

The University Experience 2020-21: Current Thoughts

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Introduction

In the UK, the process by which universities closed campuses in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic was for the most part sudden and brought with it the necessity of a rapid pivot to online teaching, meetings, student support, assessments and decision-making. Since then, a plethora of resources have been released – and continue to be released – reflecting upon lessons learned; seeking to address issues which were critical at specific moments (e.g. how to assess students in the summer of 2020); and looking ahead to September 2020 from a student perspective.

This document pulls together key points from, and reflections on, resources (particularly webinars) which focused specifically upon COVID-19 and the responses of universities to the pandemic. It by no means covers everything which is available as of now, and it does not offer solutions to every problem raised, but it will be updated on a monthly basis to reflect the most current thinking and resources. Aside from highlighting issues universities might consider, it also identifies a range of further resources to engage with on specific points. These are current as of 10th July 2020. Suggestions for additional points and/or materials would be most welcome from any readers.

Its focus is primarily on the 'surrounds' to teaching, rather than on online learning (e.g. how to conduct an online seminar), because other resources – such as training offered by most universities, tailored to their particular approaches to the delivery of teaching in 2020/21 and to the technology which they will be drawing upon – cover those practicalities.

Relationships, belonging and wellbeing

These issues are separately important but are also inherently interlinked: [positive psychology teaches us that we are more likely to be mentally well if we have a sense of relatedness to those around us](#), for example. I have therefore grouped these resources and reflections together. I have found it interesting to think of wellbeing as a campus public health issue, rather than seeing it as an individualised matter: if we see it as a campus public health issue, we can see the role that relationships, community, belonging and support services can play in maintaining it.

There are plenty of resources about creating an online community on a socially distanced campus, including from Advance HE, who have produced [this report on the induction, socialisation and engagement of students](#), and the Community of Inquiry model. The Chronicle of Higher Education released an excellent collection of accounts of how to support students during times of trauma, including reflections upon how universities responded to closures forced by Hurricane Katrina. You can sign up to get the free report [here](#). UKAT are also hosting a series of webinars which primarily focus upon personal tutoring and student engagement – more information [here](#).

Colleagues might find it beneficial to focus upon what they can control and influence, not only because that again is positive from a psychology perspective, but also because the more they can get excited about the possibilities for September 2020 then there more likely it is they can perform [deep acting, rather than surface acting](#). [This article](#) contains some other reasons why colleagues might embrace excitement about online teaching. However, this approach will only go so far in a broader environment which is not as supportive as possible, including in recognising and taking account of differential circumstances of colleagues (e.g. through workload provision).

Getting students' views

Whichever approach is taken to developing a community in a socially distanced campus, universities should build in opportunities to gain feedback from students about how *potential* approaches to digital learning and other online activities could work for them, as well as the opportunity to feedback on how *adopted* approaches are working – or not – for them. The [lived experience](#) of the students is important, and universities must not assume that they know what their students will be able to do, what they will have access to (in terms of technology, for example), or how they interact online. Getting feedback from students over summer (before approaches to be taken in September are finalised) and into the new term is simply the right thing to do ethically, but it also means that universities can better ensure quality of delivery, better decide on the allocation of resources (including beyond semester one), better maintain their community and reputations as places of excellence in learning and teaching, and better ensure equal opportunities between different types of students. Universities therefore need to ensure they have opportunities to get feedback from students on a very regular basis – this includes going beyond e.g. student reps, societies and the student union. There are existing surveys which can be used or adapted, [for example this sample survey from Michelle Packansky-Brock](#), which could be useful for gaining feedback from existing students or as part of the induction process.

Induction

Some universities are already suggesting that community-building activities should be as frontloaded as much as possible in order to make them more resilient to further peaks and troughs in the management of the virus: if there are further lockdowns

after a sense of community has been established amongst students, this would hopefully help with e.g. student performance (research shows that this is, in part, influenced by students' sense of belonging – see [this article](#) from the HE context, and [this article](#) from outside that context).

