

STUDY

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL UNREST AND THE PANDEMIC ON STUDENT MOBILITY IN CHILE



August 2020

Contents:

1. Introduction and methodology	3
2. Impact of the crisis on study plans: student perceptions on mobility	5
<i>2.1 Chilean students on foreign exchange in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020</i>	
<i>2.2 Foreign students in Chile in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020</i>	
<i>2.3 Chilean students selected for foreign exchange in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021</i>	
<i>2.4 Foreign students selected for exchange in Chile in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021</i>	
3. Impact of the crisis and response by HEIs to support exchange students: institutional perceptions	22
4. Conclusions	28
About Learn Chile and CRUCH	30
Appendix – HEIs represented in the study	32

1. Introduction and methodology

This study is a joint initiative between Learn Chile's member higher education institutions (HEIs) and the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH)¹, the purpose of which is to determine the impacts of social unrest and the global COVID-19 pandemic on student mobility, as well as the strategies implemented by Chilean HEIs to address these issues.

This information will enable us to obtain an assessment of the current situation of student mobility in Chile, and provide valuable data that will serve as a baseline to propose the implementation of policies to promote and strengthen the internationalization of Chilean higher education to the corresponding government bodies.

The contents of this report will also be of use for other countries that are carrying out similar studies. In that regard, it should be noted that several Latin American countries were affected by social order issues during 2019. In Chile specifically, social unrest that took place through a series of protests and disruptions of public order between October 18, 2019 and the end of the year have been interpreted as an expression of discontentment due to social inequality, among other issues.

At the beginning of 2020, a new global crisis emerged due to the outbreak of COVID-19, with the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring a global pandemic on March 11. As of August 10, 2020, there have been more than 20 million confirmed cases of the disease and 738,000 deaths worldwide. In Chile, the first case was confirmed on March 3, 2020, and as of that date there were a total of 370,000 confirmed cases and almost 10,000 deaths globally.

Against that backdrop, and in order to characterize the impact of the global health crisis and social crisis in Chile, both from the perspective of higher education institutions and Chilean and foreign exchange students, a research project has been developed which aims to collect key data to better understand the consequences of both crises on student mobility.

As such, surveys were conducted with both exchange students and higher education institutions during May and June 2020.

- **Exchange students in the following sub-groups (778 respondents in total):**
 - Chilean students on foreign exchange in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020² (192 respondents).
 - Chilean students selected for foreign exchange in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021 (130 respondents).
 - Undergraduate or postgraduate foreign exchange students in Chile in 2-2019 and/or S1-2020 (328 respondents).
 - Undergraduate or postgraduate students selected for foreign exchange in Chile in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021 (128 respondents).

¹ See Appendix on HEIs that responded to the survey.

² S1: first semester; S2: second semester

- **International relations offices of Learn Chile's member HEIs and/or CRUCh.**

31 responses obtained, covering 78% of the HEI universe.

The main results and conclusions are presented below.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in this study.

2. Impact of the crisis on study plans: student perceptions on mobility

This chapter covers the impact of social unrest and/or the pandemic on four exchange student groups:

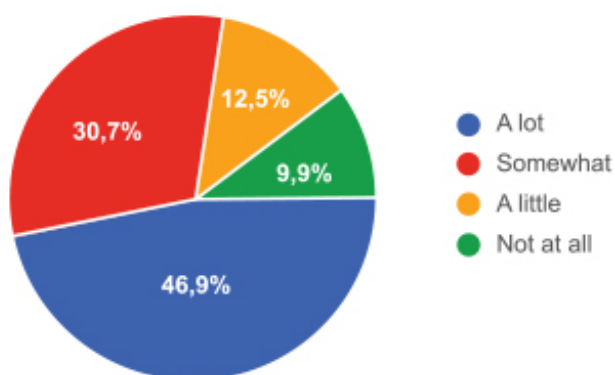
- Chilean students on foreign exchange in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020.
- Foreign students in Chile in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020.
- Chilean students selected for foreign exchange in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021.
- Foreign students selected to study in Chile in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021.

The focus on these four groups enabled us to understand the impact of the crisis on students who were already on exchange in Chile or overseas when these crises emerged (second semester 2019 and/or first semester 2020), as well as those who had not yet initiated their exchange programs, but who had been selected for a foreign exchange in the second semester of 2020 or first semester of 2021.

2.1 Chilean students on foreign exchange in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020

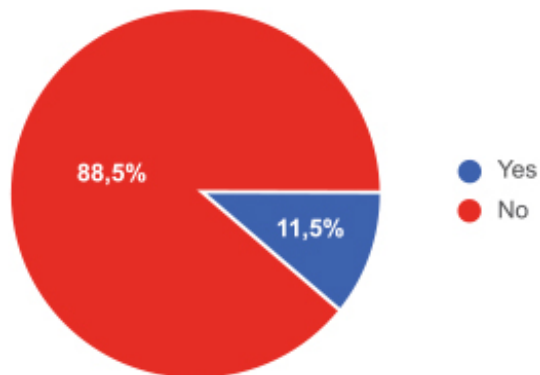
2.1.1 Regarding the social unrest in Chile:

To what extent did the social unrest in Chile impact your studies?



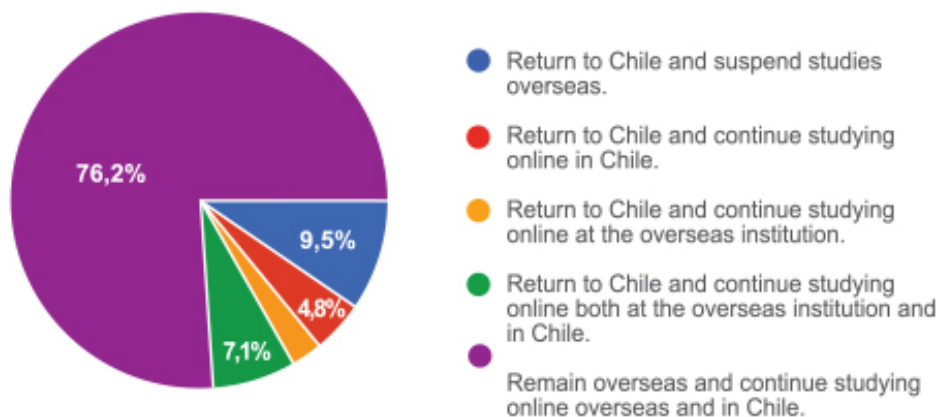
Almost 78% of Chilean students on foreign exchange indicate that the social unrest had a high or moderate impact on their studies. Meanwhile, 22% said that the social unrest had a slight or no impact on their studies.

Did you change your study plans due to the social unrest in Chile?



Even though the vast majority of Chilean students on foreign exchange indicate a significant impact of the social unrest on their studies, **only 11.5% opted to change their study plans.**

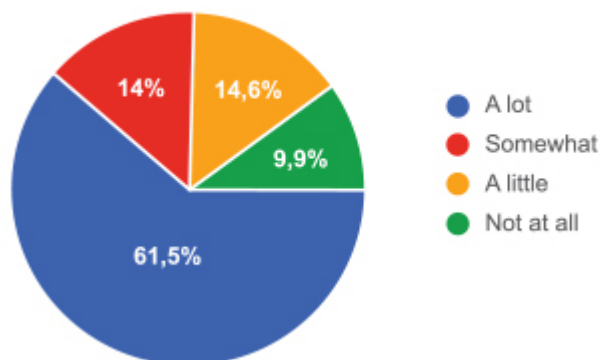
If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what did you decide to do?



