

## ISB alumni to counsel students at coffee shops across the globe

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Non-resident Indians (NRIs) and international students planning to study at the Hyderabad-based Indian School of Business (ISB) may now be able to find counsellors at coffee shops like Starbucks or Barista outlets across the globe.

In a bid to increase its international reach, ISB has launched the 'Coffee with Alumni' programme. Around 40 alumni members have already signed up to counsel international students.

Currently, international students account for around five per cent of ISB's batch size of 573, while NRIs account for 25 per cent.

"This year, we had around 75 international recruiters from Asia Pacific, Europe and the US looking for international students for their international offices. It was then that we realised we needed to increase the pool of international students on the campus. So, we decided to launch a programme through which we could reach out to prospective students outside India and, over a cup of coffee, address their queries ranging from life on the campus to career prospects," said V K Menon, senior director (career advancement and admissions), ISB.

The counselling sessions would be held at the US, UAE, UK, China, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, Spain, Singapore and the Netherlands.

"We floated this idea on the internet and got around 400 prospective students. We then realised it would be a good idea to address the concerns of these students personally," said Menon.

Attracting international students has been a key area of focus for ISB in the past one year. The institute had, last year, tied up with three reputed Asian business schools — Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, China Europe International Business School and Nanyang Technological University — to devise a strategy to attract more students from the US, Canada and Europe. These four business schools, under the brand 'Top 4Asia B-schools' have also created a logo with a common signature.

Other business schools across the country have not yet used their alumni network to draw international students. According to Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, there are no special efforts being made to attract foreign students with the help of its alumni. It prefers alumni contributing to the institute's corpus, lectures and conferences.

Mumbai-based IBS has seen its alumni help in conducting special industry workshops. "There is no set road map followed by us in evolving our relationship with our alumni," said Hema Sisodia, dean (corporate relations and campus placements), IBS.