

## Focus Conference 2022 Overview

It is a common cause globally that the abrupt emergence of Covid-19 wreaked havoc in all sectors, including the higher education system. The sudden closure of campuses as a social distancing measure to prevent community transmission has shifted face-to-face classes to online teaching and learning, a transformative experiment for academics and students in most institutions. This has thrown the focus on utilising Learning Management Systems (LMS), eLearning tools and platforms for effective student engagement, which may have limitations of accessibility and affordability for many students. The pandemic has exposed the shortcomings of the current higher education system and the need for more training of academics and practitioners in digital technology to adapt to the rapidly changing educational climate. In the post-pandemic situation, eLearning and virtual education may become an integral part of the higher education system, hence the question of re-inventing higher education.

The higher education institutions and universities need to plan the post-pandemic education and research strategies to ensure student learning outcomes and standards of educational quality. With the move to online teaching and learning, subsequently, traditional assessments followed and were adapted and adopted for online assessment. Assessments lie at the heart of the teaching process. It shapes students' understanding of the curriculum and determines their ability to progress. Reflections on assessments during Covid-19 abounded with the challenges that both academics and students faced regarding online assessments, including cheating and quality assurance issues. The focus on quality extended to the quality of teaching and learning in general.

Moreover, the pandemic brought about the question of staff and student health and psychosocial support also became important. For academics, the abrupt shift to adapt to working from home and implementing online learning has led to over-work, low work-life balance and compromised mental health. With a view on constructive and futuristic discourse, the sub-themes of the 2022 Focus conference encapsulate the current realities in the higher education sector and beyond. It further provides opportunities for an in-depth analysis based on the benefit of hindsight and foresight.

The Organising Committee specifically coined the theme, *Re-inventing higher education: Insights, trends and lessons learnt from*, specifically for the conference to reflect on and address the matters mentioned earlier. Academics, scholars, and practitioners in the higher education sector are called upon to share their research and express their perspectives on the reinvention of higher education.