Among Chilean students on foreign exchange who decided to change their study plans due to the social unrest, **the majority (76.2%) opted to remain overseas and continue their studies online.**

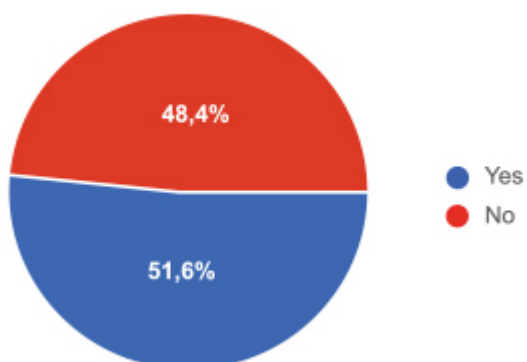
2.1.2 Regarding the pandemic:

To what extent did the pandemic impact your study decisions?



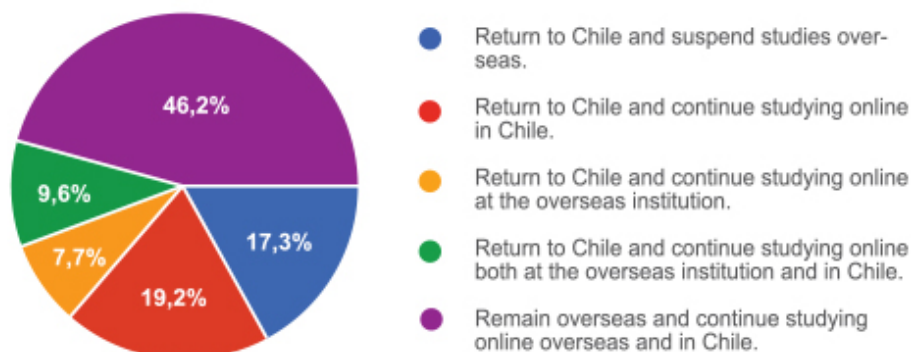
Almost 76% of Chilean students on foreign exchange indicate that the pandemic had a high or moderate impact on their study plans.

Did you change your study plans due to the pandemic?



More than half of Chilean students on foreign exchange decided to change their study plans due to COVID-19.

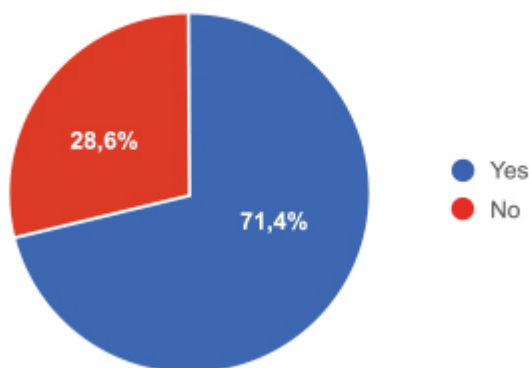
If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what did you decide to do?



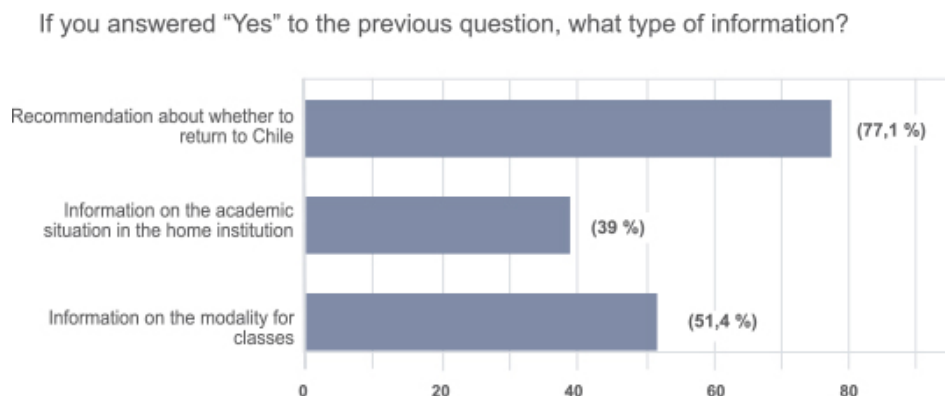
Among those Chilean students on foreign exchange who decided to change their plans due to coronavirus, 46.2% opted to remain overseas and continue studying online, **while the remaining 53.8% chose to return home.**

Meanwhile, **almost 83% continued studying online (in Chile or overseas)**, while close to 17% canceled their studies.

Did you receive useful information from your home institution regarding the pandemic that helped you decide whether to remain overseas?



More than 71% of Chilean students on foreign exchange indicate that they received useful information from their home institution regarding the pandemic, which contributed to their decision of whether to remain overseas.

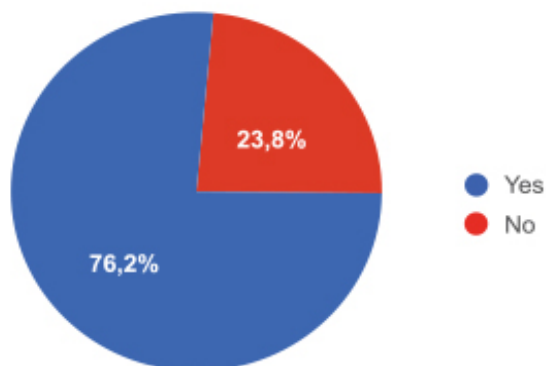


Among the group of Chilean students on foreign exchange who indicate that they received useful information regarding the pandemic, 77.1% received recommendations on whether or not to return home, while 51.4% received information regarding the format of classes (moving from in-person to online, change in academic calendar, etc.), and 39% received information on the academic situation of their home institution.

2.2. Foreign students in Chile in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020 (undergraduate and postgraduate exchange)

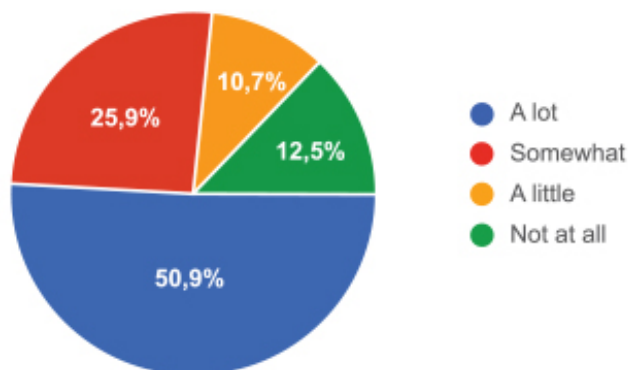
2.2.1 Regarding the social unrest in Chile:

Were you in Chile during the social unrest? (Between October 18 and December 2019)



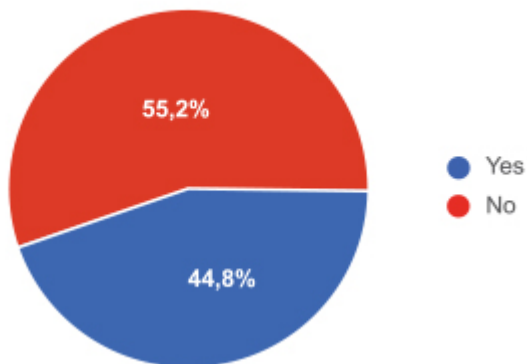
In total, 76.2% of the foreign students in Chile who responded to the survey were in the country between October 18 and December 31, 2019.

