



HOW UNIVERSITIES ARE ADDRESSING THE **CORONAVIRUS** CRISIS AND MOVING FORWARD

Discover how universities are preparing for the upcoming academic year and adapting their strategies to address the ripple effects of the coronavirus crisis.

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<https://www.qs.com/contact/>



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Introduction

The coronavirus crisis has impacted both students and universities alike, posing complex and unprecedented challenges to the higher education sector.

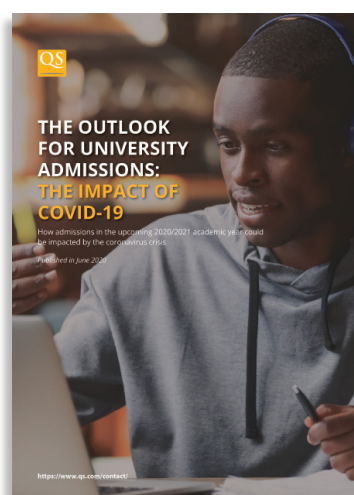
In previous analysis, QS has offered continuous coverage of its coronavirus student survey, exploring how prospective international students are responding to the crisis, changing their study plans, adjusting their attitudes towards online learning, and a range of other areas.

In this report, QS will explore the latest findings from its coronavirus university survey, pulled the 14 July, delving into how higher education institutions and the professionals that work within them are addressing the new normal.

This will cover the initiatives that universities are implementing to respond to the crisis and keep students and staff safe; the impact the crisis has had on their recruitment efforts; when they expect that they will reopen campuses; and what support they expect from their government.

Read on to discover the key findings from the QS coronavirus university survey and the insights your institution will need in the upcoming academic year.

Student survey analysis:



This white paper reveals when prospective international students ideally want to start their studies, when those seeking to study in 2020 predict they will start their studies, and how open they would be to studying online.



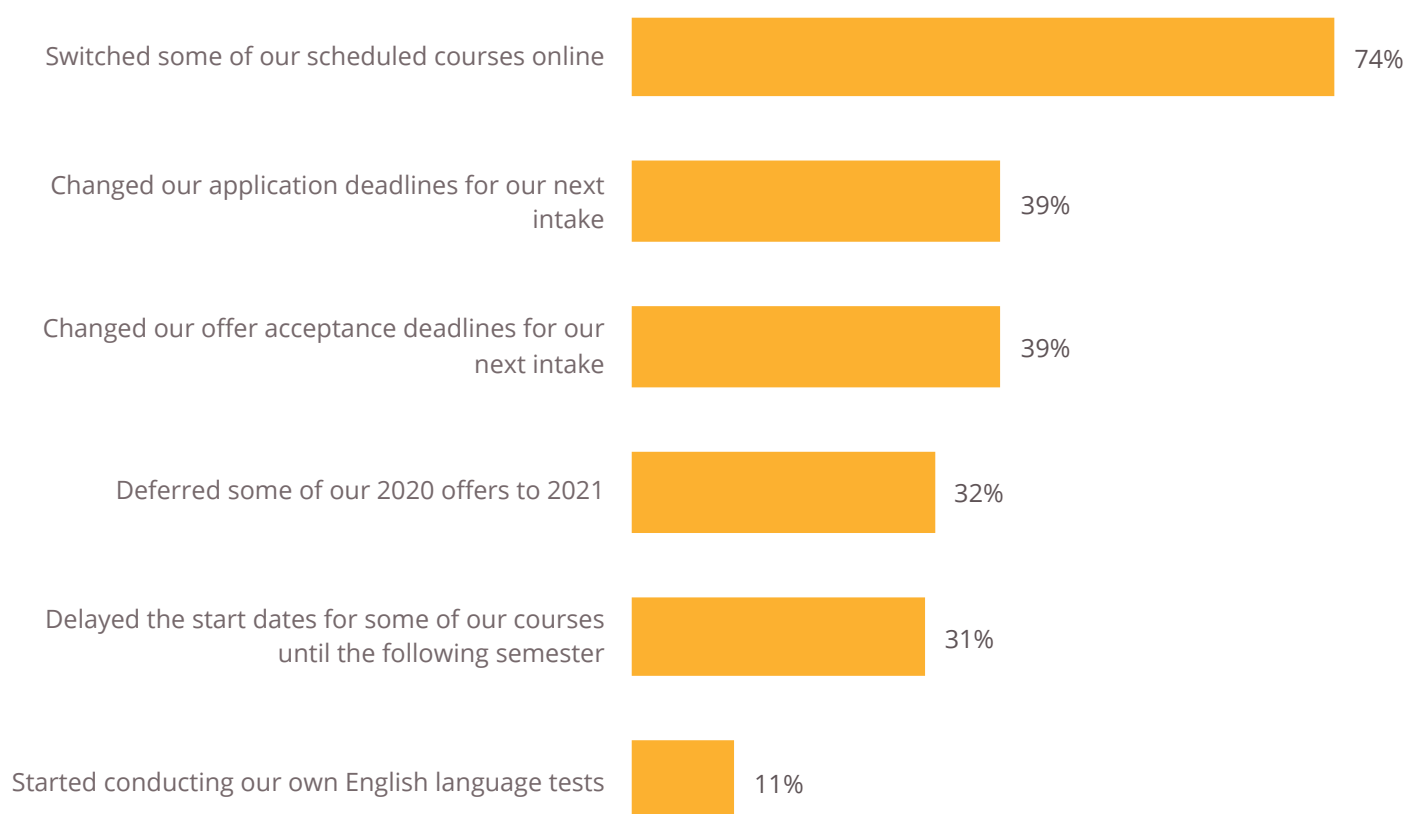
This report explores how universities will reopen in the coming months and ensure the safety of students and staff, including proposed strategies from institutions across the globe.

