

Brief on Coronavirus Responses and its Impact

Highlighting trends in Higher Education
globally

A glance at the backdrop and the evolving response

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The unprecedented impact on Higher Education as a result of COVID-19

This short brief looks at how universities globally are having to position themselves strategically to deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen how faculties have rushed to convert curriculum to an online environment, how they have become reliant on using edtech for remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. [21], and how whole sectors of educational bodies have had to hurry to put together resources and guidelines from everything from digital resources, to counseling, to advising on student finances and health issues. [3][4][7][14]. And then there is of course the role of higher education in shaping the post'-COVID-19 world [15]

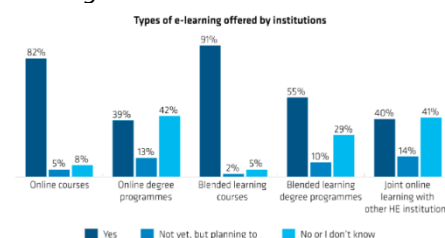
The challenges have prompted adaptations We have seen that universities have not closed – they have adapted. There has been a rapid move to

online learning and teaching [28] In fact, almost 90% of European higher education institutions moved online in April and May [29]. Opportunities in relation to digitally enhanced learning are prompting a readied response: *“The coronavirus crisis has challenged higher education institutions in many new and unexpected ways. As universities have to take radical measures and make major efforts to slow the contagion and to better understand the virus, they are forging new paths in crisis management. This brings both challenges and opportunities to Europe’s universities, in particular in relation to digitalisation and digitally enhanced learning and teaching”* [25]

The wider European strategy response is thought in as part of a two part plan involving a [European Digital Strategy](#) and an [Industrial Strategy for Europe](#) which, seen together, promote the *“effective and substantial co-operation and partnership between key stakeholders in industry, universities, other educational*

institutions and civil society organisations, as well as cooperation between EU economies and regulatory bodies”. [29]

The types of online offerings, offered by universities since 2013, cover a spectrum of online courses, as detailed in the graph below (seen clearly at 200% magnification): *online degree programmes, blended learning courses, blended learning degree programmes, as well as joint online learning with other HE institutions.*



Taken from *Covid-19 and digitally enhanced learning and teaching: New opportunities in challenging times* [22]

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RESOURCES AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE RESPONSES TO COVID

-An unintended positive consequence is that *“high education will become significantly more accessible as universities think about how to move all of their programming online, including counseling, student life, career development, etc.”* according to Gaidi Faraj, Dean of African Leadership University. [5]

- This brief on how countries are using edtech has been put together by the World Bank. It catalogues emerging approaches by country in a database and countries are listed alphabetically. Underneath are some selected country entries [21]

-This resource advises on four steps to take quickly, to bring about quick transition to online delivery online. It prudently advises to “plan for the long haul”. [20]

-This resource gives example of how universities are adapting their admissions in response to Covid-19 – with extended deadlines, waived application fees & greater flexibility, adjusted entry requirements, flexible study options [19]

-Here is a resource of Higher Education Responses to Coronavirus by the National Conference of State Legislatures, listing details of closures and re-openings, guidelines for reopening, resources for students who might lack access to an internet connection, pointers to with tips and resources to help other schools manage and improve online instruction. Of particular interest is Southern New Hampshire University, an online university, which has published a guide with tips and resources to help other schools manage and improve online instruction. (NCSL represents the legislatures in the states, territories and commonwealths of the U.S) [18]

- Here is an example of how one university is coping with the pandemic, and how it keeps its staff and students updates - The University of Richmond has extensive documentation on its site, with “brief update logs”, “Campus-Wide Updates” delineating their plans for the autumn and detailing interim policies and operational changes in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. They also strive to give practical advice on technologies, on how get online with freeWiFi hotspots across the country (e.g. Xfinity WiFi hotspots) and offer advice to low income students on where to get affordable internet services [17]

- These resources include a brief from ACHA's Task Force at American College Health Association (ACHA) are many. To name a few:clarifications on testing; Guidelines on Reopening Campuses; Recorded Webinars- here are some titles- “Preparedness and Preparedness and Response on U.S. College Campuses, Public Health and College Health Working Together. There are also extensive “situation updates” from WHO and CDC. [24]

- This resource from EUA (European University Association) is a central hub for European responses and resources. A smattering of resources referenced: [Covid-19 impacts and mitigation strategies. The European context](#) (SlideShare presentation); [EUA response to the new EU Industrial and Digital Strategies](#)(policy input) ; [IUA/EDTL Webinar: Planning for effective remote teaching during Covid-19, 24 June](#) (Webinar)[25]

-Also from EUA, this page is dedicated to Resources for digital learning and teaching during the coronavirus pandemic [26]

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