

# 95% of respondents believe that they are more likely to learn something new in the coming year

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**Covid-19 impact: Upskilling, continuous learning and professional courses are the need of the hour**

**50% of respondents prefer online learning, whereas 60% respondents prefer a blend of online and face to face learning**

**51% of respondents preferred a professional course**

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The need to possess the right skills remains very relevant throughout one's evolving career and organisational journey. This is especially true in times like today with the global pandemic.

The learning landscape is dramatically changing and individuals are focusing on pursuing a professional qualification and snapping out of the traditional face-to-face learning to a more of online and a blend of online and face-to-face learning.

According to the Learning and Development: Outlook in the Covid-19 year, a report by ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) learning and development is rapidly evolving. The study conducted in India had responses from over 102 HR professionals, representing a diverse mix of organisations across industry types and employee strength. 73% of the respondents had at least 500 employees or more, while 23% represented small organisations with employee strength of less than 250

employees.

The study captured the changing facets of learning and development (L&D) for finance professionals as well as the overall organisation. There are several significant trends that point towards the changing world order. These trends have a direct impact on how organisations would function in the future and the skills needed, as an individual, to thrive. The survey highlights that increasingly individuals are keen to learn something new in the coming year to enhance their skills and capabilities and to add the necessary competency to be successful in the new COVID-19 era.

Traditionally in India learning has always been face to face. Interestingly, only 20% of the participants preferred face to face as a learning method with 50% of respondents preferring online learning. The survey also revealed that 60% of respondents preferred a blended learning of online and face to face as one of the methods of learning and development. How blended learning evolves in the future would be key to learning and development with online learning being the safest at the moment.

The survey echoed that 69% respondents demanded short term courses of less than 3 months, while 33% were interested in a course with a duration between 3-6 months. This trend indicated the urgent need to develop new or add additional skills in the current portfolio of professionals. The focus currently is towards applied skills with 51% of respondents preferring a professional course and 21% technical course. Only 16% of respondents preferred soft skills training.

Commenting on the survey findings, Md. Sajid Khan, Head of International Development, ACCA said, "The COVID-19 pandemic has created a truly unprecedented situation which has compelled organisations to think and reinvent themselves. This has put a spotlight on the role of learning and development (L&D), both from an individual and an organisational perspective. For an individual to play a critical role in driving this change, it is essential that they learn, evolve and adapt their skills. As highlighted in the report this willingness to learn is commendable, and more people are keen to enhance their skills and build new competencies in the coming year."

This report is the result of a survey conducted in April 2020 of HR professionals across India. The current pandemic has caused 80% of business leaders to expect a significant downturn in revenues and profit for the year, as per a previous ACCA report 'COVID-19 Global survey: Inside business Impacts and Responses' (ACCA 2020).

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