To what extent did the social unrest in Chile impact your studies?



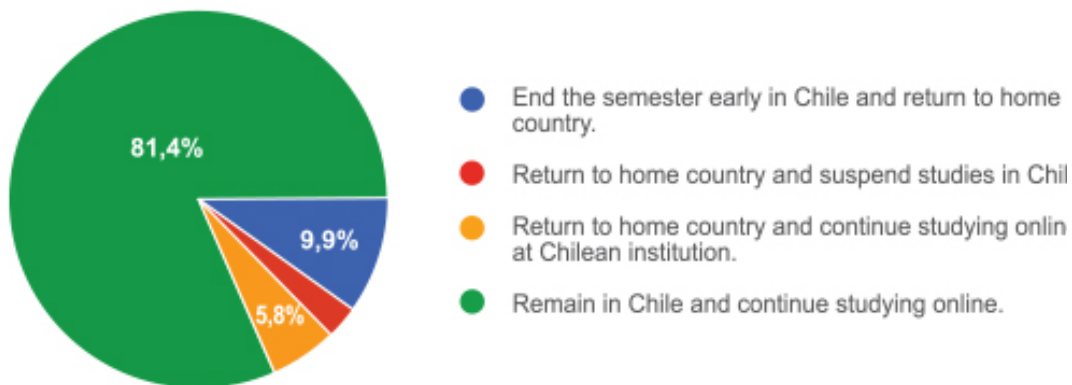
A little over half of undergraduate or postgraduate foreign exchange students in Chile in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020 say that the social unrest had a high impact on their studies.

Did you change your study plans due to the social unrest in Chile?



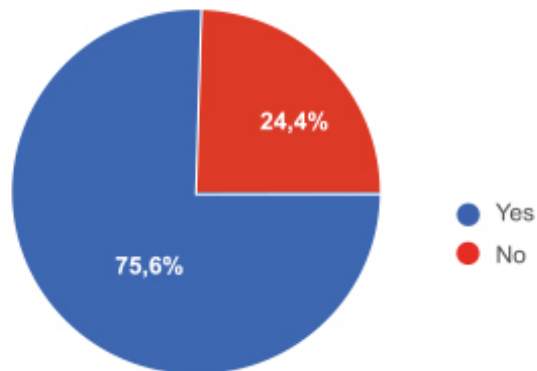
Additionally, 44.8% of undergraduate or postgraduate foreign exchange students in Chile in S2-2019 and/or S1-2020 say that they changed their study plans due to the social unrest.

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what did you decide to do?



However, among this group, it should be noted that **the majority decided to remain in Chile and continue to study online (81.4%).**

Did you receive useful information from the institution where you were studying?



Meanwhile, more than 75% of foreign students who were present in Chile during the social unrest said that they received useful information from the institution where they were studying.

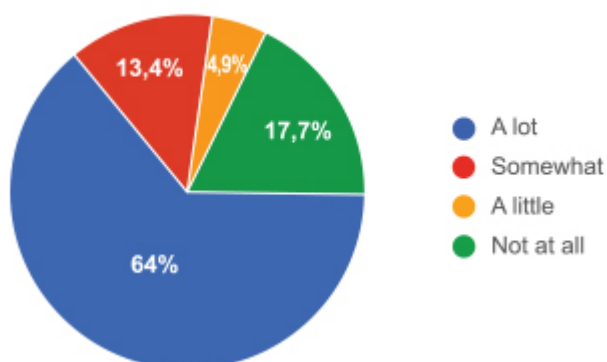
How important are the following institutional support initiatives for foreign students in case of emergency:



All types of institutional support provided during the crisis were considered by the vast majority of respondents to be quite or very important, especially the 24/7 emergency contact number.

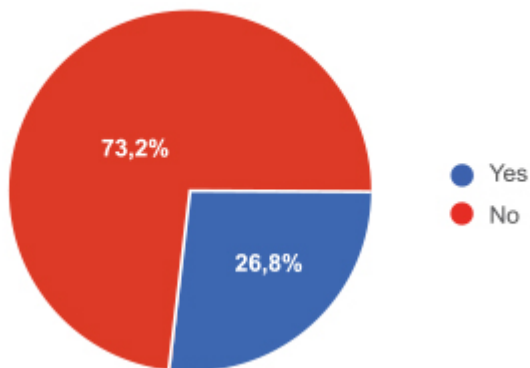
2.2.2 Regarding the pandemic:

To what extent did the COVID-19 outbreak impact your studies?



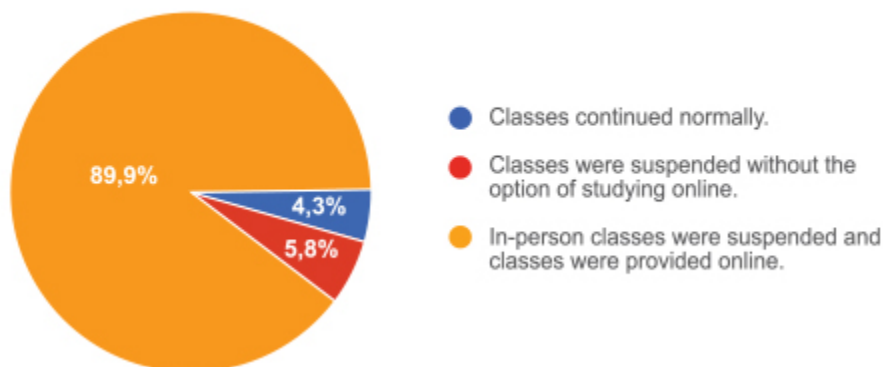
In total, 64% of foreign students on exchange in Chile said that the pandemic had a high impact on their studies.

Did you change your study plans in Chile due to the COVID-19 outbreak?



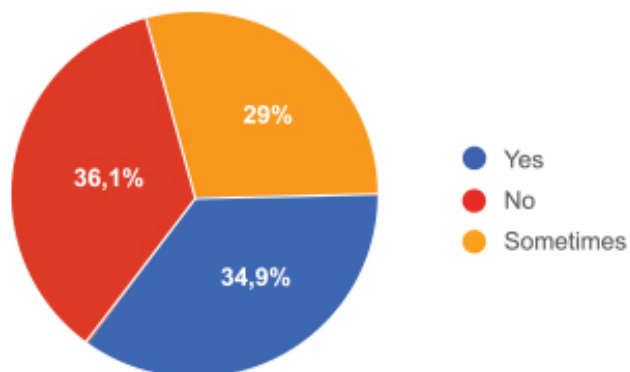
Despite this, only 27% said that they had changed their study plans due to COVID-19.

What happened with classes at the Chilean institution where you were studying following the COVID-19 outbreak?