How are universities responding to the coronavirus crisis?

Higher education institutions across the globe were quick to adapt to the new normal, moving classes and administrative tasks online and adjusting application processes.

To delve into this further, QS asked the respondents in its coronavirus university survey what initiatives they have implemented in response to the coronavirus.

Has your institution responded to the coronavirus in any of the following ways?



Unsurprisingly, the majority of universities (74%) had switched some of their scheduled courses online. This aligns with findings from the accompanying coronavirus survey of prospective international students which found that 49% of respondents expect universities to move more of their lectures online. Interestingly, a larger percentage (59%) also expect institutions to hold lectures and seminars in larger rooms to minimize close contact in larger gatherings.

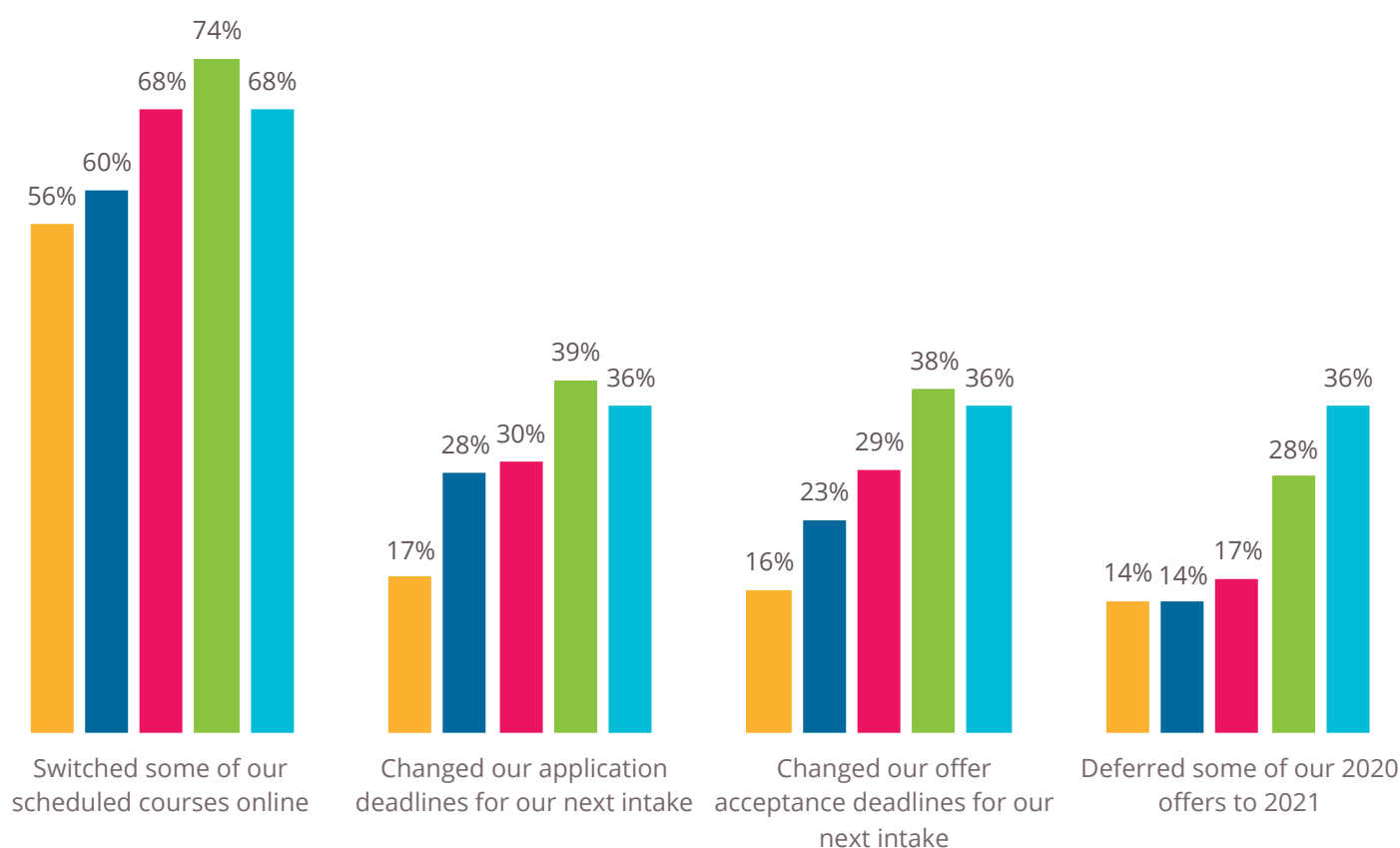
In the chart above, 39% of surveyed universities had changed their application deadlines and their offer acceptance deadlines for their next intake.

A significant minority had also deferred some of their 2020 offers to 2021 (32%) and delayed the start dates for some of their courses until the following semester (31%).

Interestingly, only 11% of universities had started conducting their own English language tests, which may be due to the rising popularity of English language mobile applications like Duolingo to assess English language proficiency.

To assess how universities have adjusted their response to the coronavirus crisis as it has escalated, QS compiled trended data from its university survey.

Has your institution responded to the coronavirus in any of the following ways?