Advance HE, when speaking to applicants over Spring 2020, noted that the overriding emotion those applicants were experiencing was one of disappointment – the language they used when describing their entrance into university was in the past tense e.g. 'I was looking forward to this part of university...' and 'I thought I would be able to do this...' It is particularly important therefore to get across a sense of fun to new entrants, and to get across that tutors are human – this requires staff to be brave and honest, potentially about shared difficulties in the current situation. Fundamentally, universities need to begin by thinking about the purposes and principles of induction, and then decide what it should look like online.

Community: challenges and initiatives

How much communication?

Much of the literature around moving teaching online (whether entirely or as part of a hybrid approach) emphasises the importance of communicating regularly and often: this doesn't mean only communicating with students about the course and the academic work which needs to be done, but can also involve giving them an insight into who staff are. For new entrants in particular, this could mean staff (from professional support services, as well as academic tutors), and students sharing introductory videos, or using some other form of creative medium to learn more about each other (e.g. posters, cartoons...!). Another possibility might be to have forums for students to 'interview' teaching staff early on in modules – questions could be submitted in advance and staff could record their answers to them and upload them into the relevant module areas. Staff on module teams could also interview each other about their research and teaching, and what the module will cover.

One [Connecting Legal Education](#) session was dedicated to the Law student experience of online working thus far, and what they hoped for in 2020/21. Student panel members' practical suggestions relevant to this section included:

- Personal tutors holding a virtual, informal meeting at the beginning of the year to introduce students to the tutor and to each other. This could also be an opportunity to bring tutees across year groups together, so that new students could gain the perspectives of returning students.
- Live discussion boards related to lectures could be a way to interact during (assuming they are synchronous) or after lectures with other students, and would mean the module leader could clarify any specific points within those lectures while also building a relationship with the cohort.
- Communicating with students via a variety of means: one student participant recommended a blended approach of emails and online discussion spaces in order to be more likely to 'catch' those students who might miss emails, or who find it easier to go over questions in a more personalised way.

Finally, HEPI have recently published [this report](#) on the impact of COVID upon students' University experience, which includes some statistics about how well they feel they have been communicated with during the pandemic, as well as their expectations as far as next academic year are concerned.

Bridgette Bewick's research

Something to be mindful of as far as communication is concerned: Dr. Bridgette Bewick's LITE Fellowship, [Pedagogical wellbeing & the Leeds Curriculum](#) at the University of Leeds, collected data before and after the lockdown of the University's campus. Bewick's sense from the students she has interviewed since lockdown is that meaningful, tailored and authentic communication is seen as supportive, but more general communications which don't contain clear messages about the implications for them and

their programme are seen as less helpful. Generic emails that list support that 'some day' might be important aren't seen as helpful by most – this mirrors findings from the [Resilience Research Project](#) (see e.g. p15).

Forms of support

Universities already dedicate a lot of time, effort and resources to student support: 2020-21 is likely to see a need not only for support to take new forms, but also for additional support to be provided. Informal types of support which might be provided through, for example, off-the-cuff conversations between a student and a lecturer on the way back from a class, will be unlikely to occur at many universities come September, while at the same time students are likely to be experiencing additional challenges to their wellbeing brought about by the absence of face-to-face (F2F) contact (although it should be recognised that, for some, the online context could enhance wellbeing through, for example, greater flexibility in terms of learning provision, less time spent commuting, and a wider range of opportunities to engage with teaching materials other than, for example, verbal contribution to a class discussion).

During a recent Connecting Legal Education hangout, Dr. Emma Jones (now at Sheffield University, but formerly of the Open University), reflected upon wellbeing in online distance-based learning: there are reflections in her [blogpost](#) following the session, and fuller reflections in the [Law Teacher article](#) on which the session was based. A particularly interesting point to note from Emma's research into Open University student wellbeing: at least one research participant said they had not attended Law School, when of course they had (on a distance-based approach). This tells us something about what students might think of when they think of what a 'University experience' is, and how their identity and sense of place might differ in an online environment.

