Agile Learning Environments amid Disruption

Evaluating Academic Innovations in Higher Education during COVID-19

Edited by Md Golam Jamil · Dawn A. Morley

Chapter

Decision-making under Uncertainty: How University Students Navigate the Academic Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic Challenges

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Abstract

Decision-making under uncertainty relates to the deficiency of information and problems understanding the nature, effects and responses to the sources of the uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic and governments' response to it created high levels of uncertainty around the problems which students faced. A series of focus groups were conducted to understand the experiences of students across the three years of undergraduate university life to ascertain the problems which students needed to address. The focus groups revealed a complexity of the options related to the problems faced about their university life. The implications of the findings provide lessons for academic and professional services staff in designing and targeting advice and informational policies and practices to effectively serve the needs of each individual student.

Keywords

- **COVID-19**
- **Decision-making**
- **Student engagement**
- **Student communication policy**
- **Blended/online delivery**

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Summary table of the details of the decision-making process map for first- and second-year undergraduate focus groups

Continuation of studies	To continue studies	University information	• The types of learning environment	• Personal
			• The support services (finance, wellbeing, employability) that the university offers	• Programr team
				• Student c
				• University communica
		Personal environment	• Whether financial support from family will be available	• Support network (fri and family)
			• Whether furlough arrangements from part-time job available through the year	• Governm announcem

				• Workplac... decisions
	Interruption/withdrawal	Future delivery methods of teaching		• University... retention o...
		University policy and regulations		• University... policy docu...
				• University... communica...
Type of learning Environment	Online learning	University information	• Flexibility of the delivery	• University... communica...
			• Assessment support	• Personal ...
			• Digital tools and accessibility	• Programm... leader
		Personal environment	• Digital poverty and access to equipment	• Informati... sessions set... by the univ...
			• International students: time zones and studying from abroad	
	Blended learning	University information	• COVID-19 social distancing rules on campus	

			• Accommodation and the financing/guarantee in case of a lockdown	
		Personal environment	• Being isolated in case of a lockdown	
			• Shielding and health concerns	
Part-time work to develop transferable skills or financial support	To not formally work		• Information on other informal work opportunities such as courses or virtual internships	• Business s employabili office
			• Information about volunteering in the area that could fill the gap for transferable skills	• The gene enterprise t
			• Attending extra-curricular activities provided by the university and develop stronger academic curriculum	• Governm website
	To find part-time work		• Speak with employability services and work on the CV/cover letter	• Newspap and trends industry
			• Speak with the generator team for entrepreneurial opportunities or side hustles	
	To continue in their previous job		• Government updates and guidance on furlough and job retention scheme	

Student life and support network	To engage with the community online	• The schedule of online events organised by the business school (networking events, get to know other events virtually, virtual seminars and 'coffee' meetings)	• Business s employabili office
		• Information about variety of societies offering programmes online through the student union and become part of the student union remotely	• The stude union
	To travel to campus to take part in social distancing activities	• The schedule of on-campus activities and the social distancing rules that apply such as the fresher fairs	• Programr ordinators

Appendix 2

Summary table of the details of the decision-making process map for third-year undergraduate students

Prospects after graduation	Graduate employment	• Industry-specific work prospects	• Business schoo employability offi
		• Jobs websites	• The generator enterprise team
		• LinkedIn and virtual internships to prepare graduate work	• LinkedIn and government job s programmes
			• Universities' we and advisors
			• Programme leaders/tutors

	Postgraduate studies	• Teaching delivery methods for next academic year	• Guest speakers different industrie
		• Entry requirements for universities	• Government information page
		• International visa requirements	
	Gap year travelling	• Visa Requirements and travel restrictions	
		• Future updates from government	
To have part-time work or not?	To not formally work	• Information on other informal work opportunities such as courses or virtual internships	• Business schoo employability offi
		• Attending extra-curricular activities provided by the university and develop stronger academic curriculum	• The generator enterprise team
	To find part-time work	• Speak with employability services and work on the CV/cover letter	• Government we
		• Speak with the generator team for entrepreneurial opportunities or side hustles	• Newspapers an trends in the indu
	To continue in their previous job	• Government updates and guidance on furlough and job retention scheme	

Learning environment	Studying at home through online platforms	• Module and programme-specific information	• Government up
		• Timetabling and delivery methods	• University communications
			• Business schoo employability offi
			• Support networ (friends and famil
	Travel to the campus library/facilities away from home	• University social distancing policies	• Programme tut
		• Government policies on travelling	

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