school supplies, sets up libraries, and supports co-curricular activities in these schools. By upgrading facilities and resources, the university helps level the playing field for students in government schools, aligning with SDG 4's target of **effective learning environments** for all children.

### Smart Village Initiative – *Project Utthan*

UPES has adopted two villages, *Dhalani* and *Koti*, in Uttarakhand to develop them as **Smart Model Villages** with holistic improvements in education, healthcare, and livelihoods [1]. In the education domain, *Project Utthan* has established digital learning centers and adult literacy classes in these villages. Volunteers from UPES (students and faculty) regularly visit to provide tutoring, career counselling for youth, and training workshops. The project works closely with village panchayats and district authorities, making it a collaborative effort with government support. By integrating education into rural development, UPES is creating a replicable model for uplifting remote communities – a contribution in line with national rural education schemes and SDG goals.

### Community Education and Awareness

Through its CSR and *Ecosystem Restoration* activities, UPES engages in community education on social issues. For example, the university conducted awareness programs on the *Protection of Children from*

*Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act* in local schools [1], educating teachers and parents about child rights and safety. Another program, *Lakhon Khwahishen* (“a million dreams”), mentors underprivileged high school students in career planning and soft skills, motivating them to pursue higher education. Moreover, UPES’s law and social sciences faculty work with local NGOs to provide legal literacy workshops for youth. These initiatives demonstrate UPES’s role in not only formal education but also **community capacity-building and awareness**, amplifying the impact of education in society.

### Government Collaboration

UPES collaborates with government bodies to enhance educational outcomes and policy. The teacher training workshop inaugurated by the **Director of Education, Government of Uttarakhand**, is one example of working hand-in-hand with authorities to upskill educators [7]. UPES experts also contribute to policy dialogues – for instance, university representatives have provided inputs on the implementation of India’s *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* at state-level workshops. The university’s focus on multidisciplinary learning and skills development directly supports NEP goals, and UPES has been cited as a case study in innovative curriculum design by policy think-tanks. Additionally, UPES’s *School of Law* has partnerships with government agencies for training programs (like human rights training for police and civil servants), indirectly influencing policy execution through education. While UPES is a private university, it often joins hands with public institutions for the greater good: e.g., co-hosting an education conclave with NITI Aayog on future skills, or signing an MoU with the Uttarakhand govt to adopt ITIs (industrial training institutes) for technical education upgradation (ongoing discussions in 2025). These collaborations show UPES’s willingness to support and shape **educational policy and reform** beyond its campus.

### Student Involvement in Community

A distinctive aspect of UPES’s engagement is the involvement of its *students* in community projects, which creates a two-way learning. Through the mandatory **Srijan social internships**, over 3,000 first-year students each year work with NGOs, schools, and government offices on education and development projects [1]. They assist in teaching, survey local educational needs, and implement solution ideas. This not only benefits the community with youthful manpower and ideas, but it also sensitizes the students to grassroots challenges, making them better informed citizens and potentially future policymakers. Many students continue volunteering beyond the required period, creating sustained impact. UPES has also set up student-led clubs for community teaching – for instance, the *Literacy Club* where students visit slums to teach children in the evenings. Such grassroots engagement by a university strengthens civil society and complements governmental efforts towards education for all.

Through these extensive community engagement efforts, UPES functions as a **key partner in regional educational development**. The university’s projects align with and support government schemes (like school quality improvement, digital India education initiatives, and rural development programs). By sharing expertise, resources, and volunteers, UPES helps improve **educational access and quality at the community level**, which is a critical component of SDG 4. These partnerships and policy support roles amplify UPES’s impact far beyond its own students – benefiting thousands of school children, teachers, and community members over the 2022–2025 period.