Some institutions have reflected upon the possibility of using contact hours in less traditional ways e.g. for some students at the Open University online coffee mornings are held (with staff) on specific themes, such as study skills. This proposal was met with enthusiasm at the aforementioned student panel-focused [Connecting Legal Education](#) event, with one student suggesting the informality would mean such contact time was less likely to be intimidating than other forms. The students also noted that it might be beneficial to have several time options in order to cater for those in different time zones, or that student reps could be encouraged to work with smaller groups from specific locations.

Following our Resilience Research Project, Sarah Humphreys and I developed and delivered resilience workshops: one of the lessons which we took from those (and which I understand has been taken from specific support groups within universities e.g. those for students with disabilities), is that students value knowing that they are not the only ones experiencing certain issues, and knowing that they are not alone. One initiative might therefore be to create more such support groups – being careful not to create a narrative of deficiency – but with student input: again, universities cannot assume they know what students need or want.

Support might also be gained from groups which students join because of shared interests e.g. the [first year Film and Book club](#) established at the School of Law at Leeds after campus closed.

Finally, the [Connecting People](#) approach might be a useful one to adopt within personal tutoring support mechanisms: premised on the research-based notion that social connections aid mental and physical wellbeing, it provides a starting point for discussions between staff members and students. It is a simple, visual process which could be of broader use within personal tutoring, not just applicable to students who have been identified, or have self-identified, as struggling. The Implementation Toolkit is available to download from [here](#).

Online power dynamics

Online dialogues run the risk of creating new hierarchies (amongst staff and amongst students): this can be due to e.g. differing levels of confidence in an online setting; confidence in revealing your own face; confidence in revealing your background because of what it can reveal about your personal circumstances – this is discussed further under ‘Academic Considerations.’

Colleagues need to proactively ensure that discussions are not dominated by the same students (and colleagues!) all of the time (for example, by choosing spokespeople from teaching breakout spaces in deliberately randomised ways – in some recent School of Law [Community Engagement](#) training, we asked students who had the closest birthday or who usually lived furthest from the Liberty Building to be spokespeople for breakout space discussions). Colleagues must also give thought to what seminar participation actually means in a digital world – see ‘Academic Considerations’ – and how e.g. the MS Teams chat function can be used in a way which is accessible to all.

University bubbles

[Bubbles have received lots of attention](#): depending upon how they are defined and used (e.g. extending to study groups within Halls, or just to seminars), the benefits and implications of them will vary. They could be an excellent community-building mechanism, but we also know, for example, that shared accommodation is already a challenge for many students – this was an unexpected theme from the [Resilience Research Project](#) (see e.g. p43) – and bubbles (with the associated intensity of connections with a small group of students) are likely to exacerbate those challenges (assuming the bubbles extend to e.g. halls of residence). Consideration would also need to be given to ensuring that students who do not live on campus, or who live alone in university accommodation which has been adapted for those with additional needs, do not miss out on communities as a result of not being in residence bubbles.

Equality and Inclusion

What do we mean by a 'safe' campus?

Most of us are not accustomed to making life and death decisions: that is what we are now doing. When we talk about campus only returning to socially-distanced activities in a 'safe' way, what do we mean? Universities can act in accordance with government guidance, of course, but that does not mean that campus will feel safe to every student or staff member. Some students and colleagues might be clinically advised not to resume F2F activities (particularly if there are e.g. further spikes in infection rates); others will not receive such clinical advice but will have concerns about being on campus due to e.g. [what is currently known about the way the virus impacts upon some people more than others](#); because they wish to shield those they live with who are clinically additionally vulnerable; or because they are living within multigenerational households. Although a return to F2F activities on campus (teaching or otherwise) should only be done in a socially distanced way and in line with government guidance at the time, [it should be kept in mind that being able or allowed to do so does not mean everyone will feel comfortable in doing so](#) and that research is ongoing into the measures which might best be taken to protect the health of all on campus – see, for example, [this paper](#) and [this one](#).

Policy decisions around public safety are regularly taken on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis, of course, but they ordinarily rely upon an ability to correctly assess both the costs and benefits to whatever decision is being made. As far as COVID-19 is concerned, [the costs in terms of long-term health complications are not yet fully known](#), which makes this sort of analysis particularly difficult. This does not necessarily mean that universities should not return to F2F activities until there is e.g. a vaccine, but 'known unknowns' must not be overlooked – basing such decisions on economic modelling alone will disproportionately affect those who bear the brunt of the virus.

