

# Pandemic COVID-2019: Distance learning in Universities in Kazakhstan

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## Abstract

The paper deals with the transition of Kazakhstan to distance education in the context of the pandemic, an overview of the organization of distance learning in Universities in Kazakhstan, problems and solutions in the framework of working with distance learning technologies in the country.

*Keyword:* Coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19, Distance education, Online learning, distance technologies, quarantine, Universities, information platforms

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## 1 Introduction

In Kazakhstan, in order to ensure the safety of life and health of students and pupils, teachers, and other employees of educational organizations, as well as to prevent the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus infection during the pandemic declared by the world health organization, it was decided to suspend internal and external mobility of students; provide students with distance learning; organize online training courses for teachers on distance learning; conduct intermediate and final certification of students online, apply online proctoring technologies that allow you to verify the student, monitor the screen and behavior of the student, as well as record the entire exam on video; conduct defense of diploma projects and master's works online.

Online learning is a global trend in education, consistently implemented by major universities such as Stanford, Berkley, MIT, and others. For Kazakh universities, the situation with total quarantine has become a serious test of strength, as well as a good opportunity to show their achievements in this direction. Many universities in the country, following international experience and global trends, began implementing distance learning and mass open online courses using various platforms long before the quarantine was announced.

In modern society, full-fledged education using distance technologies is possible only if the proper level of quality of the material (content) is combined with a service that provides convenient navigation between lectures, a clear structure of the educational process and uninterrupted broadcasting of educational audio and video materials. Since classes are mainly divided into lectures, practical and individual work, the distance format implies training in real time with teachers, as well as self-study of the provided material.

Most universities in the country have a corporate subscription to Microsoft services, including Outlook and SharePoint, as well as Cisco WebEx video conferences, and distance learning modules on the Platonus and Moodle platforms are installed. These modules become a virtual audience, giving students access to education from anywhere in Kazakhstan. At the same time, it is important

that students from the regions who have gone home during the quarantine period can not interrupt the educational process, and if there is no permanent Internet connection or high speeds, get access to lectures at a convenient time for them. Teachers conduct webinars on a schedule through the Zoom app, and additional electronic platforms are used for practical classes and feedback: Meet.jit.si, Skype, Kahoot, WhatsApp, Telegram, Teams, etc.

Taking into account the specifics of medical specialties, where it is necessary to conduct practical classes in situation centers with layouts, only teachers attend, from there they conduct webinars. They show how to put on dressing gowns, examine the patient, what reactions the patient may have. Students watch what is happening online. To work with virtual patients, the Open Labyrinth platform is used. On YouTube, teachers posted their video lectures and demonstrations of clinical manipulations.

In order to make an emergency transition to distance learning in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities in the country have increased the capacity of existing platforms, solved some technical problems, moved servers, organized broadband Internet access, prepared storage and built up system backup mechanisms, developed and launched load monitoring tools. At the same time, at the initial stages, problems were identified that could not be ignored:

- not all people in Kazakhstan have access to computers/mobile phones/the Internet;
- Kazakh providers often cannot provide the necessary bandwidth, which is why communication is often interrupted or the connection is not established at all;
- there are frequent power outages in some regions.

All the above-mentioned problems prevented distance learning from being fully implemented during the quarantine period.

## 2 Decision

In order to minimize the risks of disruption of distance education, it is necessary to train a number of teachers in the

framework of reorientation to the developer of courses and working in distance education systems. Universities should step up their efforts to develop e-courses, textbooks and their own software; develop a quality control system for training; formulate proposals for the development of legal support for distance education; implement further development of technical support for distance education, Internet service providers to increase the bandwidth and transmission capacity of the Internet.

### 3 Conclusion

Distance education is distance learning. In essence, this is a full-time form of online/offline training. Distance education should not be confused with distance learning, which was canceled in Kazakhstan from January 1, 2019. According to the data of the Ministry of education and science of Kazakhstan, part-time students mastered only 65% of the volume that full-time students master. At the same time,

both received the same diplomas. In distance learning, students learn all 100% of the volume of information. Distance education technologies in Kazakhstan have been used in higher and postgraduate education since the mid-2000s. According to the Ministry of education and science of Kazakhstan for the period of 2019, distance technologies are used by 71 universities out of the total number of all universities in the country more than 130.

In addition to the obvious advantage of distance learning-the ability to study on the job-it has other advantages, including: individual training schedule; availability from anywhere in the world where there is an Internet connection; the possibility of self-isolation during quarantine measures. In order to study remotely during a pandemic, the student must have strict self-discipline and self-control, otherwise the proper effect will not be.

In the conditions of quarantine measures introduced in Kazakhstan, prompt response and timely decision-making is necessary to ensure the continuity of the educational process.

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