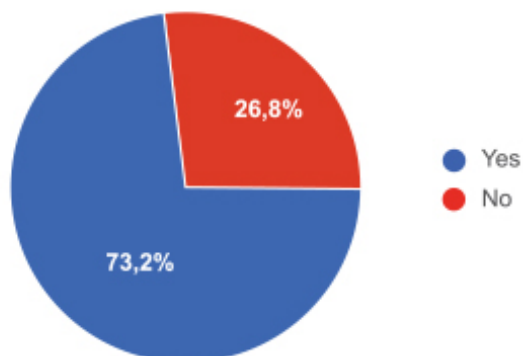
More than **94% of Chilean higher education institutions continued** classes during the pandemic. The vast majority shifted to e-learning modalities (89.9%), while 4.3% maintained in-person classes. This demonstrates **the high capacity of HEIs to ensure the continuity of study programs** for foreign students in Chile.

If you were in Chile during the COVID-19 outbreak, did you feel unsafe?



Almost 64% of foreign students who were in Chile during the COVID-19 outbreak said that they had felt unsafe (even if only sometimes).

Did you receive useful information from the institution where you were studying?

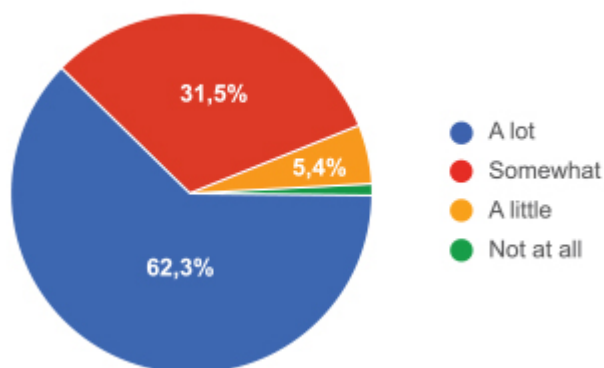


Around 73% of foreign students who were in Chile during the pandemic said that they had received useful information from the institution where they were studying.

2.3 Chilean students selected for foreign exchange in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021

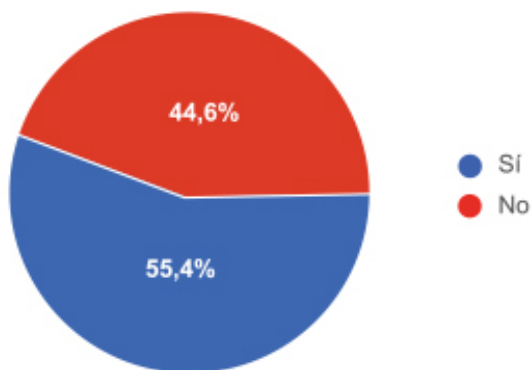
2.3.1 Regarding the pandemic:

To what extent did the pandemic impact your studies?



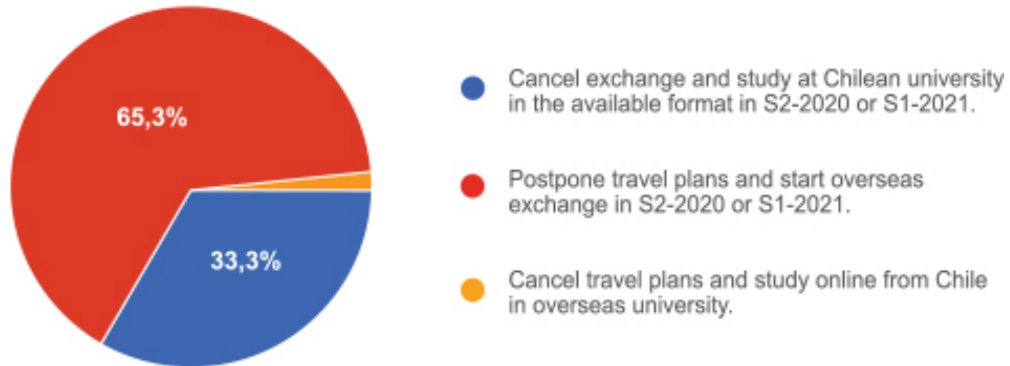
Almost 94% of Chilean students selected for a foreign exchange in S2-2020 or S1-2021 said that the pandemic had a high or moderate impact on their studies.

Did you change your study plans due to the pandemic?



More than 55% in this group opted to change their study plans as a result of the pandemic.

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what did you decide to do?

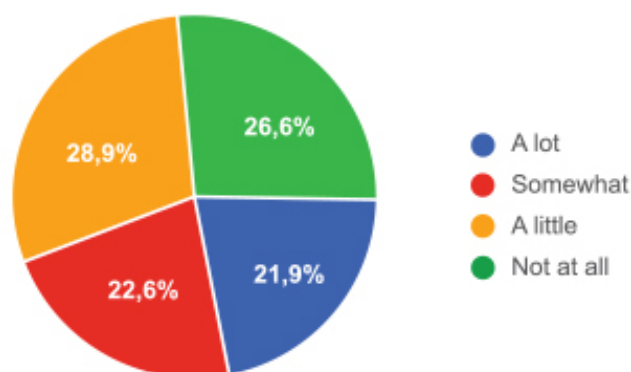


Among the Chilean students selected for a foreign exchange in S2-2020 or S1-2021 who opted to change their plans, **65.3% chose to postpone their exchange, and 33.3% chose to cancel their exchange plans and study at their home university in Chile.**

2.4 Foreign students selected for exchange in Chile in S2-2020 and/or S1-2021 (undergraduate or postgraduate exchange)

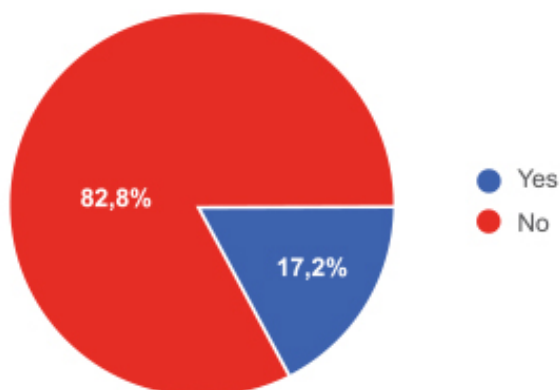
2.4.1 Regarding the social unrest:

To what extent did the social unrest in Chile impact your decision to study in the country?



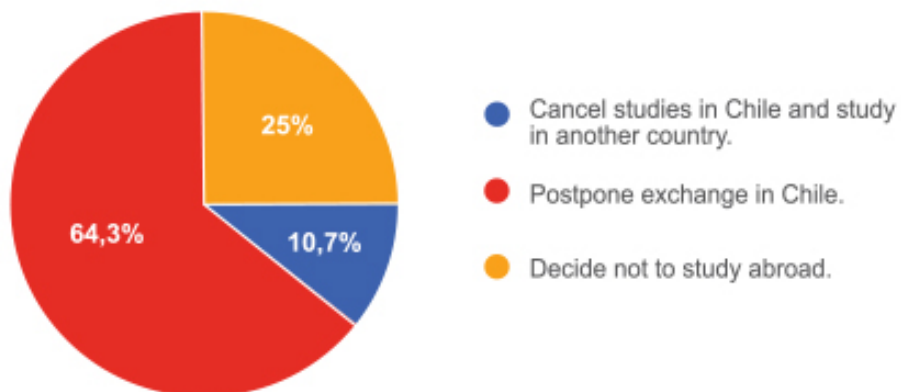
In total, 55.5% of undergraduate or postgraduate students selected for a foreign exchange in Chile in S2-2020 or S1-2021 said that recent social unrest in the country had had little or no impact on their decision to study in Chile.