In running F2F activities of any kind (teaching or otherwise), universities are arguably not asking every student to bear the same risk. Although the same is true of staff, the context for staff who are at greater risk does not mirror that of students who are at greater risk. Staff will – presumably – be accommodated through e.g. continuing to work at home, with arguably negligible personal consequences (although, of course, most would much prefer to be able to have in-person contact with their students and to feel part of that community). If a student for example feels at greater risk, or is actually at greater risk, what are the consequences for them? They will be missing out on social aspects of their degree, on activities designed to increase their sense of community and belonging ([when at least some of those who might have particular reasons for being apprehensive of coming onto campus are, statistically speaking, those students who are most likely to not feel part of a University community](#) (p.18)), and on different learning opportunities. It is therefore important that on-campus activities are run off-campus as well, regardless of the motivation behind them, and that these differences between students are acknowledged. Those students who are not able to be on campus, or who feel more at risk because of what we now know about the virus, must not be relegated to the 'other' outside of the 'most' who can take part in such F2F activities, whether overtly or implicitly – it will be important to use inclusive language when communicating with all students, for example. See [this](#) as a good example of comms.

Other challenges around the return to F2F activities

Universities must also recognise those students who have caring responsibilities for their own children, or for younger siblings. With [Unions indicating the full-time return of children to schools might not be feasible, with the potential for children to be sent home at short notice in the event of an viral outbreak, with the possibility of wraparound care being unavailable or more restricted](#), and [with full details of Government's strategy for schoolchildren to 'catch up' on missed work still be confirmed](#), students with caring responsibilities for children will likely be required to balance even more caring responsibilities with their studies than usual.

Further considerations

- One webinar I attended in June was contributed to by a Black Professor at a US University, who noted that the move to online teaching meant she was now potentially not as visible to her students as she had been previously. She noted that, although her students would still be expected to e.g. watch her lectures, this did not mean they would physically see her (e.g. the lectures might play in the background while they looked at other materials, or they might deliberately turn the video off and only listen). She noted the critical importance of all students seeing people of colour teaching them, particularly in institutions such as hers (where she and other Black Professors were very much in the minority), and explained that she had modified her module so that students had to meet with her online in order to gain credit.
- As far as technology is concerned, universities should survey students to see what they do or don't have access to (e.g. stable wifi) and see what they need to be supported in their learning – otherwise, there is the potential to compound existing structural inequalities. One key question should be, are we (within universities) perpetuating unnecessary challenges which disadvantage some students more than others, including in terms of mental wellbeing? Universities should identify the most vulnerable groups and leave nobody behind by centring their approach around them and using an inclusion lens to taking decisions – see [this article](#) for further potential principles, including being transparent around decision-making and committing to doing no more harm than that already being experienced due to COVID.
- Are we asking all the people we need to the right questions? We need to acknowledge our blind spots and adopt a [person-centred approach](#). When we are making decisions quickly and in times of stress, we are more likely to make decisions with our [unconscious bias](#) in place – consultation and evaluation are desirable and necessary to keep this in check as much as we can.
- Universities need to be mindful of the fact that community-building activities are not necessarily 'neutral' as far as inclusivity is concerned e.g. quizzes can be premised on shared cultural experiences and understanding, and it will be very easy to lose those students who are more likely to feel 'othered' within a university setting (even F2F).

Student Engagement

What do we mean by engagement, and how might we do it in 2020/21?

Engagement isn't the same as entertainment- this is a common misconception, but it's a false equivalence to claim it is. Engagement means being involved and interested in the work – how should colleagues interest students in the material, [how should they make it come to life for them at a computer?](#) Students will most likely turn up hoping courses will help them to navigate the current world and to understand it better: engage them by making it relevant to them.

It is worth remembering that even F2F student engagement is not a given, but there are different hurdles to overcome online. The Chronicle of Higher Education has a useful resource '[How to make your teaching more engaging](#)', and of course a lot can be learned about how to engage students and form relationships with them from e.g. our collective experiences in forming relationships on social media.