As the chart above details, more institutions have switched their courses online as the coronavirus crisis has developed. Interestingly, there was a dip from 74% in June to 68% in July (data pulled 14 July), suggesting that institutions may be starting to move some courses back to face-to-face teaching as campuses begin to reopen in the upcoming academic year.

It is also clear that more and more institutions are relaxing their application and offer acceptance deadlines to give prospective students more time and flexibility.

Additionally, it is important to note the proportion of institutions deferring some of their 2020 offers to 2021 has more than doubled in the last five months, with 14% of institutions doing so in March and a staggering 36% doing so in July.

What ripples effects do universities expect for international student recruitment?

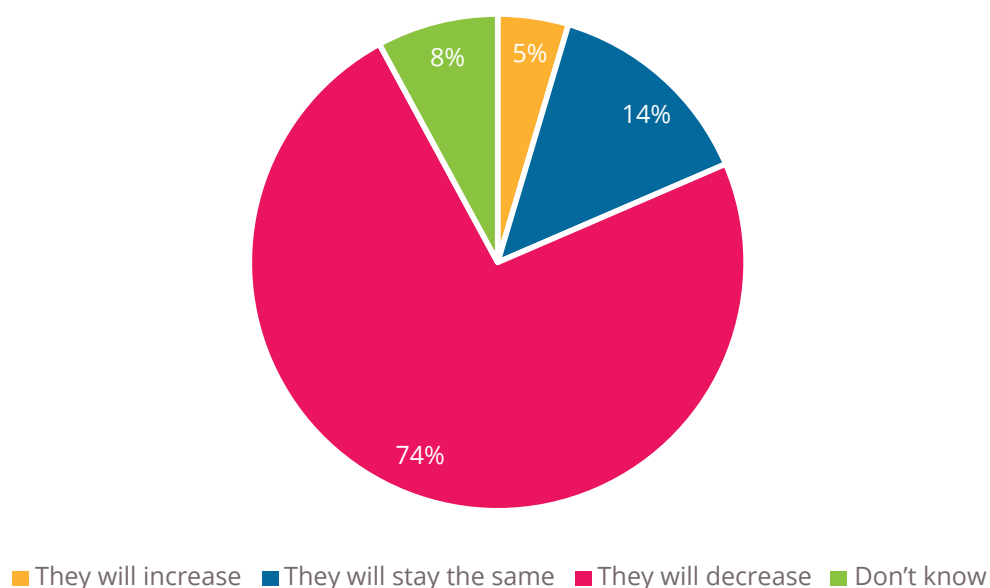
While many countries are seeing promising downward trends in case numbers, it is clear that the coronavirus crisis will be a fixture in our lives for some time to come.

Universities are now facing an upcoming academic year that potentially consists of a blended learning approach, combining online learning with restricted, socially distanced face-to-face teaching.

These changes, coupled with global travel restrictions and reduced mobility, may result in significant reductions to international student recruitment numbers.

In the QS coronavirus survey of universities, respondents were asked to reveal how they think international student recruitment applications will be impacted by the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

How do you expect the coronavirus to affect the number of international student recruitment applications at your institution?



With 74% of respondents stating that they think international student recruitment applications will decrease and only 5% stating that they will increase, it is clear that universities are not optimistic about their international student numbers for the year ahead.

When asked why they think international student applications will decrease, respondents pointed to a range of reasons that could play a part.

Why do you think international student applications will decrease at your institution?



The three top reasons that were highlighted by respondents were that international students will be unable to travel to their country (74%), international students will be afraid to travel (72%), and international students will defer their studies (66%).

Interestingly, a significant minority of 30% of respondents stated that they think international students will want to go to countries which have responded better than theirs.

In recent reporting on the QS coronavirus survey of prospective international students, 54% of respondents had reconsidered where they want to study overseas based on how different governments have handled the coronavirus crisis.

When asked which countries had handled the coronavirus best, 28% of prospective international students chose New Zealand, 12% chose China, 9% chose Germany, and 8% chose South Korea.

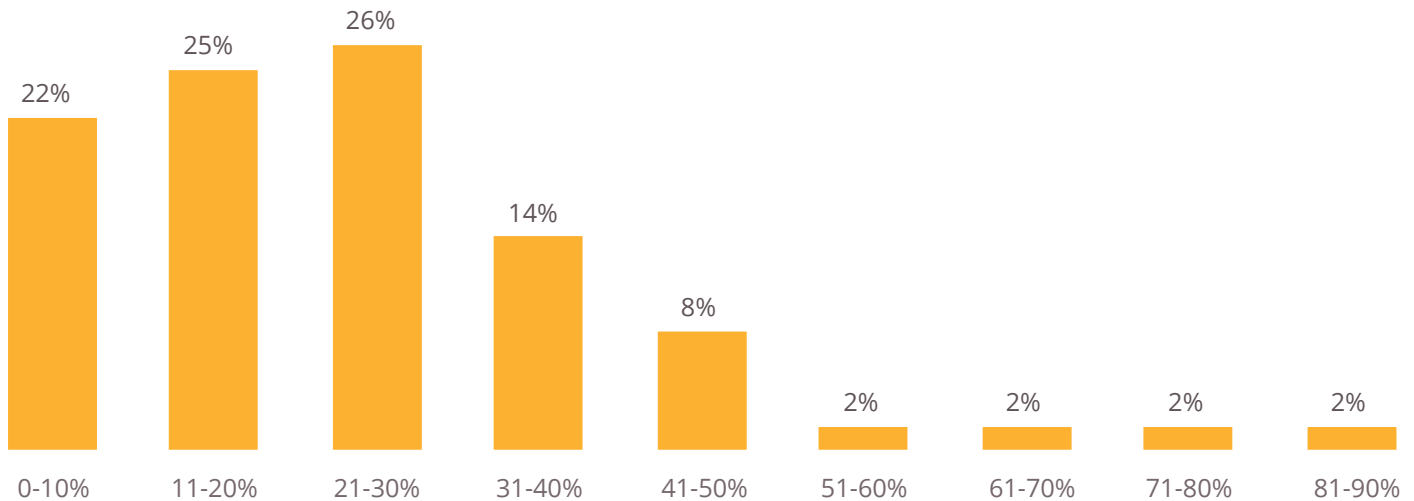
It is important to note that only a minority thought that the US or the UK had handled the crisis well, with only 2% selecting each country.

