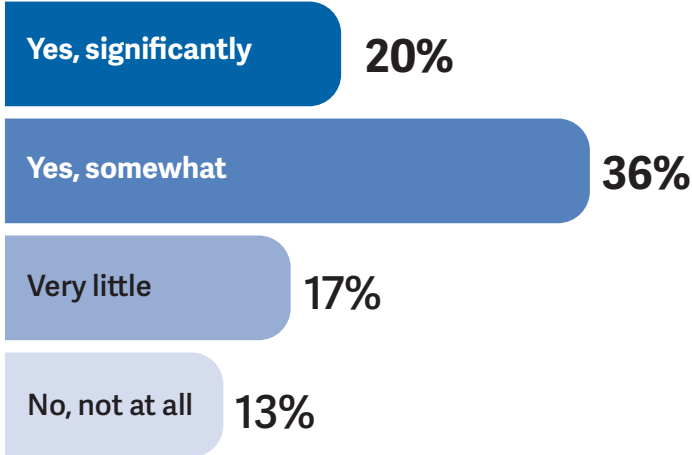# New UB survey finds COVID-19 crisis causing higher ed to reexamine its core systems

University Business and Workday partnered to develop and deploy a survey of higher education leaders from campuses around the country in June 2020, asking them how their core operational systems have been able to meet the needs of their institutions during the school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. 410 higher education leaders participated in the survey, from two- and four-year, public and private institutions with a variety of enrollment sizes.

Reexamining core operational systems

Respondents were asked if the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had caused their institution to reexamine whether its core operational systems (ERP, SIS, Financial Management, Human Capital Management) are capable of meeting the needs of the institution today and in the future. **Some 56% said yes, with 20% saying "Yes, significantly" and 36% saying "Yes, somewhat."** Just 17% said "Very little" and 13% said "No, not at all." Another 13% said they didn't know.

Has the COVID-19 pandemic caused your institution to reexamine whether your core operational systems are meeting the needs of your institution today, and will be able to meet your needs in the future?

Yes, significantly — **20%**

Yes, somewhat — **36%**

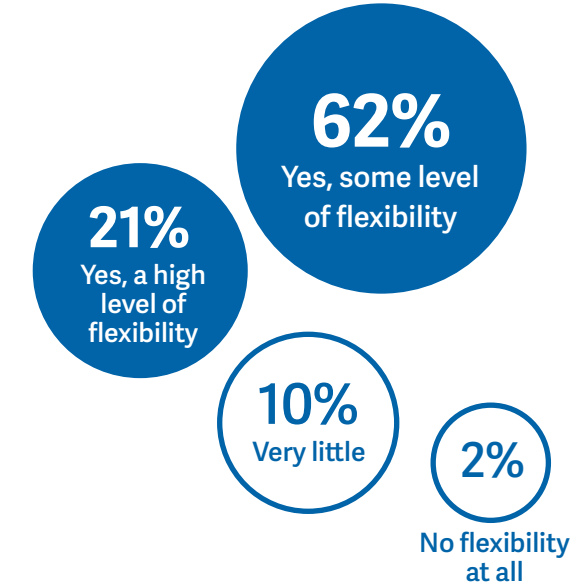Very little — **17%**

No, not at all — **13%**

Similarly, respondents were also asked if they felt that these same core systems (ERP, SIS, Financial Management and Human Capital Management) had enabled their institution to maintain business continuity during the crisis, without requiring additional investments. While 34% said they had maintained continuity without additional investments, **the leading answer by far was "We have managed to maintain continuity with our current systems, but it has required investments in time, effort and new tools or technologies," selected by 53%.** Another 5% said they had "struggled to maintain business continuity using our current systems, which have been inadequate."

53% of respondents said, "We have managed to maintain business continuity with our current systems, but it has required investments in time, effort and new tools or technologies."

The next question asked respondents if they felt that their current ERP, SIS, Financial Management and Human Capital Management systems offered enough flexibility to allow their institution to adapt in emergencies or times of uncertainty, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. While 21% said these systems offered a "high level of flexibility," **the most respondents (62%) described these systems as offering only "some level of flexibility."** Another 10% said they offered "very little" and 2% said they offered "no flexibility at all."

Do you feel that your current systems offer enough flexibility to allow your institution to adapt in emergencies or times of uncertainty, such as the current pandemic crisis?

62% Yes, some level of flexibility

21% Yes, a high level of flexibility

10% Very little

2% No flexibility at all

IT infrastructure, and access to data

Respondents were also asked if their institution was required to invest specifically in additional IT infrastructure (i.e. additional VPN licenses) in order to deliver or operate core systems remotely. 9% said "Yes, significantly," 32% said "Yes, moderately" and 27% said "Yes, but a small amount," for a total of **68% saying they had been required to make these investments.** Only 18% said "Not at all."

The next question asked respondents how confident they were that they or their institution's leaders had timely access to all the data required to make strategic decisions, both in the near and long term. Just 26% said they were "extremely confident," while **54% said they were only "somewhat confident," 14% had a "low level of confidence" and 4% had "no confidence at all."**

"The COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden move to remote teaching, learning and working have been unprecedented in higher education," says Robert Steele, Vice President, Higher Education from Workday. **"It's more vital than ever that higher education leaders have core systems that can meet the needs of their institutions, provide adequate insights and offer enough flexibility to adapt to this dramatically changed environment."**

As higher education institutions continue to assess the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on their people, students, budget, and learning delivery models, Workday remains committed to helping you respond, recover, and emerge stronger in this rapidly changing world.

To learn more about how a single system for finance, HR, student, planning, and analytics can help your institution achieve the agility you need to adapt, visit **https://www.workday.com/en-us/industries/higher-education.html** today.

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