In one webinar which I attended on this subject, it was recommended that universities consider still having active learning and content online (e.g. lectures and other resources) even once F2F teaching returns, and perhaps restricting F2F activities to teaching-related questions e.g. extended academic support hours; and broader community-building activities. This could help with a pivot back entirely online in the event of another lockdown.

'A Handbook for Student Engagement in Higher Education: Theory into Practice' (edited by Tom Lowe and Yassein El Hakim, 2020) has recently been published: a future update to this report will draw upon that text.

Academic considerations

Technology

Student views

Universities may need to change the narrative around online teaching from that which has developed within sections of the media, and in light of some of the experiences students might have had at e.g. college, or in the lockdown period pre-Easter – what universities were offering then was a 'quick and dirty' pivot; what is offered in September will obviously need to be more sophisticated. Data from post-lockdown suggests that [only 7% of University students think the technology UK universities are using is 'advanced'](#) (p.56) even where that includes e.g. Blackboard, Adobe Creative, lecture capture, Panopto, R Studio and SPSS. Those students who believe they're taught using advanced technology perceive their experience to be better – they're more likely to say they would choose the same university, to say they have learned a lot, that it was good value for money, that they value the skills taught at university, and that they believe technology is important to learning (p.57).

A student panel member at a recent JISC event noted that, in her experience from Spring 2020 term, online learning tends to link to pre-existing resources such as e.g. YouTube, or resources hosted by other universities. She reflected that it would be good to see her own university preparing some of these themselves (which would presumably be linked to an increased sense of belonging / 'value for money').

Synchronous small group sessions

Colleagues, workloads and timetables need to factor in allowances for the fact that everything takes much longer online than in person e.g. if you're asking students to go into breakout spaces, they will take their time to find those; to introduce themselves; to do the work; and to return to the 'main group' setting. Time also needs to be factored in for glitches, such as somebody's internet going down and them re-joining.

Assessment and feedback

[This student perspective on assessment types](#) is an excellent resource focused on potential assessment types. Universities will also need to think about feedback mechanisms – given how much additional teaching and assessment is going to be done online in 2020/21 (with the associated concerns about sitting at computers for lengthy periods of time), how can we reduce the amount of time the feedback takes? Recommendations from a recent Advance HE webinar included (again) going with feedback pedagogy and not technology as the starting point; establishing a social presence for feedback through e.g. video and audio feedback (video can add nuance, rapport, give social presence – see e.g. [this article](#)); exploring [peer feedback](#) as a way of creating community; and [developing feedback literacy](#) on the part of the students.

Learning from others

It was suggested in one webinar that Schools can consider trialing activities through pathways programmes, although the best approach would surely be to deliver the best possible quality programme to those students, which colleagues would be expecting to deliver to larger September cohorts, and to aim to tweak – not entirely reform – ahead of September (in order to ensure

pathways students are not treated as guinea pigs whose experience does not matter). At Leeds, and no doubt other institutions, the Language Centre has a great deal of experience of online delivery to the summer languages students – their experience can be drawn upon, for example.

A number of webinars have advocated designing the 2020/21 teaching with students: they need to be consulted about what they want, and why, and what will/won't work (keeping in mind that there will be pedagogical justifications for doing some things which they do not want!). Qualitative research could be particularly important here: focusing upon the lived experiences of students, rather than on (or solely on) blunt quantitative metrics, will give universities rich data to evaluate their planned provision, and their delivered provision. Conducting research could, of course, necessitate making a decision fairly quickly if university ethics requirements are to be met.

Community of Inquiry approach

A recent Connecting Legal Education session focused upon the [Community of Inquiry](#) approach and, specifically, [this article by Fiock](#). In brief, the Community of Inquiry approach aims to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful and posits that learning experiences are at their most meaningful when three types of presence are developed: teaching presence, cognitive presence and social presence. Fiock's article discusses ways in which online environments might be developed specifically to create these presences, as well as to satisfy seven principles of good practice for the online learning environment (including student-teacher contact, active learning and co-operation between students). Fiock provides an extensive list of suggested ways to foster this desired environment and to meet those principles – this would be an excellent starting point to think about online activities from induction through to assessment and feedback.

