

Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis has created an unprecedented disruption for global theological education. Within a few weeks, nearly all face-to-face instruction ceased around the world. Most schools scrambled to salvage the remainder of the term by moving into online learning environments. They used combinations of learning platforms, video conferencing and file sharing software, social media, and messaging applications. Often, faculty and students scaled back their work to meet the minimum requirements for course completion.

While most faculty and students have been gracious and patient during the rapid transition, much of what schools have implemented in online environments cannot be sustained long-term for pedagogical and financial reasons. This table, adapted from Phil Hill, outlines the four phases through which institutions may be progressing during the pandemic.¹

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<i>Feb. – March 2020</i>	<i>April – July 2020</i>	<i>Aug. – Dec. 2020</i>	<i>2021 & Beyond</i>
“Rush to Zoom:” Rapid Transition to Remote Teaching and Learning	(Re)Adding Basics: Enhancing Current Programs	Extended Transition During Turmoil	Emerging New Normal
Over a short period (3-4 weeks), institutions shifted to online environments, often through synchronous video conferencing (Zoom, MS Team, Google Meet, etc.).	Institutions focus on improving the emergency transition formats, including ensuring access for those with unreliable internet or computer access.	Institutions prepare to support students for a full term with provisions for online learning, face-to-face learning, or transitions between the two.	Institutions implement sustainable online infrastructure and a plan for uses of technology and face-to-face learning.

As schools prepare for the next term (entering Phase 3), uncertainty remains high. For many schools, the coming term will look different in design and delivery than it would have a year ago. For some, adjustments will continue to be temporary, filling the gap until face-to-face courses resume. For others, the coming term will mark changes that may become permanent parts of an ongoing educational approach.

During the crisis, most school leaders have focused time and energy on the most immediate challenges (shifting courses online, adjusting budgets, covering

¹ Adapted from Phil Hill <https://philonedtech.com/revise-outlook-for-higher-eds-online-response-to-covid-19/>. Originally developed at the end of March 2020 for the North American setting. While some particulars may differ, the concept of progressing through phases toward the new reality is helpful.

salaries, etc.). However, as they transition out of this acute phase and plan for the next term, attention should turn to the whole institution's wellbeing. An institution consists of a set of interconnected areas that must be addressed simultaneously to promote institutional health and fulfill school mission.

How to use this document: The following pages list questions designed to help school leaders and leadership teams think through how the whole school is (or needs to be) functioning. Most schools have addressed portions of these questions already, but the complete set of questions provides an opportunity to integrate that previous work with a holistic vision of the school's mission.

These questions include a comprehensive checklist – an opportunity to assess the school's readiness to move into the next phase of learning and ministry. The checklist assumes that modifications will involve online education for at least one more term. Each box contains a series of "yes/no" questions followed by short explanatory notes. By working through the questions, school leaders can identify areas for planning and action as the next term nears.

Following the checklist, we offer three more detailed assessments related to some of the most pressing needs during this time – finances, online education, and care for the school community. The financial questions can help schools think through budgeting, funding, and expense controls. The online education questions outline areas for consideration as schools approach the next term and then consider incorporating online learning into permanent program offerings. Finally, the questions on pastoral care can help school leaders consider their community's holistic needs in light of the stress created by the pandemic.

Finally, we categorize some links for further reading. These resources can be useful for schools as they progress through the next phases of institutional life in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

In this challenging time, may the experience of Psalm 46 be ours, especially the final verse: "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (NIV).