



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Education  
Sector

# COVID-19 Education Roundtable Implications for the Global Higher Education Campus

Friday 15 May 2020

13h00 – 14h30 GMT+2



Concept note and agenda

## Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis has created a planetary disruption to higher education. Yet at the same time, the pandemic is providing acute lessons that we can turn into opportunities for building more inclusive, more collaborative and more resilient higher education systems to address the global development agenda. There is no doubt that the crisis has challenged the creativity and innovation capacities of higher education institutions worldwide. Universities that have managed to navigate the ‘convoluted river’ created by the crisis will emerge with new learning dynamics, new capacities and a new vision for the post-crisis tertiary education landscape.

The capacity of education systems is also in question. As part of a system and within the framework of their autonomy and teaching freedom, higher education institutions (HEIs) require clear, relevant, fair and timely game rules. National education systems are reacting in a variety of ways to impacts of the crisis on higher education, and these changes will require unpacking in the light of education as a fundamental human right.

The consequences for higher education caused by the COVID-19 crisis will be far-reaching, complex and may only really emerge once a degree of normality returns. This discussion will therefore focus on the immediate and post-pandemic aftermath of the internationalization of higher learning. Following the trends of globalization, internationalization in higher education and research has grown steadily in recent years. The number of foreign tertiary students enrolled worldwide increased by nearly fivefold from 1980 to 2014. The world average number of researchers per million inhabitants in

2018 stood at 1,151.<sup>1</sup> Of the 5.3 million students studying outside their place of origin, 3.6 million come from OECD countries<sup>2</sup>. If the crisis creates opportunities for a new design for the internationalization of higher education, these figures could change in favour of the inclusion of a more balanced proportion of students from all regions of the world.

HEIs must reflect the diversity of society in their student and faculty bodies. More diverse institutions contribute to improving the quality of the education they offer, social equity, international understanding and the competitiveness of countries. Thus, governments and the international community benefit from international student mobility.<sup>3</sup> Such mobility requires clear, transparent and equity-focused frameworks. The II World Conference on Higher Education emphasized, “for globalization of higher education to benefit all, it is critical to ensure equity in access and success, to promote quality and to respect cultural diversity...” It also requires partnerships, which “should nurture the creation of national knowledge capabilities in all involved countries, thus ensuring more diversified sources of high quality research peers and knowledge production, on regional and global scales”<sup>4</sup>. The recently adopted UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education<sup>5</sup> represents a significant step in this direction. Societies will benefit from the guarantee of the right to fair recognition procedures, and the education systems will benefit from the standards that the Convention defines if they adopt them.

Alongside these already complex challenges for internationalisation, the post-crisis situation is full of uncertainties. There will be changes and challenges to be faced "by force", including a significant drop in the demand for students to study abroad. This issue will require creativity, flexibility and agility in response. At the same time, other changes will demand taking advantage of the opportunities generated by the enormous boost that the crisis has given to the systems to take them out of their “comfort zones”.

Among the challenges is designing a flexible offering that combines the delivery of classes in physical and virtual space. This will imply challenges for pedagogy and for the schemes of teaching bodies and institutional staff and their working conditions. There will be growing challenges related to teaching content, the diversification of assessment methods, the intensive use and development of technology, the participation of students with increasingly diverse needs and abilities, and the flexibility of educational pathways. All these challenges will open up new opportunities for policies that will have to provide further regulatory frameworks that are clear, transparent and fair, for both public and private higher education. The changes in the world of work and the consequent permanent reconversion of skills and competences will be a constant source of attention and connection with very dynamic labour markets that demands continuous innovation. New ways of collaboration for research and knowledge production will open up. Research will be needed regarding each of these issues. There will also be challenges for funding, recognition of studies, quality assurance and, with a sense of urgency, for an equitable distribution of opportunities among diverse students from any region of the world, including those in forced displacement. Only one per cent of refugees are enrolled in tertiary education, compared to 37 per cent of young people worldwide.<sup>6</sup>

We certainly are moving into the unknown, but disruption often leads to the previously unimaginable. We don't have the all – or even any – of the answers right now. However, by starting to think about the right questions, the clues to inspired solutions will begin to spring. That is the intention of this discussion space.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (2018b), “Skills and Innovation in G20 Countries”, UIS, Canada.