One example which arguably fits well within the CoI framework was given in an Advance HE: Active Digital Design webinar. Here it was suggested, by the University of Surrey, that it was useful for students to have weekly maps for their online learning which explain what they have in each module each week (in terms of classes), and what they need to do for those classes. It was suggested it was helpful to have these weekly maps alongside overall module maps which give the student an overview of what the module is about (it was suggested graphics could be particularly useful in conveying these messages quickly, although accessibility is a consideration here). When designing the online learning environment, it was suggested colleagues think firstly about template and content (structured module design template and a consistent approach to embedded content); then about supporting visuals (conceptual module maps with weekly module maps; use of images for content e.g. weekly agendas, activities, narratives); then learning icons (integrated learning icons on the VLE and across all learning materials e.g. might have an assessment icon which is integrated into materials where relevant); narratives (guided, scaffolded learning and hyperlinked content); and finally learning resource sets (sets of bite-size videos, and deeper learning materials such as learning activities, and articles scaffolded with narratives). All these points link to the CoI framework – they help the students to cognitively engage with materials.

Other principles and factors to take into consideration

- Start with the premise that any problems are problems with people, not technology - good practice is good practice, good teaching is good teaching, regardless of the setting in which it occurs.
- Colleagues are now more used to do everything online than students are, even those students who had some online teaching prior to summer: most colleagues have become more accustomed to using e.g. MS Teams, Zoom, whereas most students have not yet had such extensive experience. Universities need to build students' digital skills before attempting to delve into the academic side of things with them. In one webinar, for example, a representative of one

university referred to the fact they had surveyed students and asked them one thing they wanted the University to do: the most common by far was to provide baseline training and support on the tools needed for the course.

- Universities will need to be even more proactive in discussing spam and how to avoid it, because of the consequences for students' education where learning opportunities are being delivered online if e.g. their accounts are temporarily suspended.
- Workload planning has to take account of the fact staff are spending more time uploading, recording, revising materials etc – this was one lesson learned at the Chinese campus for the University of Nottingham, which re-opened in Spring 2020. Another lesson was the critical need to commit to constantly reassess everything done. How do we know if online delivery is going well? To return to an earlier theme: mechanisms need to be in place to get feedback from a range of students.
- Universities shouldn't assume the COVID-19 situation will improve on a linear basis – this has implications for e.g. not simply pushing all practical assessment back to a later point in the academic year.
- Students who have come through Foundation years or who are returning to university as mature learners will likely have particular needs, [especially as far as tech is concerned](#).
- [We already know that \(nationally\) BAME students, particularly those who are Black, are more likely to report disappointment with university and to report that they would choose an alternative path to university if they were choosing again](#) (p.28-29): this is something universities must pay attention to when considering how inclusive teaching provision is generally, and specifically in the online arena in 2020/21.
- Many colleagues are accustomed to giving guidance and/or notice around sensitive topics during F2F teaching: experience from other universities tells us that the online mode of delivery can have a really profound effect upon those who don't have a support structure around them. We must be alert to the trauma which can be associated with teaching and learning certain topics and ensure students are sufficiently aware that these discussions will take place, as well as consider how to offer support (potentially not relying upon the student 'leaning in'). In F2F contact colleagues might notice that a student has struggled with a particular topic e.g. due to facial expressions during seminars, or suddenly leaving a lecture – in an online context, these opportunities will not be present.
- Colleagues will need agreement on what is meant by seminar participation in the online context: online learning can be more inclusive and welcoming than F2F learning for some, but it can also throw up barriers to participation e.g. the risk of talking over each other (or actually doing so) can be extremely off-putting; in the absence of activities to create a sense of community, unfamiliarity with other participants and wariness of getting things wrong (which are, of course, also experienced in the F2F context); it is not as easy to encourage participation through eye contact, or through moving through groups on a table by table approach (as you might do in a F2F context). On a related note, policies on the use of cameras during synchronous teaching could be beneficial. I would err on the side of not requiring a camera to be on at all times during the class. Although this can be one way of checking that students are engaging with the work, and can also be less off putting than looking at blank squares and waiting for someone to answer a question, I'm unsure the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. There are many reasons a student might wish to, or need to, keep their camera off during a class, including:
 - Bandwidth issues.
 - Concerns about what their home working environment might reveal about them, their family, or their broader circumstances: although many students (and colleagues!) will have carefully curated backgrounds, some students will not be in a position to do this, and may also be surrounded by other family members during their classes. This takes us back to the earlier point about online social hierarchies.

