AAERI : Student Survey Highlights
The survey was floated from 3rd August 2020 for 15 days among prospective international students from India and Nepal with help of AAERI Members.

The global higher education sector is adapting to the new normal and governments across are also making rapid changes in regulations and recommendations for international students, thus to understand the “mood of students” this survey was conducted.

Our survey take the pulse of prospective international students, detailing how COVID has impacted their study abroad plans; what are their concerns regarding remote learning and their expectations from the Universities in present time and after travel restrictions are lifted.

We understand, in this complex climate, flexibility and innovation will be the pivotal pillars for many universities.
Respondent Profile

- 615 respondents, from India and Nepal
- Approx. 50% of the respondents from North India and West India; 11% from Nepal
- Majority of the respondents are interested in studying at Australia (67.8%) followed by Canada (17.1%), UK (9.3%), NZ (3.9%) and USA (2%)
Majority of the students consider availability of Job/ PR after study and Post Study Work rules as major factors while selecting study abroad destination followed by Health & safety and Recognition of qualification, while least are concerned about distance from home country.

Note: Respondents could choose multiple options.
COVID-19 effect on study abroad decision

- 82% respondents indicated COVID-19 has affected their study abroad plan
- 63% to continue with study abroad plan while waiting for travel restriction to be lifted
- Approx. 98% students intend to start studies in 2020 - 2021; with nearly 2/3rd starting in 2021

Current study abroad plans of students

Year in which they are planning to commence studies

- 2020: 34%
- 2021: 64%
- 2022: 2%

Not decided: 12%
Cancel: 2%
Postpone: 23%
Continue: 63%
University /Campus closure due to lockdown and Visa processing delays/ suspension were the major reasons affecting study plans whereas arranging funds or unable to appear for standard test were not among the major reasons.

### Major factors affecting study abroad plans

- **Unable to prepare/ appear for standard Tests**: 117
- **Not considering study abroad as worthwhile investment**: 39
- **Final exams are pending**: 75
- **Difficulty arranging funds**: 162
- **Health Concerns**: 255
- **Visa processing suspended / delayed**: 330
- **University /campus closure due to lockdown**: 387

**Note:** Respondents could choose multiple options.
Current status

- 7% have already started studying online; 9% are at Visa Stage; 21% are holding offer letter; only 9% deferring
- 27% are considering to start studying online and 20% have opted for hybrid studies
• Only 31% students were not at all interested in online studies
• Lack of international exposure/experience and quality of teaching were the major concerns of students while opting to study online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students concerns for online studies</th>
<th>Not at all interested</th>
<th>Extremely interested</th>
<th>Very interested</th>
<th>Slightly interested</th>
<th>Moderately interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of study abroad/international experience</td>
<td>459</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailability of technology to support online studies</td>
<td>213</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of teaching</td>
<td>321</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Refund policy in case of discontinuation of program</td>
<td>168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyber security concerns</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on the Post Study Work rules offered by the host country</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No concerns</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents could choose multiple options
72% of students are seeking reduction in the tuition fees in the event of not having a wholesome in-class learning.
45% of the students are asking for 50% or more than 50% reduction in fees.

Willingness to pay the same fees for online studies:
- No: 72%
- Yes: 4%
- May be: 24%

Fees reduction, if studying online:
- Less by 10%: 1%
- Less by 20%: 7%
- Less by 30%: 19%
- Less by 40%: 14%
- Less by 50%: 30%
- Less by more than 50%: 15%
- No reduction: 1%
- Don't know: 13%
- Don't know: 13%
### University Communication and support

- **Quick and clear communication** from the University outweigh fees reduction and better hygiene needs for students.
- **Approx. 54%** would like to hear once a week & about new updates affecting international students during Pandemic from Uni.

#### Expected support from University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better hygiene at the campus</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick and clear communication</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the tuition fees</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending the application period</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiving off the application fee</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferring the upcoming semester</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting applications without standardized test</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopting online method of teaching</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual tutoring and online support services</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Healthcare if unwell</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport pickup &amp; accommodation during quarantine</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Delivery during quarantine</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents could choose multiple options.
Nearly three quarters of students are ready to quarantine in their destination country; contracting COVID-19 during air travel is their major concern.

Future travel plans and concerns

Planning to quarantine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Planning to quarantine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of air travel</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May contract COVID-19 during air travel to their destination country</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to self-quarantine</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to secure accommodations</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of accommodations</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May contract COVID-19 in the destination country</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-wave of COVID-19 resulting to lockdown</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents could choose multiple options

74% Yes
26% No
Based on the information students have related to the steps taken for welfare of International students during COVID, Australia leads followed by New Zealand and then Canada.

1 denote lowest and 5 highest rating for welfare steps taken.
Student’s interest intact with studying overseas: 63% of the students are interested to continue with their current study plans while 16% students want to wait till the pandemic is over.

Deferment but not cancellation: Only 9% are interested to defer to a later time while 16% have started studying online or are a Visa stage.

University /Campus closures due to lockdown constitute as a major hurdle: University /Campus closure due to lockdown pose as major obstacles followed by visa application suspension and travel restrictions to embark on study abroad journey.

Warming up to the online delivery of program: 69% of the students open to online option with assurance to move to face-to-face soon and are concerned about lack of international exposure/experience and quality of teaching.

Expectations from universities: Real-time communication from universities on campus updates and options of in-person mobility in future semesters and considering fees reduction.
1. As students seek clarity, educational institutes are needed to offer quick and clear communication on campus safety and a well thought out plan for the upcoming semester. While most are aware that these factors remain uncertain, students’ desire for more information and clear directives was evident.

2. Offer monetary incentives such as application fee waivers, tuition fee discounts for online delivery and non-monetary supports such as standardized test requirement waiver, LOR or financial document waivers for applications made during COVID-19.

3. Assurance of quality control for online delivery and clarity on refund policies due to visa denials will put many minds at ease.

4. Student support systems should be enhanced to offer mental health counseling, financial assistance in the form of rent reductions, reduced meal plan pricing, and social connection support.
Questions...

Thank you for your valuable time

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