

RECRUITMENT DURING COVID-19

E-Guide by
INOMICS

Advice for job,
student and event
recruitment during
the 2020 pandemic

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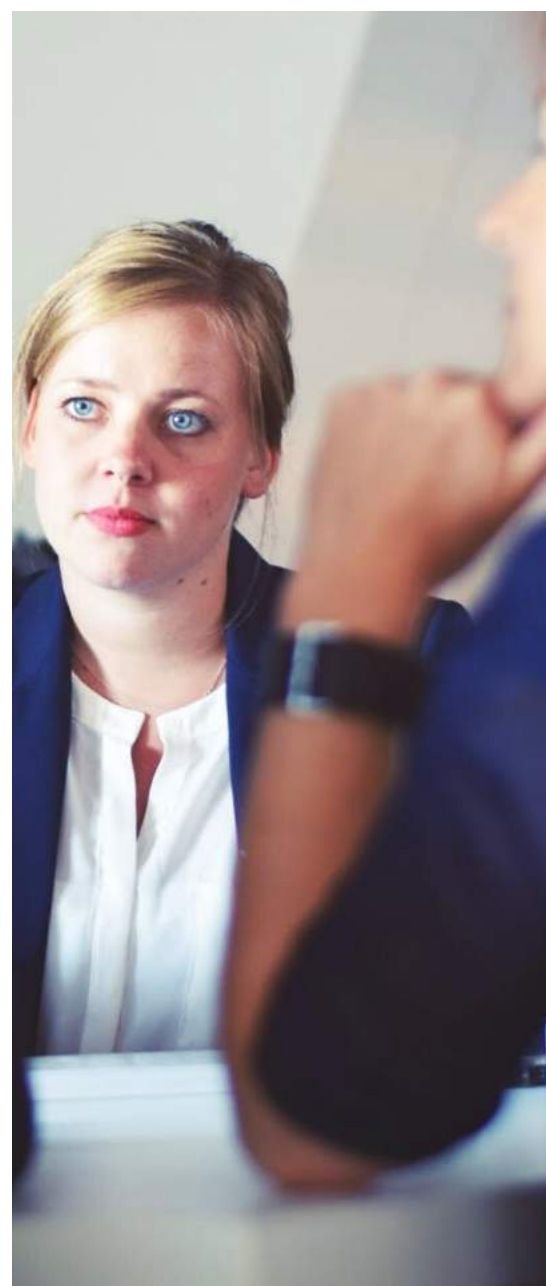
INTRODUCTION

Epidemics of the size of Covid-19 inevitably shake the world. It is a fact that the economy and many other aspects of life will not be the same after the pandemic. With a highly visible impact in terms of costs of managing the health of people, fiscal and monetary adjustments, economic recession, etc., the impacts of the crisis go beyond the economic and political to also affect the education sphere.

It is the task of many institutions to adjust their activities to the current restrictions of the pandemic, among them, the mechanics for future recruitment. Questions related to the feasibility of continuing the recruitment process, alternatives to assess candidates using only virtual tools, and international mobility of people, have left recruitment departments in uncertainty.

In order to help you take steps to further your recruitment plans in 2020, we have compiled here, some key points to restructure your recruitment strategy and find viable solutions to fulfill a large part of your recruitment quotas in 2020 and 2021.

If you have further ideas or want to share your institution's experience with us, feel free to write us at info@inomics.com.



THE NEW SCENARIO OF JOB RECRUITING DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



One of the first questions before deciding how and for which roles to recruit during the corona crisis to understand what has changed. Despite the fact that the answer may be obvious, it is worth listing the different situations faced at workplaces:

- There are restrictions on interaction and physical movement at the workplace, thus affecting not only new recruitment but the work dynamic itself (**more work from home and less office interaction**).
- The economic impact has been big in many industries affecting the recruitment market itself. Instead of recruiting more people to expand, **companies are obliged to decrease the number of employees** and minimize the less profitable or more problematic areas.
- Companies are hiring less but more for partially remote jobs. Also **job announcements that offer remote work options get far more applications** than if they remain as an on-site offer.
- **One of the biggest constraints remains the setting up of how and when to start working.** Not having a clear answer on travel restrictions makes it more challenging to plan ahead for the enrollment of new people in the team.
- Shifting the whole recruitment process online through **remote interviews and further with online onboarding process.**
- People are more cautious about job changes due to the economic and mobility situations. Uncertainty is the most common feeling, so **candidates tend to avoid applying for positions where they fear their job position is not secure.**

BEST PRACTICES FOR EVERY STAGE IN THE JOB RECRUITMENT PROCESS DURING COVID-19

The crisis may lead to some useful adjustments in the HR departments of institutions throughout the recruitment funnel. Let's explore solutions to apply at different stages of the process.