When asked why they chose New Zealand, one respondent said: *"When the number of infected people was still relatively low, New Zealand implemented strict measures to contain the spread, thus sacrificing the economy, which enabled them to restart the economy earlier than other countries."*

Another respondent stated that: *"New Zealand handled it swift and tough. They were also able to communicate effectively with their constituents. Most importantly, they prioritized their testing capability. It was the epitome of good governance and displayed how the use of brute force and violence was never an option."*

In the university survey, QS asked respondents to reveal the proportion of their prospective international students which they predict will seek out study in other countries, due to their response to the coronavirus.

What proportion of your international students do you think will go to other countries?

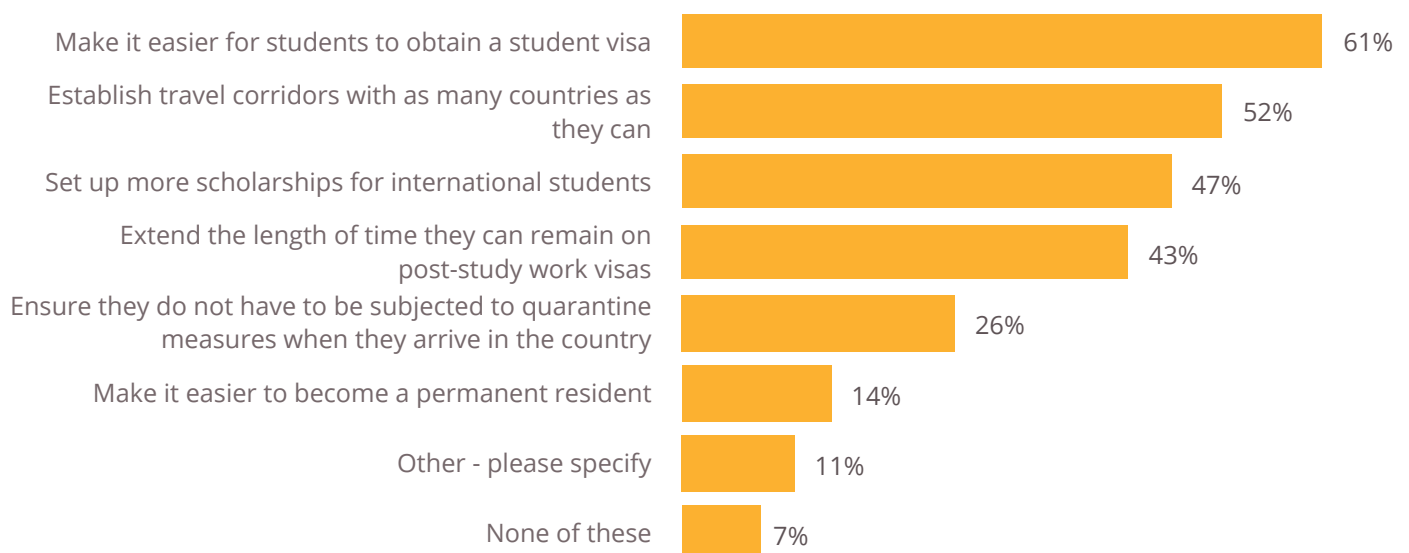


From the responses, it is clear that the majority of universities believe that up to 30% of their prospective international students could go to another country due to the coronavirus.

A minority of 14% of respondents believe it could be up to 40%, while only a very slight minority believe that it could be over 50%.

In terms of what they expect from their governments to address these negative forecasts, universities are hoping to see swift action when it comes to visas and travel corridors.

Which of the following should your government do to encourage international students to come to the country?

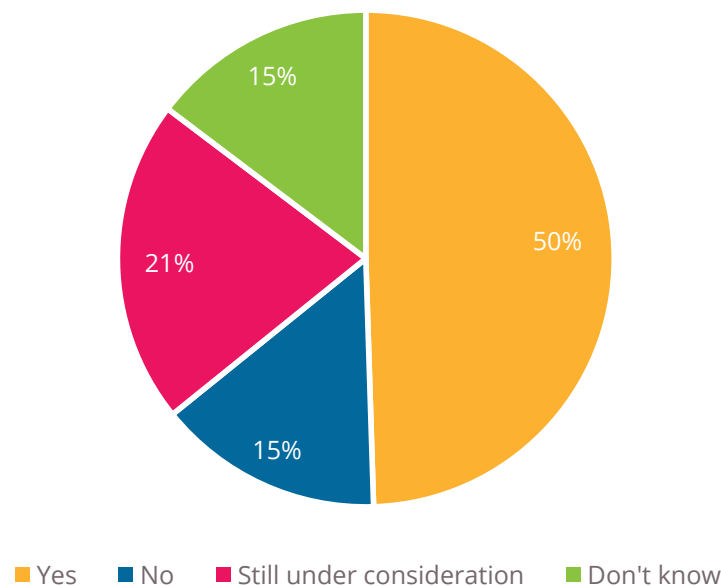


How are they adapting their student recruitment tactics to address these ripple effects?