Did you change your plans to study in Chile due to the social unrest in the country?



Meanwhile, more than 82% of foreign students selected for an exchange in Chile in the second semester of 2020 said that they had not changed their study plans due to the social unrest.

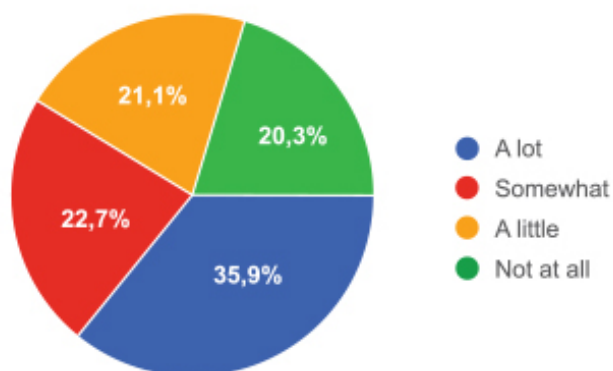
If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what did you decide to do?



Among the group of foreign students selected for an exchange in Chile in the second semester of 2020 who did decide to change their plans due to the social unrest, **64.3% opted to postpone their studies in Chile**, while 10.7% decided to study in another country.

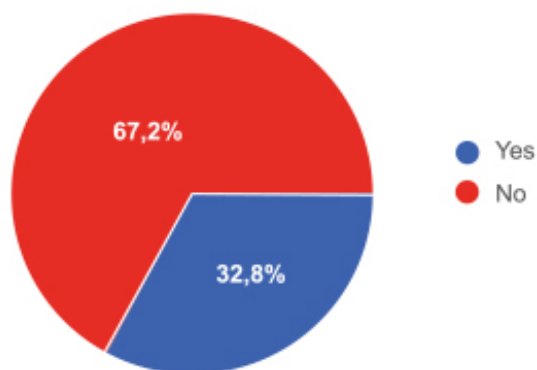
2.4.2 Regarding the pandemic:

To what extent did the COVID-19 outbreak impact your decision to study in Chile?



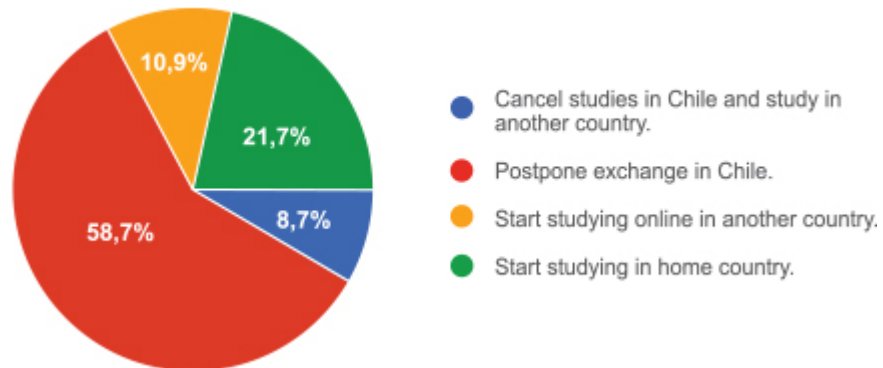
Almost 60% of undergraduate or postgraduate foreign students selected for an exchange in Chile in S2-2020 or S1-2021 said that the coronavirus pandemic had had a high or moderate impact on their studies.

Did you change your plans to study in Chile due to the COVID-19 outbreak?



However, 67.2% of this group decided not to change their plans to study in Chile as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, what did you decide to do?



Among the group of foreign students selected for an exchange in Chile in S2-2020 or S1-2021 that did decide to change their study plans, **58,7% decided to postpone their courses and study in Chile in the future.**

3. Impact of the crisis and response by HEIs to support exchange students: institutional perceptions

3.1 Incoming students (arriving in Chile)

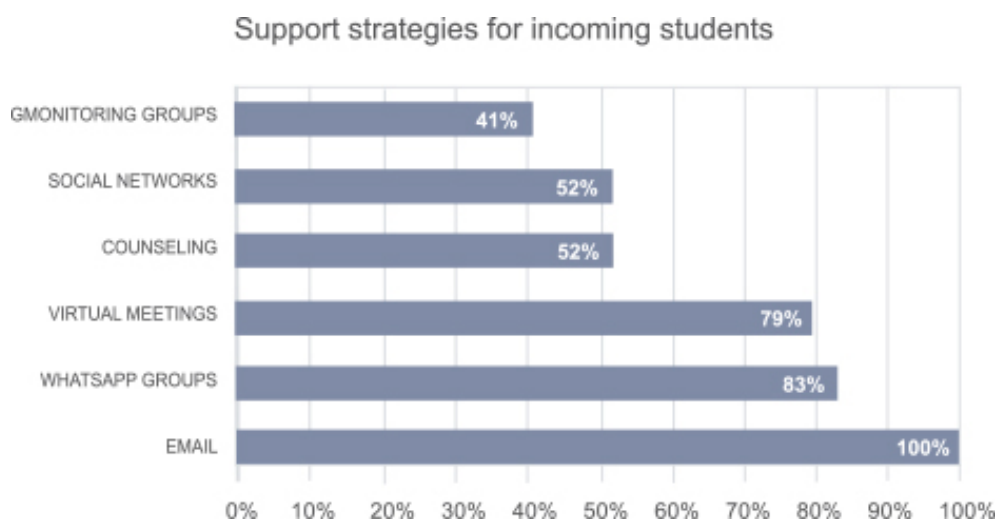
According to the most recent foreign student enrollment report compiled by the Chilean Higher Education Information Service (SIES), which forms part of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), in 2018 there were 9,312 foreign exchange students in the country.

The HEIs that responded to this survey estimate that, on average, **19% of incoming students cancelled their studies due to the social unrest** during the second half of 2019, although there was a high degree of variability (standard deviation of 23%). This could be explained to some extent by the location of the university of technical institute (for example, in areas less affected by the social unrest).

On the other hand, the number of incoming foreign exchange students **fell by 41% on average due to the pandemic**, with a standard deviation of 31%.

However, it should be noted that all foreign students in Chile are continuing with their academic activities online in Chilean institutions.