Advertising Jobs:

Good communication is key here! Check your job descriptions and include offers like **flexible hours, the opportunity to do remote work, childcare or health insurance**. By re-thinking all your marketing and employer branding materials to include the measures and positive changes to the pandemic will help build trust among candidates. Additionally, being as clear as possible about the role, the length of it, tasks and expectations will help your prospects make informed decisions and apply to jobs which are really suitable for them.

At this stage it is important that the **marketing, PR and HR departments work together and deliver consistent messages**.

Job Applications:

Drafting and publishing a **clear application process** will help you save time and avoid misunderstandings with candidates.



Providing clear and timely information about interviews, the selection process, documents needed, additional steps or processes expected due to the current situation, and terms and conditions of hiring (onboarding process, hours and location of work), will make a difference and build a good score as an employer.

Also do not forget your current employees; maintaining good internal communication can avoid undesirable surprises and ensure certainty among team members.



Pre-selection of candidates:

If you need to assess the qualifications of an employee, make sure you choose tests and methods which can be completed at home or via a remote interview. Hardware and software requirements of employees are also a good thing to check during the pre-selection of candidates. If you expect the research work to be done at home and your candidate does not have a proper internet connection, this will mean something different for you as an employer providing the tools for work.

Interviews:

Moving forward with video interviewing should be already in your recruitment plan and budget. The institution should invest in good software that enables this functionality not



only for recruitment but also for day to day communication with employees. Remember these are uncertain times, so be empathetic with candidates' questions and concerns during the interview. Finally, it is also wise to gather information about your candidate's travelling history and health condition in case their new job implies visits to your office.

Hiring process:

Once you have the perfect candidate for your position, finding and confirming references may be challenging. Use virtual media including conference calling to get those endorsements sorted out. Finally, all the hiring processes should take place online in order to speed up the completion time and reduce costs of document delivery.

Onboarding:

Despite a working from home setup, the company culture should still continue. Implementing an efficient communication channel including messenger, calls and video setup is essential. Some of the tools to use for this include slack, hangouts, zoom. Software such as Kronos, Oracle or Asana are also good alternatives for HR and project management. Additionally, remember to include in your welcome materials, safety protocols to prevent the spread of the virus.



RISKS AND CHALLENGES FOR STUDENT RECRUITMENT DURING THE 2020 PANDEMIC

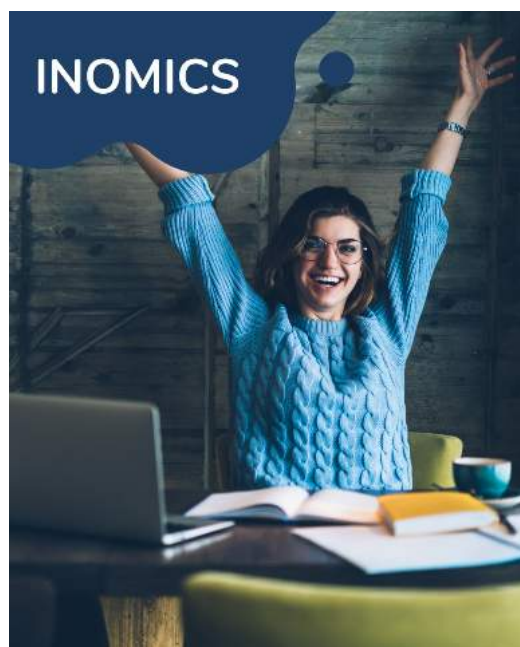
With the coronavirus turning the education scene into an online-dominated service, universities and other higher education providers are starting to wonder how to adapt their recruitment strategies to the current scenario. Without a doubt, Covid-19 has transformed and will continue to transform the education scene on one hand making it more affordable for more people, but on the other hand demanding a new set of tools and delivery methods.