Universities are also taking proactive steps to address and mitigate these forecasts and encourage strong recruitment numbers for the upcoming academic year.

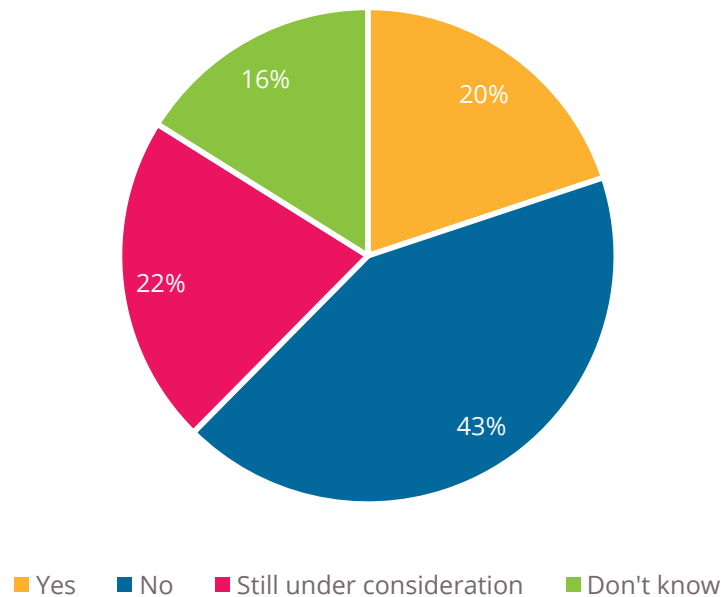
According to the QS coronavirus university survey, 50% of respondents are seeking to diversify the source countries they use for recruiting international students, with a further 21% of respondents still considering their options.

Is your institution looking to diversify the source countries from which you recruit international students?



Additionally, universities are considering their language test requirements and how they enforce them in the upcoming academic year, with 20% of respondents stating that they will admit international students who have not completed language tests and 22% still considering it.

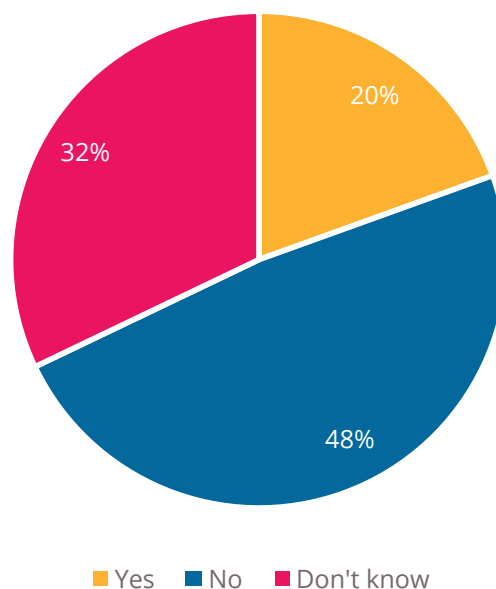
Will you be admitting international students who have not undertaken language tests (due to exams being cancelled)?



Universities are also considering whether to allow tuition fee discounts if teaching begins online in the new academic year.

This comes after recent research from QS revealed that 78% of surveyed prospective international students expect discounted tuition fees if beginning their studies online.

Is your institution considering discounting fees for new international students if they have to start their studies online?



A significant minority of 20% of respondents state that they are considering discounting fees for new international students, 32% are unsure, and 48% are not considering it at all.

While universities are exploring a range of recruitment tactics to mitigate the ripple effects of the coronavirus crisis, it is important to examine how education can be delivered safely in the new academic year.

When do universities predict that they will reopen campuses and what will this look like?

