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Remote Work Challenges of Lecturers: Exploring Open Distance and E-Learning Institutions in South Africa

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Abstract

The study explores the challenges lecturers in the open distance and e-learning higher education institutions experience. Following the rapid spread of COVID-19, organisations across the globe have increasingly adopted remote work policies to reduce costs, boost productivity and improve retention, to name a few. These policies, among others, support flexible work arrangements or schedules. South African open distance and e-learning higher education institutions, like other institutions of higher learning across the globe, recruit a diverse staff complement from urban and rural areas to assist the institution in achieving its mission and vision and enhance student throughput. However, the swift and temporary physical closure of higher education institutions during COVID-19 presented challenges for students, lecturers, higher education institutions, and academic bodies alike. This exploratory study aims to identify the teaching challenges of lecturers of open distance and e-learning higher education institutions while working remotely, and to use the findings to inform practices that can be implemented. The study will be conducted with 10 lecturers in two open distance and e-learning institutions in South Africa. A qualitative approach will be employed in this study.

Key words: remote work, lecturers, open distance and e-Learning institutions, COVID19