

Blackboard®

Rapid Deployment of Online Learning for over 24,000 Students at Chandigarh University



Chandigarh University (CU) is a leading Indian institution offering its students a unique amalgamation of professional and academic excellence. The University has been accredited with the prestigious A+ grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Chandigarh University has become the youngest and only private university in India to bag A+ grade in the first cycle of the accreditation process and has also become the only private university of Punjab to be accredited by NAAC A+.

With a wide spectrum of programs paired with flexibility, experiential learning and interdisciplinary orientation, CU emancipates students to explore their interests and pursue dream careers. Ranked among Asia's best and fastest growing universities, CU has coupled the experience of top industry leaders and renowned academicians to foster a global approach.



- › Established in 2012
- › Youngest university in India to be ranked by NIRF, Govt. of India
- › September 2020 - Received 'Diamond' Rating from QS I-Gauge Ratings based on globally recognized QS World Rankings

The pandemic has significantly disrupted the field of higher education and necessitated a paradigm shift for teaching and learning in India. When the order of school closures was extended, CU kept its students and faculty members top-of-mind. To ensure education could continue as safely as possible, CU made the decision to partner with Blackboard to bring its teaching and learning fully online for over 24,000 students and 2,000 faculty members. The university went on to adopt Blackboard Learn and Blackboard Collaborate, a learning management system and virtual classroom solution.

With intensive planning and training, the transition was completed rapidly within a month. With over 100 programs, as well as teachers and students from diverse backgrounds, CU had predicted that moving all courses online and getting a large number of people onboard a new system was going to be a challenge. Although blended learning was a practice before the pandemic hit, it was not mandatory and a majority of teachers were still doing face-to-face teaching. CU understood that while most students would have no problems adapting to online classes, a more comprehensive training plan was needed for their faculty members.

Putting Collaborative Team Work into the Rapid Deployment Plan

Mr. Surinder Deol, Head of ERP Solutions at CU said, “It has been an interesting journey at CU. Everything had to be done in a very short time. With train-the-trainer programs in place, we wanted faculty members to be up and running rather quickly with Blackboard which is a completely new system to them. However I’m surprised it only took them a month!”

As part of the rapid deployment plan, CU put three teams into place - Steering Committee, Blackboard Task Force Team, and the Troubleshooting Team.

- **Steering Committee** - This is the team in charge of updating procedures and policies to ensure things are moving quickly, efficiently and effectively.
- **Blackboard Task Force Team** – This team was initially on ground zero. Shefali Verma, Associate Professor at CU and her team worked tirelessly on educating and training students and faculty members. They made sure everyone understood the pressing need for CU to shift to online teaching and learning. With the assistance of the Blackboard Team, a train-the-trainer program was put into place. Weekly webinars and briefings were held via Blackboard Collaborate for the Task Force Team to ensure they were equipped with the skills required to then train their faculty members and students to help them with the shift to online mode.
- **Troubleshooting Team** - During the onboarding, the university’s I.T support team kept their help desk open 24/7 to answer all questions and queries, making help available whenever required as much as possible.

Advancing Learning at Chandigarh University in the Present, and for the Future

CU aims to groom students as professional leaders in an intellectually challenging and contemporarily diverse environment.

“This mission should not be stopped by the lack of physical teaching. CU will continue to maintain high standards of education even virtually. Teachers in different faculties have been well-trained in pedagogy and online teaching and learning methodologies. They are also equipped with skills that are specific to their disciplines, which guarantees the course delivered online would be as equally good as face-to-face”, said Dr. Satbir S Sehgal, Registrar of CU.

The university continues to support its students and employees at this time, and are making plans to continue with hybrid teaching and learning as the National Education Policy looks to introduce policies such as flexible learning very soon.

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