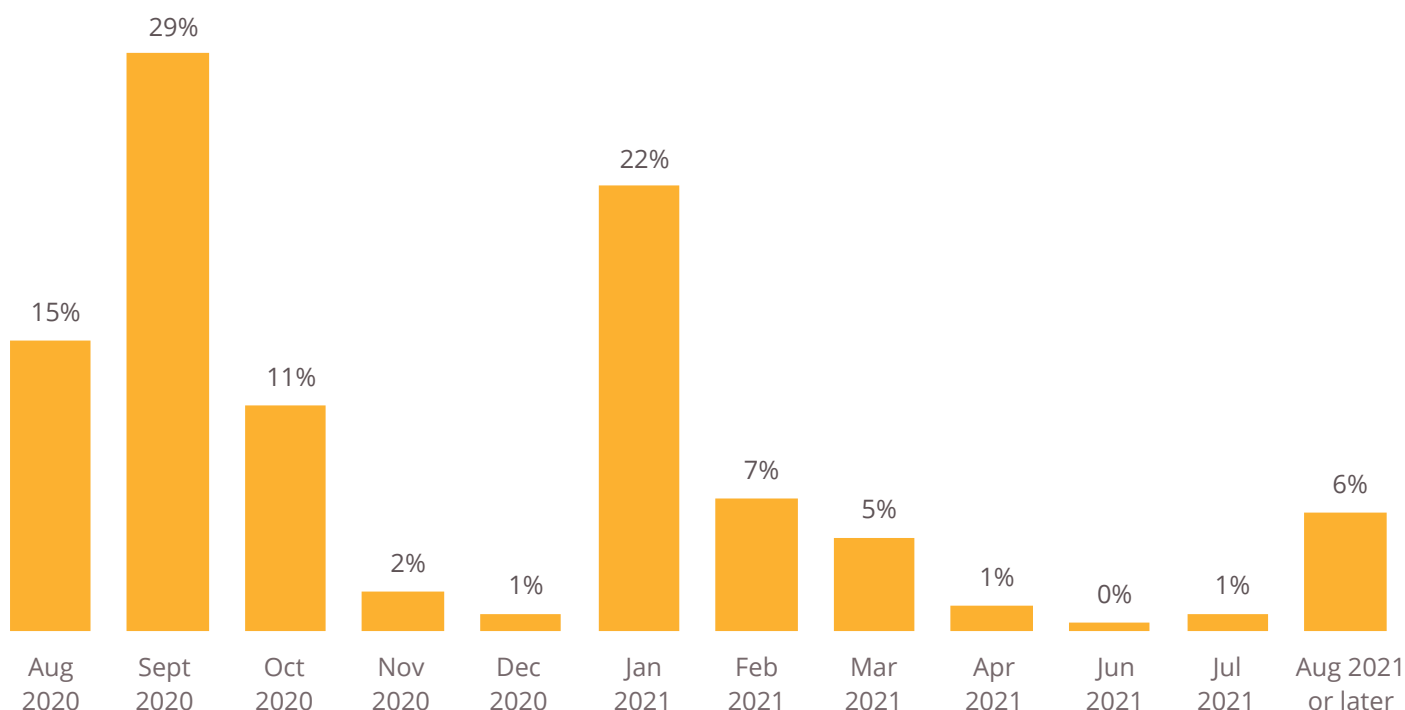
In previous reporting, QS has examined how universities are preparing to reopen campuses and deliver education in the upcoming academic year.

These initiatives ranged from staggered class times to protective bubbles for class cohorts, temperature checks, social distancing markers, and many other proposed policies.

To discover more information on this, please download our June report; [How Universities can Support and Protect Prospective and Current Students in the Upcoming Academic Year](https://www.qs.com/support-students-upcoming-academic-year) (available at www.qs.com/support-students-upcoming-academic-year).

In the QS coronavirus survey of universities, respondents were asked when they expect their main campus will be fully reopened to students.

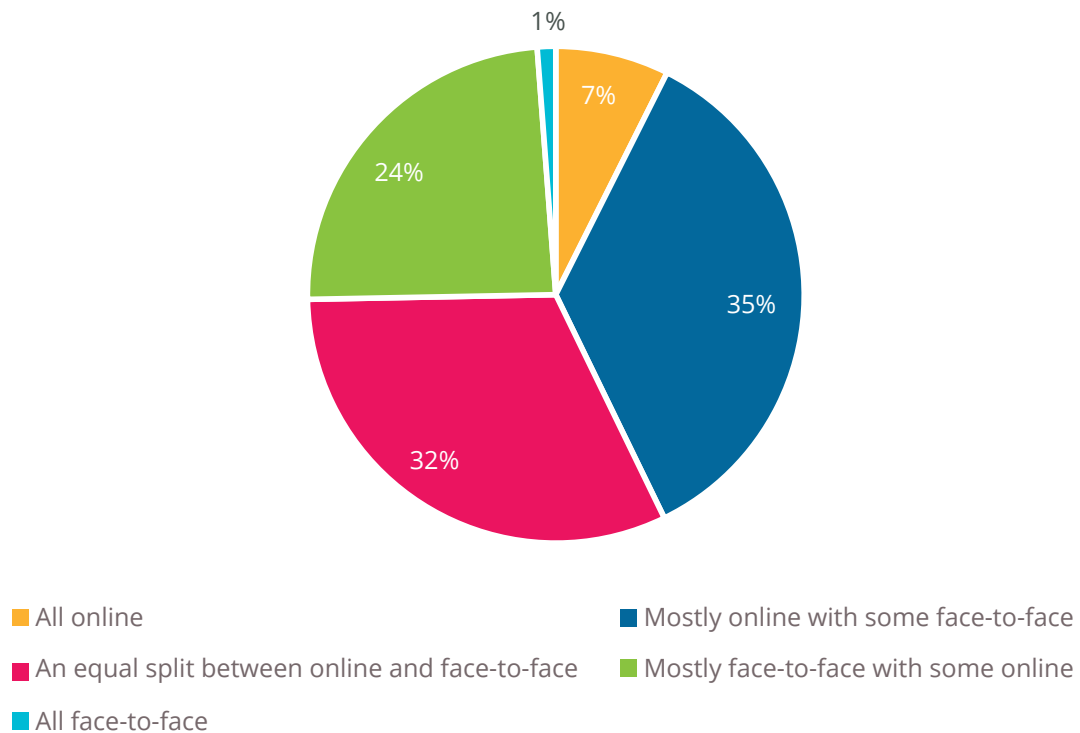
When do you expect your main campus to be fully opened to students?



A promising 29% of respondents think their main campus will be reopened in September of this year (and 15% predict August), while 22% expect a reopening in January 2021.

In terms of how teaching will be delivered, the majority of respondents expect a blended learning approach.

How do you expect teaching to take place when the next academic year begins?