Among the most common challenges faced by Universities we find:

- The need to innovate, design and deliver course curriculum adaptable for **e-learning experiences** that are realistic to implement by professors and keep satisfaction levels of students high.
- To provide an efficient solution to the **current dilemma of international students, start their studies online, delay the start of their studies or turn to local institutions to start their studies.**
- **Extending application deadlines and implementing flexible policies** for students who transform into warm leads.



- Implementing **flexible entry requirements** to cope with difficulties of students in each of their home countries.
- Hosting **virtual campus tours, virtual Q&A sessions**, and accompanying students in their application and enrollment processes in this environment of uncertainty.
- **Waived and reduced application fees**, as well as dealing with requests to lower tuition fees prices due to the implemented e-learning solutions.
- **Visa and other mobility restrictions** imposed to current and prospective students abroad.
- Arranging **mobility agreements** with partner universities in a world of travel restrictions.
- Dealing with an **unplanned student recruitment demand** and its high chances of bouncing back to normal levels in an unknown time period.



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TIPS FOR RECRUITING STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 TIMES



Covid-19 has brought changes and limitations due to mobility restrictions, a changing economic environment and a shift of priorities among students and their families.

The first step towards maintaining a healthy recruitment strategy includes revising the education offer of universities and adapting to the current needs of students. Making clear in the offer, the possibility to start the studies online and then transfer remaining classes on campus, the possibility of virtual onboarding sessions, online courses to collect degree credits, online pre-masters and pre-bachelor's with easy-track to a on campus degree, and cultural immersion experiences to complement online classes once the pandemic ceases, can make a big difference in the attractiveness of your offer. At the end, the effort of bringing leads to your institution is reduced to 0 if the offer is unattractive to the students.

Below we have listed some tips for you to shape your student recruitment strategy during Covid-19 times.

Analyze and modify your goals:

Key performance indicators and recruitment targets were based on a normal scenario. Now it is time to reassess those numbers and bring them back to reality. Only with realistic goals one can then map out a plan to achieve them.

Revise and re-arrange your target market regions:

It makes sense to decrease the marketing activities and spending in regions which are highly-affected by Covid-19. If the recovery forecast of these regions is rather pessimistic or takes longer than the average, there is very little chance that students from these countries will have mobility and study abroad as their priority or even possibility in the short-term.

Adjust your marketing budget to support more online activities:

With most of the study fairs, college visits and offline marketing activities being cancelled, a wise step to take is to allocate the unspent budget to online activities that can build on long-term assets for the University. Students may not be actively applying for a degree abroad, but they are using the time to explore more about Universities and their academic and extracurricular offers. Using your time to create content online, build fruitful cooperations with aggregators and bloggers and get the word about your institution out on the internet is a very good investment for the future.



Additionally if the recruitment and enrollment process continues as planned for 2020 and 2021, the best channels to use in the current conjuncture are online based channels. The limitation of open university days, face to face interviews and other on-campus based activities leaves channels such as SEM, SEO, social media, affiliate marketing, etc. as the most efficient to capitalize on. Examples of activities you could implement at your University:

- Google Adwords
- Social Media
- Admissions and Student Blogs
- Virtual fairs and virtual tours
- Study advice blog
- Digital downloads such as e-books, admission guides, brochures
- Trials for online classes
- Student Youtube channel and testimonials



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Focus more on automatic and transparent email communications:

On one side, further build and develop your email database; on the other side, make the communication more efficient via automation. Covid-19 has transformed email into the easiest official way to communicate. Use this to benefit and engage with prospective students for your University.

Once a campaign is run to collect leads via newsletter subscription, brochure download, etc. it is your job to make sure these students stay as warm leads. To this end, the best way to ensure optimal communication is by exploiting automatic welcome emails and follow-ups to be sent to keep a warm contact. This will also help you with communications regarding the Covid-19 updates.



Be active on social media:

If email is the most popular media for official communications, social media is now the place where students hang-out. Leveraging your presence on social media will make you more popular and engaging for students.

Social media should not only bring official messages to students but should also mostly be on topics which are of interest to them. Your regular updates about recruitment guidelines, programs with open applications and Covid-19 updates should play along with snapshots of student life, tips and tricks to study from home, social activities to engage with fellow students virtually, and other useful daily-life content.