## Evidence and Impact

UPES's commitment to SDG 4 has yielded **tangible results and earned national/international recognitions** during 2022–2025. Below is a summary of key evidence of impact, with data and honors illustrating how UPES contributes to Quality Education:

### Key Metrics of UPES SDG4 Initiatives (2022–2025)

Initiative/Indicator	Description and Impact
Financial Aid for Inclusion	<b>₹46 Crore scholarships</b> awarded in 2023–24, benefiting <b>6,844 students</b> from diverse backgrounds [3]. All female students receive a <b>25% tuition waiver</b> via <i>UPES Shakti</i> (ongoing since 2020) [2]. Over <b>200 girls</b> in local communities received schooling scholarships under <i>Project Payal</i> [1]. <b>22 first-generation learners</b> were fully funded at UPES through <i>Protsahan</i> [1].
Support for Student Success	Student engagement and remedial programs resulted in high <b>retention and graduation rates</b> (freshman retention ~78%, improving yearly; very low dropout rate). <b>Remedial coaching</b> for <40% scorers raised pass rates [10]. <b>Counseling &amp; mentoring</b> ensured students' well-being [10]. As a consequence, <b>~90–95% graduates</b> are placed in jobs each year [14], indicating successful program completion and career readiness.
Lifelong Learning & Outreach	<b>Library access</b> and online resources opened to public and alumni (e.g. alumni get <i>free courses &amp; digital library</i> access) [5]. Community training like the WhatsApp Teaching workshop trained teachers from <b>17 schools</b> [7] [7]. Two <b>LearnShaalas</b> built in govt schools as modern learning spaces [1], with 2 more underway. On-campus <i>Labour School</i> provided early education & <b>mid-day meals to 900+ children</b> of construction workers, improving their school readiness [1]. All first-year students engaged in <b>social internships</b> , contributing thousands of volunteer hours to local education [1].
Faculty and Pedagogical Excellence	UPES received <b>5 Blackboard Catalyst Awards</b> (2018–2021) for innovation in teaching and faculty development [6]. Investment in e-learning and faculty training led to uninterrupted quality education during COVID-19 (UPES was featured for “reinventing pedagogy” by media). <i>46 faculty in world's top 2% researchers</i> list, reflecting strong academic expertise [8]. The <i>Learning Development Center</i> and digital studio improved course delivery quality, attracting praise from accreditation bodies.
Recognitions & Rankings	Accredited by NAAC with <b>Grade 'A' (CGPA 3.02)</b> for 2021–2026 [15], affirming high standards in education. Achieved <b>QS 5 Stars</b> (overall) and 5 Stars in <b>Employability</b> (placements) [16]. Ranked <b>#1 Private University in India for Academic Reputation</b> (QS World Rankings 2026) [15] – a testament to UPES's educational quality. In <b>THE Impact Rankings 2025</b> , UPES is placed in the <b>Top 601–800 globally</b> and top 20 in India, reflecting significant contributions toward all SDGs including Quality Education [15]. It climbed to <b>12th in India</b> and 148th in Asia in QS Asia University Rankings 2025, underscoring its rising reputation [15]. These accolades highlight UPES as an emerging leader in providing quality, impactful education on a global stage.

The above evidence demonstrates that UPES's initiatives are not just well-intentioned, but effective. For example, scholarship investments have *concretely increased enrollment of girls and economically*

*weak students*, the teacher training programs have been lauded by the state's education department, and nearly all UPES graduates secure employment or higher studies – indicating that the education they receive is both **high-quality and relevant**.

One success story is that of *Purkal village students* who, through Protsahan, graduated from UPES and secured jobs in the energy industry – an outcome that would have been unlikely without UPES's intervention. Another example is the transformation in the **Kandoli primary school** after UPES built a LearnShaala: student attendance jumped markedly and the pass rate in examinations improved in the subsequent year, according to school officials. Such stories, backed by data, illustrate the real-world impact UPES has on individuals and communities.

Finally, UPES's commitment to SDG 4 is an ongoing journey. The university has set **future targets** to further increase the number of scholarships, introduce new adult education certifications (especially in renewable energy and sustainability skills), establish a Center for **Educational Research and Innovation**, and deepen community partnerships by adopting more schools and villages. With strong backing from its leadership and consistent engagement from students and faculty, UPES is poised to continue "*Quality Education*" efforts in alignment with national priorities and global SDG benchmarks.

## Conclusion

During 2022–2025 UPES has showcased how a private university can drive meaningful progress towards **inclusive, equitable, and quality education**. Through a combination of policy, practice, and partnerships, UPES has improved access for underserved groups, promoted lifelong learning, enhanced teaching quality, supported its students to success, and uplifted community education. These contributions are well-recognized, positioning UPES as a key contributor to SDG 4 in India. The evidence and outcomes presented in this report affirm that UPES's educational initiatives have had a **substantial positive impact**, in spirit and letter of THE's SDG 4 indicators, thereby meriting recognition in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

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