

UOW Malaysia KDU UC moves teaching and learning fully online in response to COVID-19 crisis

In March 2020, the Malaysian government enforced a Movement Control Order (MCO) as a nationwide measure to curb the spread of COVID-19. This mandated the closure of all non-essential premises, including public and private institutions of higher learning and skills training institutes. Higher Education Providers (HEPs) were required to cease operations of all on campus activities and facilities and send students home on short notice.

Over 590

higher education institutions in Malaysia were forced to close—including public and private universities, colleges, polytechnics and skills training centres.

[EasyUni](#)

Between

1.2 – 1.6 million

local and international students across Malaysia were directly affected by the MCO.

[ESPACT](#)

According to Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) [Guidelines](#), HEPs had autonomy to modify current face-to-face teaching and learning components to become fully online—given readiness of students, academic staff, existing resources and infrastructure.

The Challenge

UOW Malaysia KDU UC needed an online solution to continue teaching and learning operations for its 3000+ students and 180+ academic staff. The Teaching and Learning Centre was tasked with charting a course of action to ensure minimal business and academic disruptions across all 3 Malaysian campuses.

Like many HEPs worldwide, they faced several challenges for switching to online modes of delivery in such unprecedented times:

- Coordinating and supporting a **new academic strategy** for remote learning.
- Maintaining the **quality of teaching** and students' academic progression.
- Considering **broadband access** and bandwidth requirements for all.



**UOW
MALAYSIA
KDU**

PART OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG AUSTRALIA
GLOBAL NETWORK

UOW Malaysia KDU University College (UOW Malaysia KDU UC)



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openlearning.uowmkdu.edu.my



UOW Malaysia KDU UC has provided quality private tertiary education in Malaysia and surrounding regions through its modern campuses and vibrant industry-focused programmes since 1983. Previously known as KDU University College, the institution is part of the University of Wollongong Australia's global network.

Solution

- Portal Subscription

Results

- Business Continuity
- Virtual Campus

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The Solution

With an existing OpenLearning subscription, UOW Malaysia KDU UC was well positioned to go fully online.



Pre-MCO Trial

In anticipation of campus closures, a drill was activated to prepare both academics and students for a possible transition. In the 6 weeks prior to the MCO, all lecturers were asked to trial teaching from home for an entire day—running every lecture, tutorial, assignment and discussion fully online.



Central LMS

OpenLearning was used as the central LMS for teaching and learning delivery across faculties, with every subject hosted as an online module on the [UOW Malaysia KDU UC portal](#). Within each module, lecturers could provide course content, run projects and learning activities, facilitate discussions and group work, and track student progress. Lecturers could also integrate other applications or tools such as Skype, WebEx, YouTube, Kahoot! and Google Forms to supplement their teaching on OpenLearning.



Teaching Guidelines

UOW Malaysia KDU UC's Teaching and Learning Centre prepared guidelines for converting face-to-face content to a format more suited for OpenLearning. This enabled them to manage the transition and maintain quality of education delivery. Within these guidelines, lecturers could be innovative in redesigning their lessons to keep students engaged and meet learning outcomes.



Academic Support

The Teaching and Learning Centre played an important role in ensuring lecturers were supported throughout this transition—functioning as a help centre for technical and pedagogical queries. The Centre also monitored overall progress, ensured guidelines were adhered to, and collected bi-weekly feedback from lecturers.



We were able to quickly respond to campus closures and strategise our operations because we had a robust LMS like OpenLearning in place. Blended learning was already part of our strategy and our staff are resilient and adaptable to change. By using OpenLearning, our staff were further empowered for efficient engagement with students.



Professor Dr Hon Wei Min
Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic
UOW Malaysia KDU UC

The Results

In powering through this pandemic, UOW Malaysia KDU UC experienced paradigm shifts in their approach towards online teaching and learning.



100% Online Delivery

Since 2018, UOW Malaysia KDU UC has used OpenLearning across its campuses to varying degrees. Before the MCO:



90% of academics used OpenLearning to host content—as a repository for lecture notes, course materials.



20% of academics used OpenLearning to enhance teaching—as a supplementary source of learning activities.



Every subject across all faculties delivered online via OpenLearning.



100% of academics and students used OpenLearning as end-to-end platform for content hosting, student engagement, assessments, tracking.



Redesigning Learning

UOW Malaysia KDU UC lecturers realised that replicating the face-to-face experience via fully online synchronous sessions were impractical and unnecessary. Pedagogical adjustments were made to course materials to keep in line with on-campus timetables—but redesigned to suit online delivery and broadband requirements:



Smaller Blocks

Conventional course syllabus were **broken up to smaller segments** to make learning more engaging and accessible for students.



Golden Ratio

40% synchronous to 60% asynchronous

guidelines were implemented. A subject that required 7 contact hours per week could be redesigned to include 3 hours of synchronous virtual classroom sessions and 4 hours of asynchronous activities.



Alternative Assessments

Physical final exams were replaced with online assessments. The format and length of exams were reevaluated in favour of shorter, more summative types of assessments—where students were tested based on application of knowledge and actual context. More practical types of assessments from the Hospitality or Engineering schools were postponed until safe to return to campus facilities.



Smooth Transitions

Lecturers felt anxious in the beginning as it was difficult to gauge students' understanding in a new environment. Nonetheless, UOW Malaysia KDU UC's academic staff were generally supportive of the transition online, and were enthusiastic about picking up new tools to redesign learning experiences.



After pre-MCO trial:

60% felt more confident with going online.



1 week into transition:

Online learning started picking up.



4 weeks into transition:

Online learning was running smoothly.



Students also reported being anxious at first, but gradually **eased into the process**.



Current students have **accepted new norm**, but look forward to being back on campus.

Moving Forward

UOW Malaysia KDU UC was able to quickly move teaching and learning operations online by integrating its existing OpenLearning LMS with other online systems. Some findings and future-proofing measures include:



Lecturers accept that their role will continue to evolve during the MCO and beyond. Given worldwide uncertainties, teaching and learning is unlikely to revert to previous formats. The new norm will see new styles of learning take precedence—fully online, blended learning, project-based, self-directed.



Teaching and Learning Centre to drive current and future strategies to provide guidance for academic staff and maintain education quality. The Centre has drafted internal guidelines for academic delivery and online assessments for implementation across all 3 campuses nationwide.



Top management support is crucial in aligning business objectives and addressing challenges at all levels. During the MCO, constant meetings and feedback sessions with top management ensured that both academic and admin teams were receiving the support they needed—empowering them to remain resilient through the crisis.

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