Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 saw the rapid adoption of fully online higher education (HE) academic programmes across the world. With the likely post-pandemic return to on-campus education, online learning in some form is expected to continue. It is apparent also that globally, students’ mindsets about online learning have changed during the pandemic period. It is thus timely to investigate the potential of blended learning (BL), a hybrid form of online and face-to-face education, as a pedagogical approach for HE in the future worldwide. As academic staff are instrumental in implementing effective HE pedagogical approaches, this study explored the academic staff’s views and practices with BL. The study implemented the qualitative case study approach, and the in-depth interview method was applied with eight academic staff representing different departments in a Singaporean higher education institution. Thematic analysis on the qualitative data gathered in accordance with the study’s foci elicited inputs about the academic staff’s BL understandings, usage and impacts, as well as challenges and suggestions for enhancing BL in HE. The findings revealed the academic staff’s positive BL perceptions, sound understandings, and strong experience with various digital tools. From this sound foundation, the staff interviewees made suggestions for developing effective BL practices which apply for HE in the future. The study’s important implication is that the findings are relevant and valuable in the situation where, post the pandemic, HE adjusts for students return to campuses where BL is likely to replace the face-to-face education. Importantly, these suggestions form the elements of a BL ecosystem that includes policy, infrastructure, training and evaluation and demonstrates flexibility for the ecosystem’s application to both the Singaporean context and to effective HE BL design globally post the pandemic.

Keywords: blended learning, higher education, post COVID-19, effective practice, BL ecosystem