

COVID-19 Impact Survey

**Online survey of Athabasca University undergraduate students
conducted from May 21 to June 6, 2020**



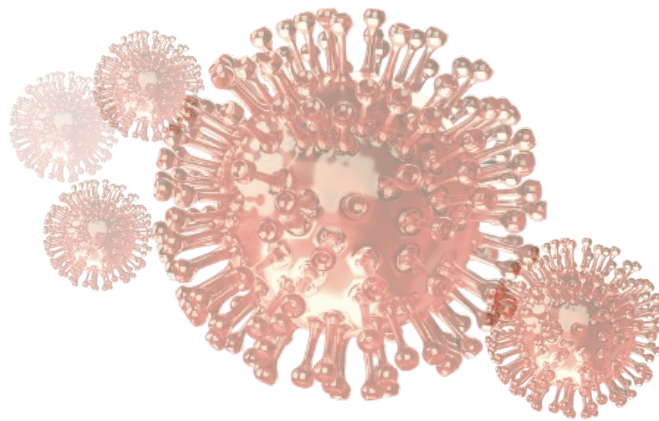
Overview

AUSU ran a survey looking at the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic among undergraduate Athabasca University students in late May and early June 2020, with an opt-in online survey that was sent out via AUSU social media and e-mail newsletter. **1,613 students** participated in six question survey looking at whether the pandemic has had impact on a student's studies and what challenges students are facing.

The vast majority of students identified that the pandemic has had some impact on their studies, with only 20% of students saying that there was no impact on their studies.

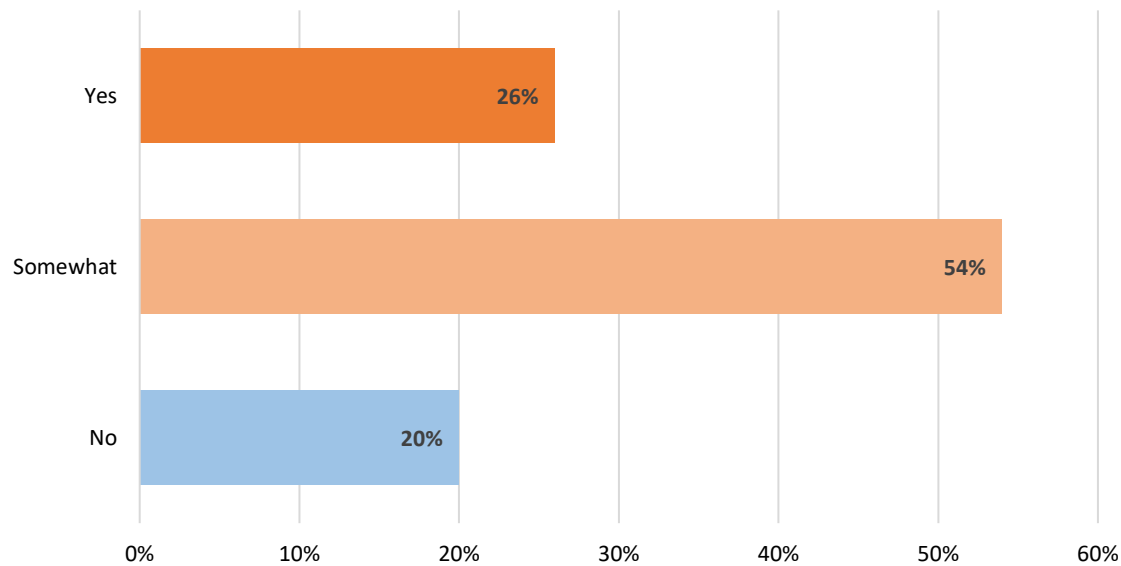
Some key findings:

- **80%** of students surveyed said that the pandemic was having an impact on their studies
- **24%** of students surveyed were either unsatisfied with the response from Athabasca University or did not know they could contact Athabasca University with an issue relating to COVID-19
- **64%** of students surveyed identified concerns about their mental health during COVID-19
- **68%** of students surveyed said that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their focus and productivity as it related to their Athabasca University studies
- Being unable to finish course(s) on time, being unable to study with distractions at home, and difficulties with ProctorU were identified as the biggest academic challenges as a result of the pandemic



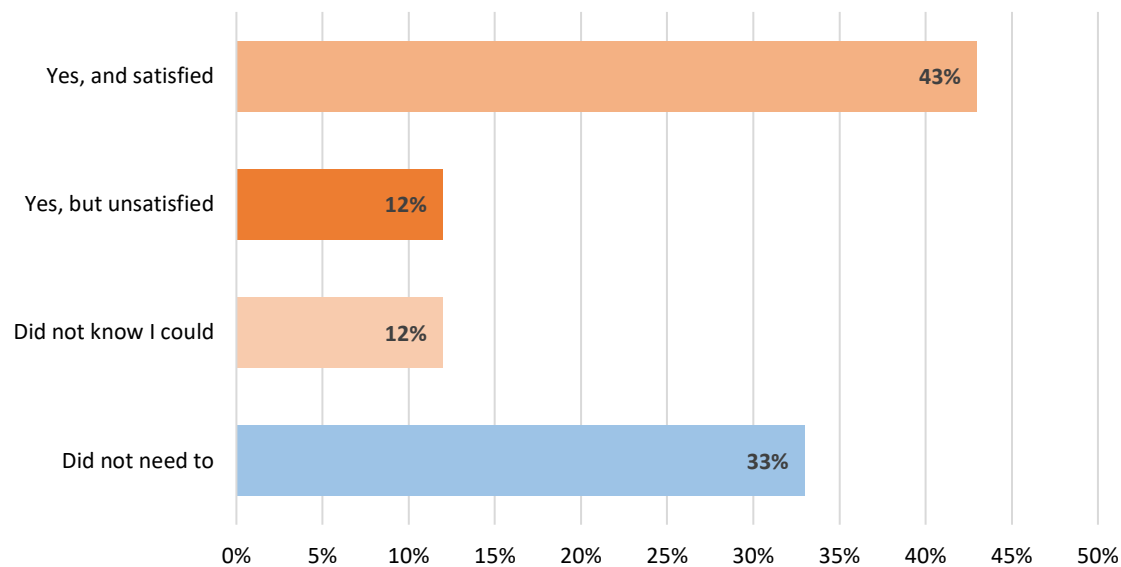
AUSU Survey on the Impacts of COVID-19

Have the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic affected your ability to continue your Athabasca University studies?



