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**Open Universities Worldwide: Current Challenges   
and Future Prospects**

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Around 17 million students study in different-type open/distance teaching universities throughout the world. This presentation examines the diverse open/distance universities according to different classification criteria: institutional modes (single-mode universities, dual-mode, extensions and consortia); generations of technology (print-based, multi-media, computer-based); size (small to mega-universities); public/private; scope of operation (local, national, global); instructional approaches (industrial model of distributed teaching responsibility, collaborative online teaching, satellite/video-taped lectures, blended mode); innovative clusters.

The presentation examines 10 current challenges facing open/distance universities related to: competition with campus-based universities; reduced budgeting from the governments; changing technological and instructional infrastructures; digital divide between developing and developed countries, and between poor and rich; finding the golden triangle for combining high quality, admitting large numbers of students and providing economies-of-scale; moving from a national to an international landscape; finding appropriate parties for collaboration in the academic and corporate worlds; creating a closer interface with markets in the knowledge society; ensuring quality of teaching and evaluation; designing on-going support for both students and teachers.

The presentation concludes with examining the leading future prospects for the open/distance universities, and the noticeable parameters that will shape the "future universities", and which are relevant to the development of both campus-based and open/distance teaching universities.

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