

RESEARCHERS BOOTCAMP

THEME 8: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT- HIGHER EDUCATION RESPONSE TO COVID-19

EDUCATION RESEARCHERS RESPOND TO LOCKDOWN



DATE

30 March – 30 April



NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS

12



APPROACH

Desktop research



AUDIENCE

Policy makers and
Leadership of Higher
Education Institutions



PLATFORMS USED

Google Hangout
Google Forms
Whatsapp
Telephonic interviews

PURPOSE: To investigate how higher education institutions are managing the risks and impact of COVID-19.

FINDINGS

Some 6 200 students are still in university accommodation during the lockdown, being either international students or those who had insufficient time to travel.

Institutions have begun remote teaching, but many students lack access due to cost or poor network coverage, and/or find themselves in circumstances unconducive to learning.

Researchers and postgraduate students face deadline difficulties and lost conference opportunities.

Higher education institutions must prepare for disruptions like COVID-19 and reimagine and recreate governance and management policies that better serve the entire community.

Disruptions to the day-to-day lives of students and staff necessitate clear communications, guidance and psycho-social support.

It is imperative that there is an equity lens for every decision made.

Practical modules, e.g. those which require education or veterinary students to demonstrate their competence in real-world situations, pose particular problems for remote teaching and learning.

Staff working from home may be more productive – but the environment may not be conducive

Economic lockdown and unemployment will affect students' ability to access finances and pay fees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Supply clear and up-to-date information to staff and students on remote working and assessment schedules and expectations, through virtual contact centres web platforms and social media.
- In addition to shift work arrangements and teleconferencing, build the capacity of academics to design online materials and assessments and offer virtual teaching, particularly but not only for students with disabilities.
- Learn from staff already versed in providing online and psycho-social support.
- Alter times, timing and locations of clinical practice or practical training requirements, and make innovative use of video material and body cameras.
- Introduce greater flexibility in methods for paying fees.

- Provide support for students in need, especially those formerly dependent on residence food and accommodation.
- Provide funding for institutions in distress due to loss of tuition fee and accommodation income.
- Provide financial support for the high initial costs of online learning.
- Provide students living with disabilities with additional dedicated funding and support.
- Provide international students with advice and assistance with regard to applications, enrolment and visas.
- Give researchers and postgraduate students permission to defer project deliverables and provide guidance on researching online (e.g. data management and protection and ethics approval).

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