

Call for Abstracts/Call for Papers
International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education
Special Issue “Sustainability in Universities specialized in Distance
and Online Learning”



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About the Journal:

The International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education (IJSHE) is the world’s leading journal specifically addressing sustainability issues in a higher education context. Now in Volume 20, IJSHE is fully indexed and has an Impact Factor: 1.437* (2018) and 5-year Impact Factor (2018): 2.377*, which attest its influential role in the academic community and community of good practitioners.

Further details on IJSHE can be seen at:

<http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=IJSHE>

Background and Research Focus:

Universities have various options to implement sustainability in their core businesses, be it higher education, teaching, curricula and syllabi, research and outreach as external fields of action and management systems, governance, communications (e.g. Isenmann et al. 2018), operations with infrastructure like buildings, library and IT, staff, human resource management, organizational development and students’ daily routine and life on campus as internal fields of action (e.g. Velazquez et al. 2006; Starik et al. 2010; Grindsted 2011; Disterheft et al. 2012).

Fueled by the United Nations (UN) Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the UN World Action Programme on ESD and the UN Global Compact’s Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) for example, universities have made considerable progress around the globe in the last years in terms of implementing sustainability and doing better in terms of sustainable development (e.g. ISCN 2017). In all these efforts, usually common universities have been focused and hence analyzed. Compared to these standard types of universities, however rather little is yet known about universities specialized in distance and online learning.

This gap is in particular surprising in terms of quantities, dynamic developments in the professional higher education sector and in the light of the specific potentials in terms of sustainability, such universities may have compared to common ones:

- For example, more than 158.000 students have been registered in universities specialized in distance and online learning in Germany in 2016; and roughly 17.000 students have participated in professional higher education certification programs (e.g. Dieckmann and Zinn 2017).
- On the one hand, energy consumption and production of carbon dioxide might be much less in online camps, due to the quite low proportion students need to attend at the campus (e.g. Roy et al. 2008; Little and Cordero 2014). These potentials are of relevance for environmental performance.
- On the other hand, the independence from place and time enables “lifelong learning”, especially for those groups for whom attending common universities actually would not be feasible or a realistic option. In addition to people with disabilities, one may also think of

single parent, mothers or fathers resp. with small children, residents of structurally weak regions where a university is far away, just employed persons and - surely no less important - other professionals willing to participate in higher education at academic level, completing their degree courses alongside work at a rhythm that suits them. These potentials are of importance for social performance.

This special issue of the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education (IJSHE) seeks to close the gap of sustainability in universities specialized in distance and online learning, at least to a certain extent. It is the first of its kind explicitly addressing the current state of the art, delivering good practice examples, identifying drivers, describing challenges, delivering guidance and providing hands-on solutions in terms of sustainable development, finally helping to contribute to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the higher education sector on the whole (Beynaghi et al. 2016; Storey et al. 2017; Leal Filho et al. 2019).

Topical Areas of the IJSHE Special Issue:

The guest editors of this special issue solicit contributions from academia in particular universities and higher education institutions specialized in distance and online learning as well as practitioners involved in universities' centers of advanced training and professional studies from different countries including, but not limited to, the following topical areas:

- Online teaching and distance learning for sustainable development and ESD at universities specialized in distance and online learning, compared to common universities
- Research for sustainability at universities specialized in distance and online learning
- Outreach & transfer for sustainability at universities specialized in distance and online learning
- Universities specialized in distance and online learning as sustainability reporters
- Competence-based education for sustainable development applied in universities specialized in distance and online learning
- E-learning as method and tool set to support education for sustainable development
- IT intelligence for education for sustainable development
- Ecological footprint of universities specialized in distance and online learning
- Specific ecological issues like environmental management at universities specialized in distance and online learning
- Specific social issues like life-long learning at universities specialized in distance and online learning
- Specific contributions to students' assessments like online exams, tests, virtual seminars and surveys.

Consistent with the aims of IJSHE and in line with the topical areas, contributions are invited on a range of empirical and conceptual issues, with priority given to papers expanding previous research while addressing the specific characteristics, potentials, benefits and challenges of universities specialized in distance and online learning as well as of other higher education institutions or centers for professional academic development and advanced studies.

Contributions employing innovative and under-used methodological approaches or theoretical frameworks are particularly welcomed as well as elaborated case studies. Please indicate whether you have participated in the 2019 conference "Sustainability at universities specialized in distance and online learning – education for sustainable development in academic distance and online learning", hosted by the Wilhelm Büchner University – Mobile University of Technology, Darmstadt (Germany), November 8th 2019.

Dates & Submissions:

The deadline for submissions of 500 word, extended abstracts will be **March 15th 2020**, and full papers are due by the **July 30th 2020**.

Please send expressions of interest with a 500 word extended abstract and full contact details of the authors to the guest editor: Ralf Isenmann (ralf.isenmann@wb-fernstudium.de) till **March 15th 2020**.

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