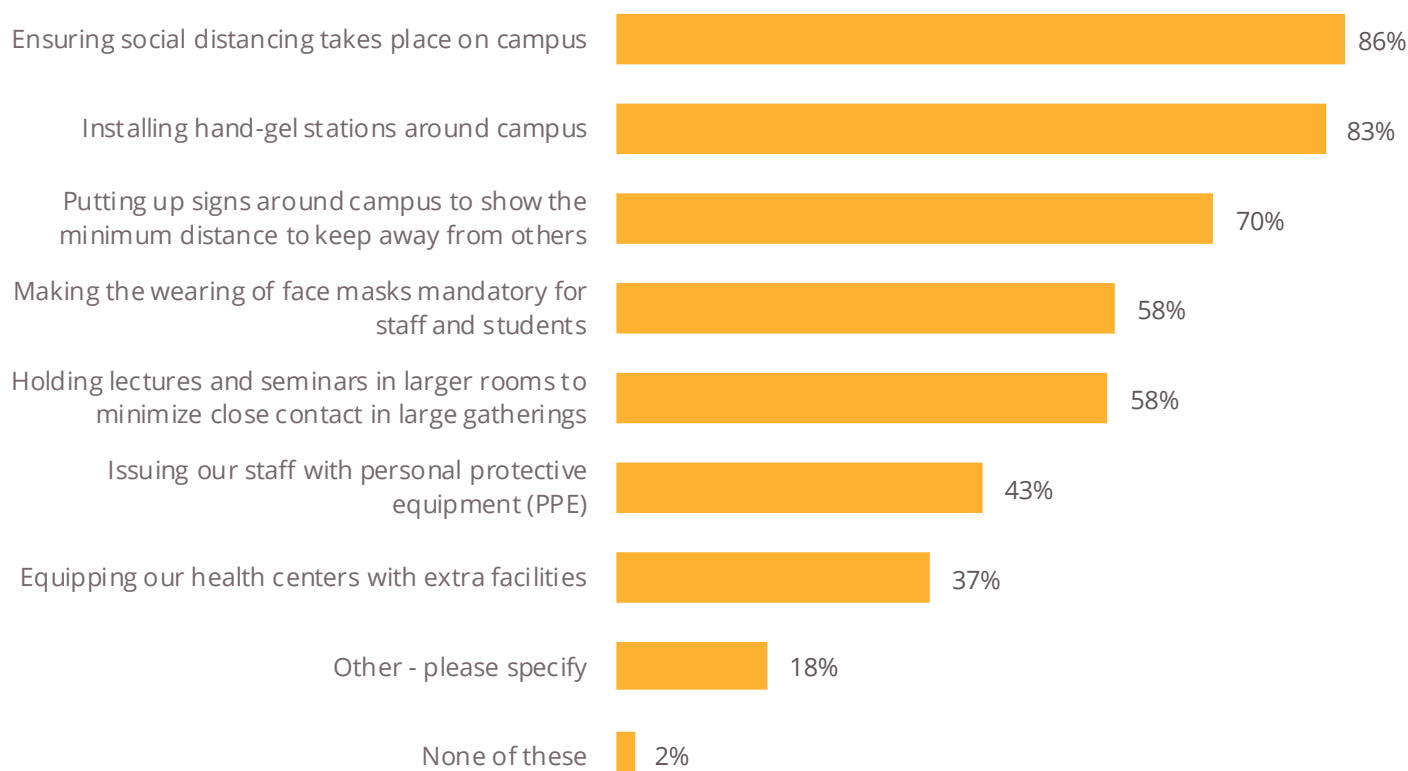


Of those universities surveyed, 35% believe teaching will be mostly online with some face-to-face teaching, 32% think there will be an equal split between online and face-to-face, and 24% predict that it will be mostly face-to-face with some online.

Additionally, 7% think that teaching will be fully online and only 1% believe that teaching will be delivered entirely face-to-face.

With this blended learning approach, universities will have to carefully consider the measures they will introduce to limit the impact and spread of the coronavirus.

Which of the following measures is your institution implementing on campus?



The top three measures that universities are implementing are ensuring social distancing takes place on campus (86%), installing hand-gel stations around campus (83%), and putting up signs around campus to show the minimum distance to keep away from others (70%).

Interestingly, only 43% of institutions are providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to their staff and around one third of institutions will not make wearing face masks mandatory for staff and students.

These last two findings suggest that institutions may need to consider stricter measures if they wish to control the spread of the coronavirus and protect the health and safety of students and staff.

Conclusion

The coronavirus crisis will continue to shape the way we learn, work, and interact for the foreseeable future.

