

Academic Institutions' Responses to COVID-19 Crisis

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The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has caused an unprecedented global crisis in recent human history. Academic institutions (universities, colleges, research centers, and national laboratories), home to thousands of students and employees across the world, have faced numerous challenges due to the lockdown measures imposed by governments. We ten early-career researchers (ECRs; five males, five female) from seven different countries, namely Australia, Austria, India, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States, came together to investigate the challenges and strategies adopted by various academic institutions to tackle the crisis.

The main aim of this study [1] was to highlight the possible ways academic institutions dealt with the global pandemic. We synthesized our findings based on publicly available reports and survey questionnaires. The study was conducted in collaboration with ECRs from various science and engineering disciplines; five out of ten ECRs are Geochemists.

Academic institutions had to tackle challenges independently within their capacity and available resources. Although every university had its own way of responding to the global pandemic, our study highlights the common challenges that universities faced and the strategies that have been implemented. The study also proposes a framework to facilitate better handling of such future crises at the organizational level. This study will enable any academic institution to build a fast-track system, which can support the operation and maintenance of the institution during an emergency.

[1] Biswakarma, J.; Rushworth, D.; Srivastava, G.; Singh, G.; Kang, K.; Das, S.; Anantharaman, S. B.; Aeppli, M.; Popp, A. L.; Bhuyan, D. J. (2021) Organizational level responses to the COVID-19 outbreak: challenges, strategies and framework for academic institutions, *Frontiers in Communication*.