International Examples of Practice in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Overview

Introduction

As part of our work to support the higher education sector in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, QAA has created some webpages to illustrate international examples of practice.

Academic integrity

The continued academic integrity of assessments and examinations is important to the global higher education sector during this period of remote teaching. It is recognised that many institutions will be undertaking remote assessment and examinations (at an institutional scale) for the first time. At Deakin University in Australia, the Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE) has published a guide to support programme leaders in redesigning their assessment for online delivery.[8] The guide includes an outline of the latest research on academic integrity, assessment security and digital assessment. The guide notes the importance of focusing attention and resource on securing the integrity of final-year assessment, and the importance of educating students about the dangers of cheating and the benefits of academic integrity.

In Canada, the University of Calgary has produced a statement on academic integrity and developed a webinar on the academic integrity of online courses as a result of the pandemic.[9] The statement has four key elements: honesty, trust, responsibility and respect. It encourages open and authentic dialogue between staff and students to ensure that the rules of online assessment and examination are understood and adhered to. The University of Waterloo's Office of Academic Integrity has developed an informative webpage on academic integrity with resources for staff and students to ensure the integrity of remote assessment.[10]

Student and staff support

Many institutions have developed innovative approaches to support their student communities at this time. At the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) in the United States, the University sent text messages to all of its students to gather information on students' accessibility to appropriate technology or adequate internet connection.[11] Nearly 1,000 students replied toeplied to

staying productive and looking out for one's wellbeing while working from home.[13] Massey University's Te Putahi-a-Toi School of M ori Knowledge has developed four podcasts, which explore the M ori perspective on COVID-19 and whanau health. The podcasts cover the topics of 'Tapu and the healthful practices,' 'Maintaining balance in our hauora,' 'P r kau and T whirim tea explains respiratory issues,' and 'Time for wh nau ora check in?'[14]

For international students, who have had to return to their home country, restrictions on internet and access to university resources may create obstacles for their continued study. The University of Sydney in Australia has created a dedicated webpage to assist students living in China for them to access the University's resources online, including access to the University's virtual private network in China.[15] The dedicated webpage includes instructions and guides to downloading learning resources.

Planning for a resumption of in-person teaching

As some countries begin to ease restrictions on their populations' movements, universities have started to develop plans for resuming on-campus (or in-person) teaching and research. From the examples we have identified, common practice appears to be a slow, phased return to some on-campus teaching and research, which is scheduled and managed centrally. At Aalto University in Finland, remote working continues to be encouraged. Students and staff are able to use campus facilities for access to labs, workshops or small-scale, in-person teaching, where necessary, and this is managed through an institutional notification procedure and centrally-held schedule.[16] In New Zealand, the University of Otago has allowed, in exceptional circumstances, for some small groups of students to return to on-campus teaching, where online teaching is not possible. All classes or workshops approved for on-campus delivery are limited to 10 people. The University has set strict guidelines to ensure that these small teaching clusters do not interact with any other student/staff teaching clusters and maintain all physical distancing requirements.[17]

Further to this, universities in China have also seen steady progress towards resuming on-campus learning and teaching. On 23 April 2020, the University of Nottingham's Ningbo China campus announced plans for students to return to campus with all students back to face-to-face teaching by 4 May. Requirements for students will include daily updates on their

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