Leverage virtual experiences and gatherings:

Since students cannot visit your campus and engage with the student life in person, it is your responsibility to create virtual spaces that promote these experiences. Virtual campus tours, webinars, virtual student gatherings, an online tandem partner program that pairs new/prospective students with students/alumni, Facebook and Instagram Q&A live sessions, etc. will help keep the positive attitude up and display an excellent brand image amongst students and their families.

New on
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University of Groningen, Netherlands - Why You Should Study Abroad Here?

In a city where one in every four people is a student, it's nearly not difficult to find others to connect with. At a university known for its focus on the field to which female students and the empty female bedrooms - it's also not difficult to find inspiration. And it's a country with a never-ending supply of coffee, you'll find no less of satisfying your stomach. Welcome to Groningen, one of the largest and most vibrant cities in the Netherlands with a University that may, or may not, blow your mind.

Bachelor's Degree at University of Groningen, Netherlands
Offering more than 60 Bachelor's and 100 Master's programs, the University of Groningen provides opportunities to meet your brain power in pretty much anything you can think of. These programs are also taught in English, meaning the university attracts thousands of international students every year. High on the list of things to do in Groningen is to visit the University of Groningen and City Planning to Human-Architecture interaction and everything in between.

Photo taken by being a current student of University College Groningen.

University College Groningen, Netherlands
If you're not feeling a conventional degree, fear not, within the University of Groningen, there's a liberal arts campus where you can design your own curriculum in a city that gets its name from the word 'Groningen' - instead of just giving you classes, you will be encouraged to find creative flows to the complex problems of daily life. You will also be given the chance to collaborate with other students internationally, as well as working on its long tradition of research programs in the University of Groningen or other international institutions, if you so choose.

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Undergraduate Education at University of Groningen, Netherlands

Perhaps the most beautiful thing about Groningen is the fact that it's a city where you can find everything you need to thrive. The city is a mix of old and new, with a rich history and a vibrant student life. You'll find a mix of old and new, with a rich history and a vibrant student life. You'll find a mix of old and new, with a rich history and a vibrant student life.

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Invest in technology:

With the boom of e-learning and e-teaching it is wise to invest budget in tools that will soften the transition from on-campus teaching to online classes. These tools are an investment that will benefit different areas: they will help you keep the education promise to current students, help deliver class samples to prospective students and, make video communication channels more efficient, among others.



Use online remarketing at a deeper level:

Your remarketing and communications activities, regardless of the chosen channel, can differentiate between students who are warm leads, students who are applicants and students who were admitted to your University. Each of these groups requires a different level of communication, messages and reassurance. Building trust the right way will determine either the success in the enrollment process or a bottle-neck problem that can stagnate your recruitment funnel.



EVENT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

With public gatherings being cancelled worldwide, conference organization and management is probably one of the most affected areas during the times of Covid-19. With restrictions put in place for the long-term, it is time to reshift budget allocation and come up with new strategies to keep the exchange of knowledge done at academic and industry events, as well the conference business itself alive.

If you have already planned an event that was meant to take place during the pandemic, instead of completely cancelling it, try to offer virtual options to cover the main part of your programs. Options like GoToMeeting or Zoom can easily records sessions, offer live broadcast or provide on- demand -viewing. When the event is transformed into a virtual gathering, you can expand your options by organizing:





Pre-record sessions:

This modality requires each speaker to send their pre-recorded session as well as a PDF with their notes and materials to download. You can offer access to each specific session or general access to the whole content of your conference.

Live webinar packages:

If you prefer to keep the live interaction option with your attendants, live webinars are the most suitable option. Here you can provide an access link where participants can join, listen, interact and participate in an active Q&A session. If your conference was already scheduled and organized, it is a good practice to re-brand so as to emphasize the fact that people can attend from home.

Social media live events:

Currently social media offers a diverse set of channels to record and offer live streaming sessions. With Facebook and Instagram being the most popular channels, going live with a video on these channels or YouTube, LinkedIn or Twitter will surely engage the masses plus give you the great bonus of growing your social media presence.

Regardless of the solution you choose for your event, telling the truth and maintaining clear communication is the best way to go with conferences, trade shows and events. Offering different solutions to attendants and promising only what you can deliver will ensure high satisfaction levels for your event.

We hope that this guide helps you in taking your recruitment further during Covid-19. At INOMICS we are happy to consult and support you to adjust, adapt and improve your recruitment strategy. If you have any questions or need additional help, feel free to contact us at info@inomics.com

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