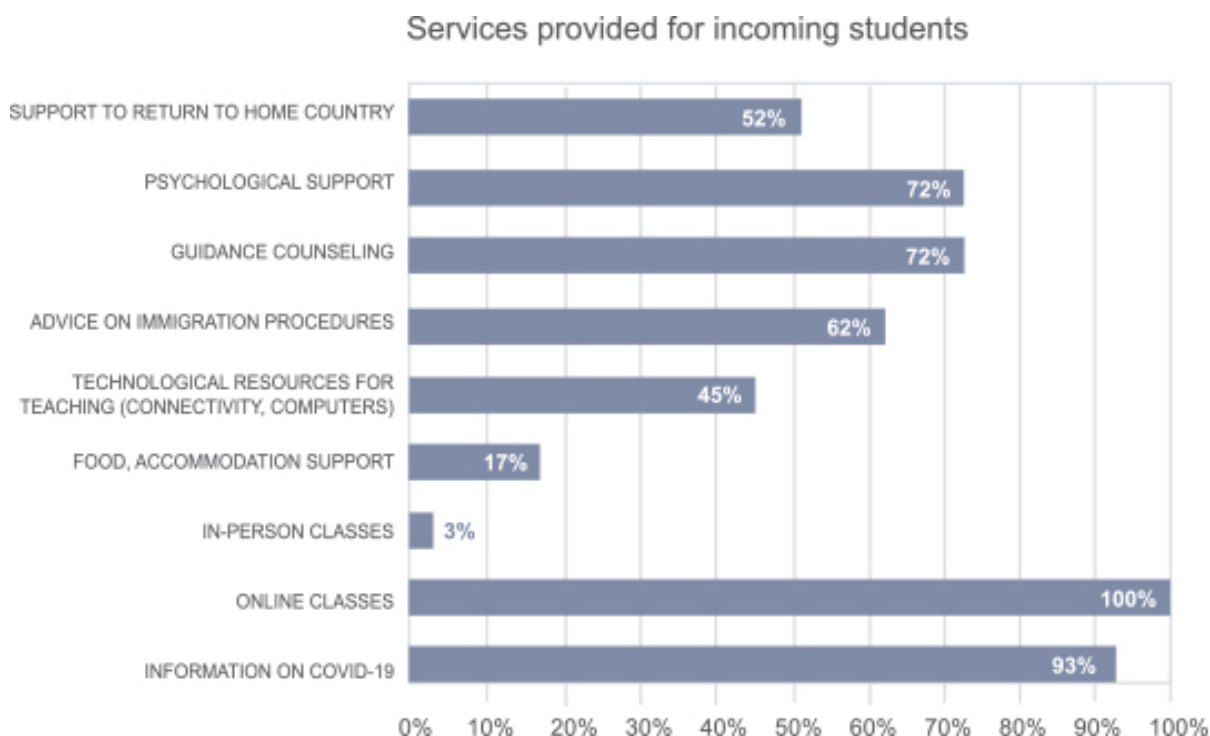
Support strategies for incoming students



All HEIs have implemented strategies to maintain contact with incoming students via email, and the majority have also done so via WhatsApp groups (83%), virtual meetings (83%), counseling (52%) and social networks (52%).

In addition to the alternatives provided in the survey, the following were also mentioned: telephone calls, mentoring by university department, mobile app to share location and provide help in case of emergency, and global ambassadors (program for Chilean university students to support exchange students).

What services have been provided for incoming students?



All HEIs included in the study said that they have provided online classes for incoming students, while 93% have provided information about COVID-19. Several additional services have also been provided for foreign students, including psychological support and guidance counseling (72%), advice on immigration procedures (62%), and help returning to their home country (52%).

Various HEIs have also provided additional technological, food or accommodation support to foreign students.

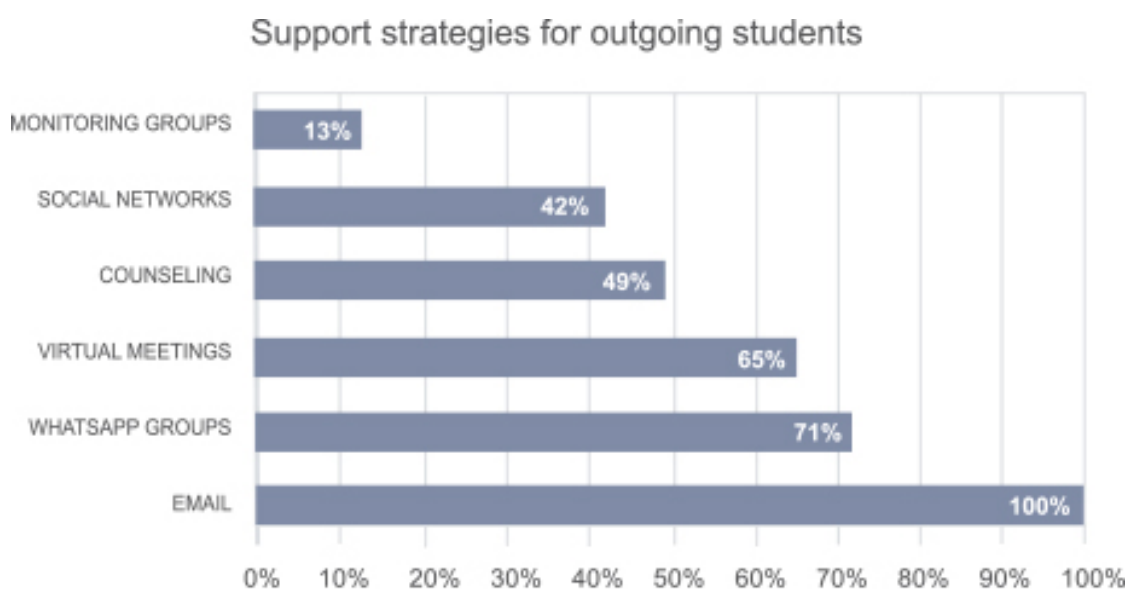
Similarly, other services have been provided in addition to those included in the survey, such as setting up a 24/7 emergency cell phone number and an "International Club " for local and exchange students with online social activities.

3.2 Impact on outgoing students

Based on the survey, it is estimated that around 2,000 Chilean students started a foreign exchange between December 2019 and March 2020.

Around 50% chose to return to Chile before the end of their overseas academic program, while the remaining half opted to stay in their destination country.

Support strategies for outgoing students

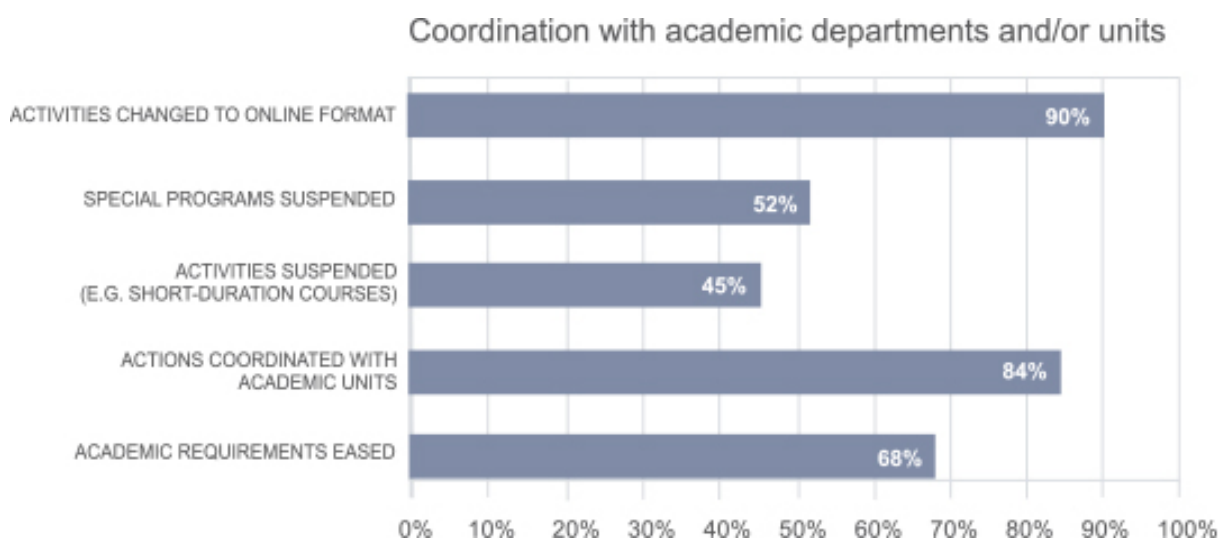


All HEIs have provided support for outgoing students via email, and many have also done so via WhatsApp (71%) and virtual meetings (65%).

