

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

2021

Open Distance and eLearning Virtual Conference

MEDIATING OPEN DISTANCE
AND eLEARNING IN THE
ADVENT OF GLOBAL CRISES



DEADLINES EXTENDED

The Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation
Portfolio

University of South Africa (Unisa)

invites proposals for the

2021 Open Distance and e-Learning Virtual Conference

Full paper submissions, workshop and ODeL Postgraduate Consortium proposals addressing the themes and sub-themes are invited from the global community of academics, scholars, researchers, emergent scholars and postgraduate students for the Unisa 2021 Open Distance and e-Learning Virtual Conference.

The Unisa 2021 ODeL Virtual Conference will be held from 4-6 August. The aim of the conference is to encourage debate on contemporary and new opportunities, challenges and models facing open distance and e-learning (ODeL) in a globally connected digital era.

Additional information regarding the submission formats for papers and workshops, as well as for the Postgraduate Consortium are available on the conference website:

www.unisa.ac.za/2021OdelConference

I. CONFERENCE THEME:

“Mediating Open Distance and e-Learning in the Advent of Global Crises”

This theme seeks to generate debate and consider practical and sustainable solutions to ODeL teaching, learning and research in times of global crises and pandemics, such as during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

II. SUB-THEMES

Additional sub-themes are the following:

- The nexus between equity and quality in ODeL: reconsidering quality, access and equity
- Open and distance education post-COVID-19: unbundling and re-bundling, emerging business models, new forms of delivery, the changing role of faculty, revisiting structure and flexibility
- Researching *learning analytics* in the ODeL context
- Using student and staff data to mediate and improve teaching, learning and research
- Inclusion of marginalised students (students with disabilities, incarcerated students, etc.)
- Professional development in an ODeL context
- ODeL staff experiences of teaching during the pandemic
- e-Assessment during the pandemic
- Capacity development – mentoring young and emergent scholars
- ODeL research capacity through *digital literacy* and *digital proficiency*
- Researching technology-supported trends in ODeL
- The place and role of MOOCs in ODeL
- The place and role of open educational resources (OERs) in ODeL
- Educational research methodologies in the ODeL context
- Writing for ODeL publication (ODeL journals landscape and ODeL journals' publication cycle)
- Technology and the 4IR
- Issues affecting students with disabilities
- Challenges presented by working from home

III. CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

- The conference will feature plenary sessions at which invited speakers will give virtual keynote addresses.
- There will be online panel discussions where invited experts will debate topical and pertinent ODeL research issues.
- Full papers will be presented at scheduled breakaway sessions. (Presentation length: 20 minutes, followed by a 10-minute Q&A session)
- Proposals for virtual workshops will also be considered. (Length: 3 hours)
- An ODeL Postgraduate Consortium workshop will be offered as part of the conference.

IV. ETHICAL AND SCHOLARLY ETIQUETTE

- The Unisa 2021 Open Distance and e-Learning Virtual Conference is organised as a scholarly event.
- The papers submitted for presentation will therefore be subjected to peer review.
- Accepted papers will be posted as preprints on the ScienceOpen platform in a special collection dedicated to the conference.
- Unisa Press: Journals will invite selected papers for publication in special issues of scholarly journals still to be determined. More information will be circulated after the conference.
- A paper submitted cannot be under review for another conference or journal during the time it is considered for the Unisa 2021 Open Distance and e-Learning Virtual Conference.
- A paper submitted must be substantially different from any previously published work.

V. IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for workshop proposals	Deadline extended 31 May 2021
Notification of acceptance of workshop proposals	Deadline extended 30 June 2021
Deadline for full papers	Deadline extended 31 May 2021
Notification of acceptance and feedback for full papers	Deadline extended 30 June 2021
Submission of approved conference papers	14 July 2021
ODeL Postgraduate Consortium workshop proposal submission deadline	Deadline extended 10 May 2021
Notification of acceptance of proposal for ODeL Postgraduate Consortium workshop	31 May 2021
Registration opens	18 April 2021
Pre-Conference workshops	3 August 2021
Conference	4-6 August 2021

VI. SUBMISSION DETAILS

Papers: <https://www.scienceopen.com/collection/2021eLearningConference>

Workshop proposals: odelconference@unisa.ac.za

ODeL Postgraduate Consortium proposals: Qakisme@unisa.ac.za

VII. FOR MORE INFORMATION

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