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2019a), “Education at a glance”. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2019\\_f8d7880d-en#page233](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2019_f8d7880d-en#page233)

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (2018b), “Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education”, Canada.

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, (2009), “Declaration by the Second World Conference on Higher Education”, UNESCO, Paris.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO (2019d), “Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education”, Paris.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Data Base.

## Objective and guiding questions

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Under an emergency that prevents physical but not virtual mobility, **what are the impacts that the crisis' consequences have and will produce on cross border education?**

This webinar aims to contribute to answering this concern through subsidiary questions addressing the various dimensions of internationalization. Some of them seek to understand the current situation and others pretend to begin to draw a future that, for the moment, seems uncertain.

- *What is happening to international students?*
- *How will their educational achievement be ensured?*
- *How are teachers addressing the challenges related to the learning and achievement of their international students?*
- *How are HEIs as systems addressing the need for flexibility and creating new processes, procedures, and methodologies?*
- *Are they receiving support from national education systems?*

Realizing a new vision for the future,

- *Are HEIs aware and prepared to develop a new vision that the future of higher education requires?*

To maintain internationalization with a significant proportion of "distance" students,

- *Are HEIs and their staff prepared to make substantial changes in (a) admission systems; (b) educational calendars; (c) teaching methods, assessments and delivery modes; (d) funding schemes; (e) student care; (f) research schemes; (g) intensive use of technology?*
- *Are HEIs prepared to collaborate and make alliances with other HEIs in favour of internationalization? And to do co-research?*
- *Are HEIs ready to produce knowledge, information and data related to the challenges identified?*

## Audience

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The webinar can involve a broad range of actors with a vested interest in higher education: National policy-makers in charge of higher education, rectors/presidents of universities, UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Programme, teaching staff, students, the economic and professional sectors, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organisations, UN agencies, as well as civil society groups (teachers' unions, etc.), and international networks active in the field.

## Technical specifications

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The webinar will use Zoom as a technical platform. The Zoom link can be accessed herewith: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/webinars>.

## Language

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The working language of the webinar is English.




Questions and comments will be accepted in English, French and Spanish using the chat function.

## Agenda

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Friday 15 May 2020	
13:00- 13:15	<b>Opening remarks:</b> Mr. <b>Peter Wells</b> , Chief HED Section (Discussion Moderator)
13:15 – 14:15	<b>Panellists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. <b>Ms. Roberta Malee-Bassett</b>, Global Lead for Tertiary Education, the World Bank</li><li>• Mr. <b>Anasse Bouhlal</b>, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Beirut Office</li><li>• Prof. <b>Ms. Marguerite Dennis</b>, consultant and expert in international student recruitment, enrolment and retention, United States</li><li>• Prof. <b>David Gibson</b>, Director of Learning Futures, Curtin University, Australia</li><li>• Prof. <b>Mr Glen A. Jones</b>, Professor of Higher Education and Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada</li><li>• Prof. <b>Mr Peter Lennie</b>, Executive Director, Worldwide Universities Network</li><li>• Prof. <b>Mr. Ignacio Sánchez</b>, Rector, P. Catholic University of Chile</li><li>• Mr. <b>Libing Wang</b>, Chief of Section, UNESCO Bangkok Office</li><li>• Prof. <b>Mr Toby Wilkinson</b>, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Lincoln, UK</li></ul>
14:15-14:30	<b>Viewers Questions</b> (Ms. <b>Paz Portales</b> , Programme Specialist (UNESCO))  <b>Closing Remarks</b>