- Anxiety about being watched by a whole class in a way which would be less likely to occur in a F2F environment: although a student might be looked at if answering a question in that context, it would be rare for them to feel as if their face was on show throughout.
- The fact that it is distracting to most people to have a sea of faces looking at them when they're trying to engage with work.

Careers and employability

[The student panel on the aforementioned Connecting Legal Ed hangout](#) suggested that communication from potential law employers had been very good in some cases, and where it had been more variable there was a recognition that this was most likely due to the fact that this situation is new to everyone. It should also be noted that the Bar came in for particular praise from some student participants e.g. [Zoom school](#), which was made widely available (including to those who did not already have pupillages planned). Nevertheless, they did reflect upon missed opportunities – in some cases – to gain work experience. Providing students with opportunities to work out which skills they have, which they are lacking, and providing them with opportunities to develop those skills which they are lacking through e.g. online courses around emotional intelligence, resilience etc will be one way of at least mitigating the effect of them having work experience cancelled.

[The Advance HE and HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey 2020](#) shows that students see the right kind of work experience as critical to their future, above focusing on getting the best degree possible (p.52). Universities need to do what they can to maintain opportunities such as volunteering activities which will help students to enhance their CV in a time when gaining working experience will have been, and will continue to be, challenging.

Links

General resources

Advance HE have put together a range of resources to assist during COVID-19: some of these are reflections upon past issues, some are looking ahead <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/advance-he-membership-benefits/resources-support-you-during-covid-19-pandemic#socialdistancing>

Advance HE [Creating Socially Distanced Campuses and Education](#) project

[Advance HE and HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey 2020](#)

Doherty, Michael; Bleasdale, Lydia and Flint, Emma [Law student perspectives on responding to the Covid-19 crisis](#)

Relationships, Belonging and Wellbeing

ACHA *Guidelines* 'Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era' (focused upon technical aspects of safety across campus – a search will come up with the PDF)

Bewick, Bridgette [Pedagogical wellbeing & the Leeds Curriculum](#)

Bleasdale, Lydia and Humphreys, Sarah [Resilience Research Project](#)

British Council [East Asia Watch: Chinese universities begin the return to campus, but with some major changes – what can UK universities learn from them?](#)

Connecting People [Toolkit](#)

Darby, Flower [Sorry Not Sorry: Online Teaching Is Here to Stay](#)

Dickinson, Jim ['What does it mean to offer a full student experience this September?'](#)

Dickinson, Jim [If we must reopen campuses, we musn't waste them on teaching](#)

Freeman, Tierra M. , Anderman, Lynley H. & Jensen, Jane M. (2007) [Sense of Belonging in College Freshmen at the Classroom and Campus Levels, The Journal of Experimental Education, 75:3, 203-220](#)

Furrer, Carrie and Skinner, Ellen ['Sense of Relatedness as a Factor in Children's Academic Engagement and Performance' *Journal of Educational Psychology* 2003, Vol. 95, No. 1, 148–162](#)

Hewitt, Rachel [Students' views on the impact of Coronavirus on their higher education experience](#)

Jones, Emma, Samra, Rajvinder. & Lucassen, Mathijs (2019) [The world at their fingertips? The mental wellbeing of online distance-based law students, The Law Teacher, 53:1, 49-69](#)

Jones, Emma [Connecting Legal Education: Wellbeing of online distance learning students](#)

Morgan, Kate [Forget 'Fake it Til You Make It'—Try This Instead](#)

Pacansky-Brock, Michelle [Getting to Know You Survey](#)

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