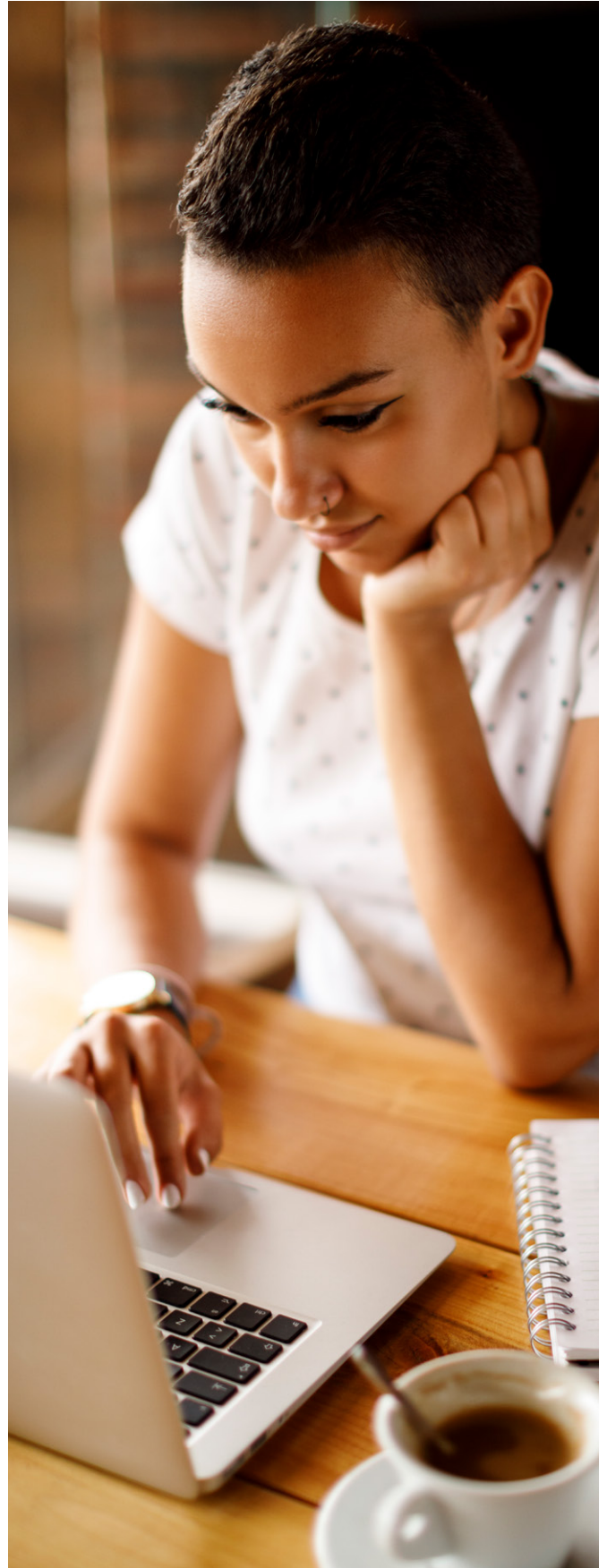
As higher education institutions navigate this new normal, the health and safety of students and staff must be paramount.

Universities must learn from each other and share their ideas and insights for how to deliver education and reopen campuses in a safe and effective manner.

QS is dedicated to supporting this discussion and providing valuable insights and research through its ongoing surveys of prospective international students and universities.

If you would like to discover more QS insights or discuss how your institution can operate and thrive during the coronavirus crisis, please reach out to the QS team at <https://www.qs.com/contact>

For any media queries, please contact
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About QS

QS Quacquarelli Symonds is the world's leading provider of services, analytics, and insights to the global higher education sector. Our mission is to enable motivated people anywhere in the world to fulfil their potential through educational achievement, international mobility, and career development.

Our QS World University Rankings portfolio, inaugurated in 2004, has grown to become the world's most popular source of comparative data about university performance. Our flagship website, www.TopUniversities.com – the home of our rankings – was viewed 149 million times in 2019, and over 94,000 media clippings pertaining to, or mentioning, QS were published by media outlets across the world in 2019.

QS portfolio

- **QS Digital and Events** provides prospective undergraduate, graduate, and MBA applicants with independent guidance throughout their search and decision making. Our world-class digital platforms include TopUniversities.com, TopMBA.com, and QSLearn.com which support search and inform applications to programs matching their profile and aspirations. In parallel, prospective students can meet, either virtually or face-to-face, with admissions officers of international universities and business schools. For universities and business schools, it offers effective and innovative digital and off-line student recruitment and branding solutions.
- **QS Enrolment Solutions** supports higher education institutions to maximize their student recruitment with a range of specialist services, from data-driven insights and high-quality lead generation to optimized communications and student conversion. With over 20 years of experience QSES has an unequalled understanding of international student decision-making. Our international office locations (UK, Romania, India, Malaysia and Australia) enable us to operate across time zones to deliver high value to our partners and exceptional services for applicants.
- **The QS Intelligence Unit** is a leading originator of institutional performance insight drawing on unique proprietary datasets gathered in pursuit of its published research. Best known for the widely referenced QS World University Rankings, today comprising variants by discipline and geography, the unit also operates a sophisticated, multi-dimensional quality standard; a comprehensive analytics platform facilitating advanced benchmarking; and an in-demand consulting team. Our insights both inform and are informed by frequent presence and digital conferences for educators, university leaders, and policy makers.
- **QS Unisolution** is dedicated to developing SaaS technology solutions to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of international mobility, relations, and recruitment functions within education, positively impacting the educational experience for the students, staff, and partners we serve.



For more information about the QS services, please visit www.qs.com or contact b2bmarketing@qs.com

To continue empowering motivated individuals and institutions across the world alike during the coronavirus outbreak, QS's response has included:

- Moving its [student recruitment events online](#), ensuring that universities and talented potential applicants across the world are still able to achieve high-quality personalized engagement.
- Expanding its range of digital marketing offerings, empowering student recruitment teams as they seek to maintain outreach and enrolment efforts.
- Launching a webinar series designed to enable university faculty and administrators alike to share best practices as they transition their educational offerings into the virtual classroom.
- Ongoing surveys of prospective students and institutions globally to analyze how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting them.

In 2019, as part of our commitment to sustainability, [QS became a certified CarbonNeutral® Company](#), reflecting our efforts to reduce our impact on the environment through a range of efficiency initiatives and offsetting unavoidable emissions through a verified carbon offset forestry project in Brazil.