Other strategies not included in the survey were also mentioned, such as telephone calls, student-to-student WhatsApp chats, psychological support, support with tuition fees, consular assistance and support with the cost of fines for changing airline tickets.

3.3. Institutional strategies implemented with international counterparts

In which of the following ways has the university coordinated with its academic departments and/or units.



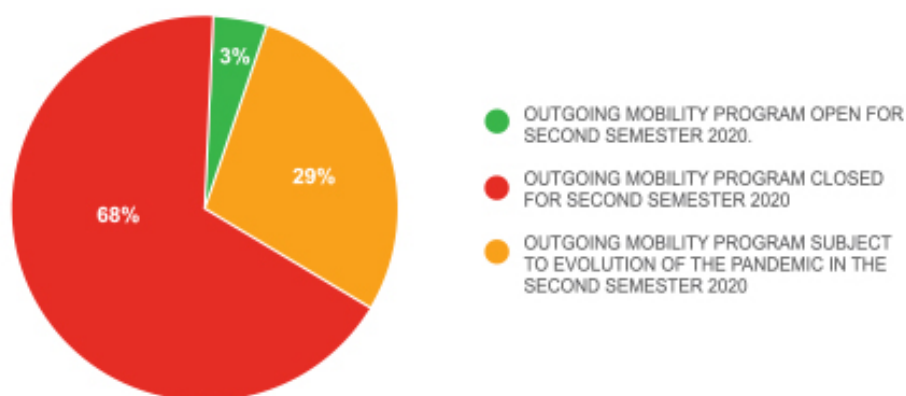
Regarding coordination by HEIs with academic departments and/or units, **90% of respondents said that they had shifted academic activities to an online format, 84% said that they have coordinated actions with academic units, and 68% said that they had eased academic requirements.**

Similarly, almost half of the respondents have been required to suspend special programs and other activities (for example, short-duration courses).

3.4 Future vision

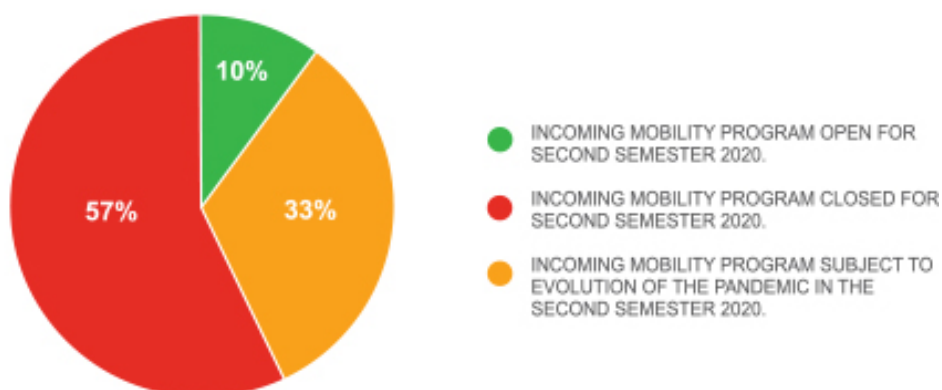
What is the status of your student mobility program for the second semester of 2020 (as of June 2020)?

Outgoing mobility program status for second semester 2020 (as of June 2020)



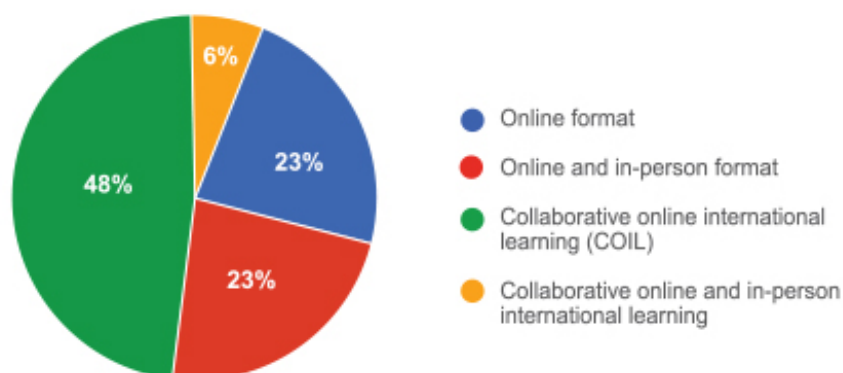
68% of HEIs indicated that they had suspended their outgoing student mobility program for the second semester of 2020, while 29% said that this remains to be decided depending on the evolution of the pandemic.

Incoming mobility program status for second semester 2020 (as of June 2020)



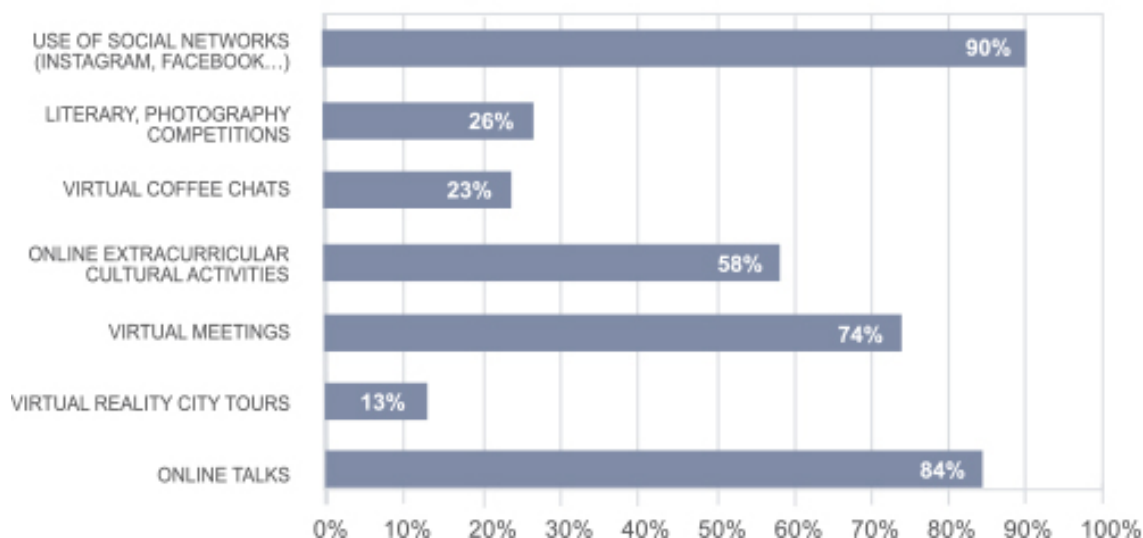
Regarding the outlook for incoming student mobility programs in the second semester of 2020, 10% of HEIs indicated that their exchange programs remain open, and 33% said that the situation is dependent on how the pandemic evolves.