## Panelists

<p><b>Prof. Ignacio Sánchez</b> is President of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. He was elected President in 2010 and confirmed for a second period in 2015. He is part of the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH) and Chair of the Chilean Chapter of Catholic Universities of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). He is Vice-President for the South Region of the Organization of Catholic Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean - ODUCAL.</p> <p><a href="mailto:isanchez@uc.cl">isanchez@uc.cl</a></p>	
<p><b>Prof. David Gibson</b> is Director of Learning Futures at Curtin University and UNESCO Chair of Data Science in Higher Education Learning and Teaching, received his doctorate (Ed.D. Leadership and Policy Studies) from the University of Vermont in 1999 based on a study of complex systems modeling of educational change. His foundational research demonstrated the feasibility of bridging from qualitative information to quantifiable dynamic relationships in complex models that verify trajectories of organizational change. He provides thought leadership as a researcher, professor, learning scientist and innovator. He is creator of simSchool, a classroom flight simulator for preparing educators, and eFolio an online performance-based assessment system, and provides vision and sponsorship for Curtin University's Challenge, a mobile, game-based learning platform. He consults with project and system leaders, formulates strategies, and helps people articulate their vision for innovation; then helps connect people with the resources needed to fulfil their aspirations. His research has extended from learning analytics, complex systems analysis and modeling of education to application of complexity via games and simulations in teacher education, web applications and the future of learning. Professor Gibson has also advanced the use of technology to personalize education via cognitive modeling, design and implementation</p> <p><a href="mailto:David.C.Gibson@curtin.edu.au">David.C.Gibson@curtin.edu.au</a></p>	
<p><b>Dr. Marguerite Dennis</b> is an internationally recognised expert in international student recruitment, enrolment and retention. She has more than 25 years of experience consulting with colleges and universities in the United States and around the world. She has been recruiting internationally for over 25 years, first at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and then at Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts. She was responsible for establishing a branch campus for Suffolk University in Dakar, Senegal and Madrid, Spain.</p> <p><a href="mailto:margueritedennis@gmail.com">margueritedennis@gmail.com</a></p>	

**Prof. Peter Lennie** is the Jay Last Distinguished University Professor at University of Rochester. He has been Executive Director of WUN since August 2018. Professor Lennie is a neuroscientist whose work has focused principally on early stage mechanisms of vision, and the encoding and transmission of information from the eye's retina to the primary visual cortex. His published work has contributed particularly to our understanding of how information about the color of objects is represented in the brain.  
[plennie@wun.ac.uk](mailto:plennie@wun.ac.uk)



**Prof. Toby Wilkinson** is Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Lincoln. His responsibilities include two of the university's four academic divisions and its group of five schools, curriculum development and online programmes, marketing and communications, and a wide range of local, regional and national partnerships. He leads on all aspects of internationalisation and, prior to joining the University of Lincoln, was the inaugural Director of International Strategy at the University of Cambridge.  
[TWilkinson@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:TWilkinson@lincoln.ac.uk)



**Dr. Roberta Malee-Bassett** is Global Lead for Tertiary Education and Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank, providing leadership and technical expertise for projects related to post-secondary education reform initiatives around the world. Her most recent work has focused on East and Southern Africa, the new EU member states, the Russian Federation, the South Caucasus, Central Asian nations, and the countries of the Western Balkans. She has been team lead for a variety of tertiary and higher education projects, spanning topics such as finance and quality assurance reform, internationalization of higher education, equity and access, research and competitiveness, and skills development.  
[rbassett@worldbank.org](mailto:rbassett@worldbank.org)



**Prof. Glen A. Jones** is Professor of Higher Education and Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. He is the author of more than 150 publications on Canadian and international higher education. His research and teaching focuses on higher education systems, governance, politics, and academic work. His most recent book, *International Education as Public Policy in Canada*, will be published by McGill-Queen's University Press in August, 2020. Other recent books include *Professorial Pathways: Academic Careers in a Global Perspective* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019) and *Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices* (Routledge, 2016). He has received numerous national and international awards for his scholarship, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Manitoba in 2018. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Oslo, Fudan University, the University of the West Indies, and Beijing Normal University.  
[glen.jones@utoronto.ca](mailto:glen.jones@utoronto.ca)



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COVID19taskforce@unesco.org



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