

# Universities Adapt to Online Classes, Others go Beyond Just Teach

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From online classes to online exhibition and evaluation of projects by engineering students, and from online assessments to shifting the admission process to an online platform, universities in Gujarat are taking to the internet to teach students during the lockdown.

As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupts the education calendar, while old school universities in Gujarat have adapted themselves to the online mode of teaching, state run as well as private universities have moved beyond online classes to online exhibition and evaluation of projects by engineering students, online assessments and even shifting the admission process to an online platform.

Nearly century-old Gujarat Vidyapith, set up by Mahatma Gandhi on October 18, 1920, that till date follows Gandhian practices of simplicity and self-reliance including spinning charkha, has taken to technological advancements in the times of COVID-19 lockdown. Among other state and private universities in the state, Gujarat Vidyapith has started online classes for departments including Yoga on platforms like YouTube, Zoom, Google Classroom, Facebook Live and Instagram.

“Though we are in a nascent stage, we are in the process of setting up more technological facilities in Gujarat Vidyapith. Our teachers are being trained. Besides, we are holding training for the administrative staff including registrar and controller of examinations,” said Gujarat Vidyapith vice-chancellor Anamik Shah.

Biman Pal, head of department of Yoga, said, “Initially our classes were conducted through a YouTube channel and Instagram. Then we explored other options like Zoom as we realised that live classes were better for both academic as well as practical teaching of asanas. We are using these for all the three courses at this department.”

Gujarat Vidyapith and its rural campuses, along with more than 12 gram sewa kendras and extension centres have also encouraged students to use e-resources available through INFLIBNET.

In addition to online lectures, Ahmedabad University has also modified its evaluation process to adapt to the online platform and also initiated an online admission process.

“We are quite involved with our students and will ensure that they complete this semester on time. Courses have been modified to adjust to the online environment. The evaluation rubric has been modified in many courses to provide for additional assignments. Our faculty have come up with innovative ways to use very short quizzes during the session as means to sustain student attention and ensure learning,” said AU Vice-Chancellor Pankaj Chandra.

The university is also developing a project to archive the times using digital content.

“Reports that require reflection and consultation of online journals have also been strongly introduced. Our admissions process for the next academic year has also moved online,” Chandra added.

L D College of Engineering, Ahmedabad organises an exhibition of final year students’ projects in an annual open house – KAIZEN every year. This year, LDCE is organising Online-KAIZEN 2020. Review of industry defined projects will be done on online platforms of Google Classroom and Google Duo.

LDCE is also working with experts to arrange webinars by international experts through American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), requesting them to work around time zones so that most faculties can attend them.

On these measures and tools adopted by universities, principal secretary education Anju Sharma said, “The education department is proactively working to take various measures for alternative online modes of teaching and examinations, and continuously encourage institutions to take necessary steps in this regard so that education is not affected. While video lectures and other study materials are made available on NAMO e-Tab application which is being used by the students across universities in Gujarat, all universities have started one or the other tool to complete their academic course.”

Not only smaller private universities have adapted themselves to these technological tools for teaching but some of the largest state-run universities like Gujarat University and Gujarat Technological University (GTU) too has replicated this on a massive scale.

One of the largest technical universities in Gujarat, Gujarat Technological University (GTU) with 437 affiliated colleges and over 4 lakh students has also started online teaching-learning through various digital platforms such as Zoom Cloud Meeting, FaceBook Live, Google Classroom, A-view, Flinnt open platform is continued by faculty members of GTU PG schools of Engineering, Pharmacy, and Management.

“We have recorded over 80 per cent attendance for our online classes. There are four hours of theory sessions as well as two hours of practical sessions taken by faculty members per day. Virtual laboratory practicals are also covered. Through various digital platforms like Google Classroom course content, lecture notes, assignments, links of SWAYAM, MOOCs, Youtube and Virtual lab experiments were shared with the students. The faculty made an all-out effort to contact each student to attend the online classes on Zoom Cloud Meeting, FaceBook Live, Google Meet. Assignments were assessed online too. The progress of the students is being monitored by heads of departments of each institute daily,” said GTU Vice-Chancellor Navin Sheth.

“Apart from providing education through various online educational modes, the research team of Gujarat University has successfully completed i-Hackathon on devices for infection prevention, patient maintenance, validation of claims for medication and drugs, new prophylaxis from

ayurveda, homeopathy and other alternative therapies,” Gujarat University V-C Himanshu Pandya said.

**The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) has also begun online learning for the students of its flagship programme Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship (PGDM-BE) amidst lockdown due to outbreak of Coronavirus.**

“The Institute conducts 4-5 hours of online classes through Zoom and Google Classroom. The Institute has also ramped up its technological infrastructure to provide counselling to international students under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). EDII is one of the partner institutes for ITEC division of the Ministry of External Affairs and conducts several programmes for professionals from developing countries ranging from 6 weeks to 8 weeks,” said Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director General, EDII adding that the counselling to these students would be provided as and when sought by them.

Other measures taken up by universities include MS University of Baroda that has set up remote access to all e-resources subscribed by MSU and the learning resources available through eSS consortia are accessible through Knimbus. Students are advised to access books available on Z-Library, which contain 4,975,000+ books and 85,000,000+ articles for free.

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