What is the main type of new internationalization initiative currently being developed by your institution?



Against this backdrop, **48% of respondents indicated that they are preparing collaborative online international learning (COIL) courses**, while 23% said that they are looking for new ways to provide internationalization opportunities through online and in-person formats, and 23% said that they are aiming to do so solely through e-learning.

Use of social networks (Instagram, Facebook...)



The majority of HEIs are planning to **maintain the multicultural experience through the use of social networks (90%), online talks (84%), virtual meetings (74%) and online extracurricular activities (58%)**. To a lesser extent, they are also designing literary and photography competitions, holding virtual coffee chats, and virtual reality city tours.

In addition to the options included in the study, HEIs are also developing other initiatives, such as virtual fairs for our partners to participate in online, virtual mobility, the implementation of online mentoring programs, short-duration online courses, online courses with strategic partners, and virtual Chile experience courses.

4. Conclusions

Towards the end of 2019, the world gradually began to experience a health emergency unprecedented in the last 100 years. The global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused the death of hundreds of thousands of people with millions of confirmed cases, resulting in a series of restrictions such as the closure of borders. In the field of international education, this situation has obligated HEIs to restrict student mobility between countries and, in consequence, higher education institutions have been required to rapidly develop new strategies for this key dimension of their internationalization efforts.

In the case of Chile, the health emergency caused by the pandemic follows a social crisis which had already affected higher education institutions, requiring them to implement a timely and effective response in terms of student mobility in order to maintain quality standards in this difficult situation.

Against this backdrop, internationalization in higher education has faced major challenges. Now, more than ever, it is essential for institutional cooperation to be increasingly proactive, creative and tangible. Along these lines, Chilean HEIs have strengthened their cooperation platforms, sharing experiences and best practices for facing this emergency situation. This study is an example of the collaborative spirit present not only in Chile, but around the world.

It is often said that crises also bring opportunities. The social unrest in 2019 led HEIs to take measures to facilitate continuity in the education of local and international students at home via online or remote formats, which were also rapidly implemented with the arrival of the pandemic. Chile's advantages when it comes to e-learning should also be taken into account, given that the country has the highest level of connectivity in Latin America (according to the (GCI ranking) with 88% of households connected to the internet.

In that regard, this study shows that despite the majority of students—both Chilean and foreign—indicating that the pandemic has had a high impact on their studies, this did not result in significant modifications to their study plans or their decision to remain in their destination countries and, therefore, on their learning experiences. This could be due to the fact that the vast majority of exchange students were able to continue with online programs, regardless of whether they decided to return to their home country.

Chilean HEIs have demonstrated their ability to respond in the face of a crisis, making various services available to students. All institutions said that they had provided online classes, while 93% made information available to students on COVID-19. Several HEIs also offered additional support services to foreign students, such as psychological support and guidance counseling (72%), advice on immigration procedures (62%) and support returning to their home countries (52%).

In turn, the majority of HEIs are looking for ways to maintain the multicultural experience of incoming exchange students via the use of social networks (90%), online talks (84%), virtual meetings (74%) and online extracurricular activities (58%). To a lesser extent, they are also conducting literary and photography competitions, virtual coffee chats, and virtual reality city tours.

Nevertheless, we are convinced that cultural activities conducted online can never replace the cultural experience gained in person. In that sense, HEIs are planning to develop hybrid (blended learning) models in the short and medium-term, in which students can learn and have the experience of living in Chile, while finding out more about its customs, people and landscapes, and enjoying its cuisine, among other aspects.

Finally, this new scenario promotes outreach between institutions from around the world. All HEIs are working on new internationalization strategies, primarily through the development of inclusive courses together with overseas institutions using methodologies such as collaborative online international learning (COIL), which contributes to the ongoing challenge of providing global learning opportunities for all students.

About Learn Chile and CRUCH

Learn Chile www.learnchile.cl

Learn Chile was created in 2013 to promote the internationalization of Chilean HEIs' academic offering and position Chile as a great place to study.

The network is currently made up of 24 HEIs (universities and technical institutes) and the State of Chile through export promotion agency ProChile. The network is present throughout the country, and all member institutions are accredited by the National Accreditation Commission of Chile.

Learn Chile's member HEIs are:

- Duoc UC
- INACAP
- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso
- Santo Tomás Educación Superior
- Universidad Autónoma de Chile
- Universidad Austral de Chile
- Universidad Bernardo O'Higgins
- Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción
- Universidad Católica del Maule
- Universidad Central de Chile
- Universidad de La Frontera
- Universidad de la Serena
- Universidad de los Andes
- Universidad de Magallanes
- Universidad de Valparaíso
- Universidad del Bío-Bío
- Universidad del Desarrollo
- Universidad Mayor
- Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación
- Universidad San Sebastián
- Universidad de Santiago de Chile
- Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María
- Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana
- Universidad Viña del Mar

Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH)

www.consejoderectores.cl

CRUCH was created in 1954 to coordinate university initiatives in Chile.

The Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities is currently made up of 30 state and public universities, presided over by the Ministry of Education.

CRUCH's member universities are:

- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso
- Universidad Alberto Hurtado
- Universidad Arturo Prat
- Universidad Austral de Chile
- Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción
- Universidad Católica de Temuco
- Universidad Católica del Maule
- Universidad Católica del Norte
- Universidad de Antofagasta
- Universidad de Atacama
- Universidad de Aysén
- Universidad de Chile
- Universidad de Concepción
- Universidad de La Frontera
- Universidad de La Serena
- Universidad de Los Andes
- Universidad de Los Lagos
- Universidad de Magallanes
- Universidad de O'Higgins
- Universidad de Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Educación
- Universidad de Santiago de Chile
- Universidad de Talca
- Universidad de Tarapacá
- Universidad de Valparaíso
- Universidad del Bío - Bío
- Universidad Diego Portales
- Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación
- Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María
- Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana

Appendix – HEIs represented in the study

The following 31 HEIs responded to the survey, representing 78% of the universe of HEIs contacted (Learn Chile and/or CRUCH members).

1. Duoc UC
2. INACAP
3. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
4. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso
5. Santo Tomás Educación Superior
6. Universidad Alberto Hurtado
7. Universidad Arturo Prat
8. Universidad Austral de Chile
9. Universidad Autónoma de Chile
10. Universidad Bernardo O'Higgins
11. Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción
12. Universidad Católica de Temuco
13. Universidad Católica del Maule
14. Universidad Católica del Norte
15. Universidad Central de Chile
16. Universidad de Chile
17. Universidad de Concepción
18. Universidad de la Frontera
19. Universidad de los Andes
20. Universidad de Magallanes
21. Universidad de O'Higgins
22. Universidad de Playa Ancha
23. Universidad de Santiago de Chile
24. Universidad de Talca
25. Universidad de Valparaíso
26. Universidad del Bío-Bío
27. Universidad del Desarrollo
28. Universidad Mayor
29. Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María
30. Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana
31. Universidad Viña del Mar