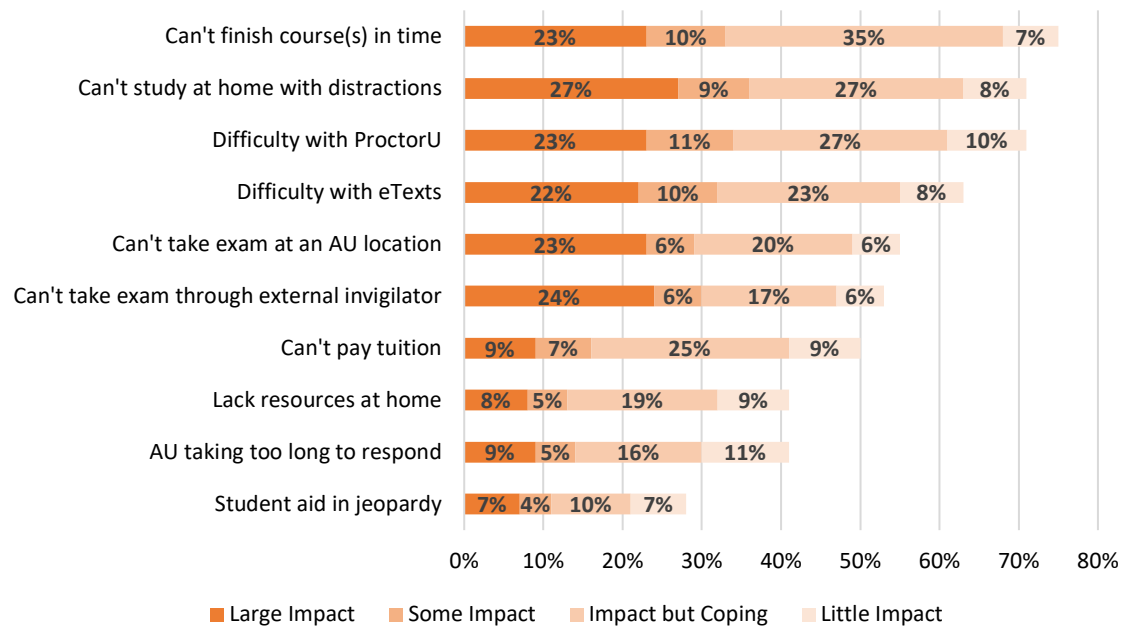
The majority of students who responded to the survey said that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on their studies, with 80% of students saying that it had an impact or somewhat had an impact on their ability to continue their studies. 20% of students said there was no impact.

Have you had to reach out to Athabasca University during the COVID-19 pandemic?



AUSU Survey on the Impacts of COVID-19

From your perspective, please rate these COVID-19 pandemic challenges on how much they impact you.



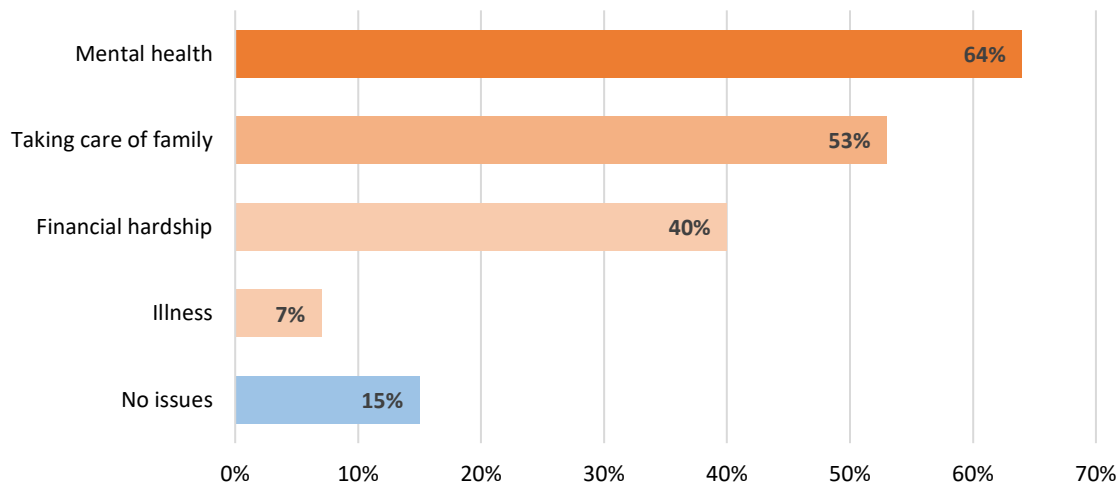
AUSU asked students to rate ten different challenges from having a large impact on their studies to having no impact. The biggest challenges identified by students who were surveyed include:

- *"I cannot finish my course(s) in the time I was hoping to."* - 75%
- *"I can't study at home due to self-isolation, caring for dependents, or too distractions."* - 72%
- *"I have challenges using ProctorU for exams due to the cost, technology, or other reasons."* - 70%

The listed challenges that over half of students surveyed identifying as having an impact also include:

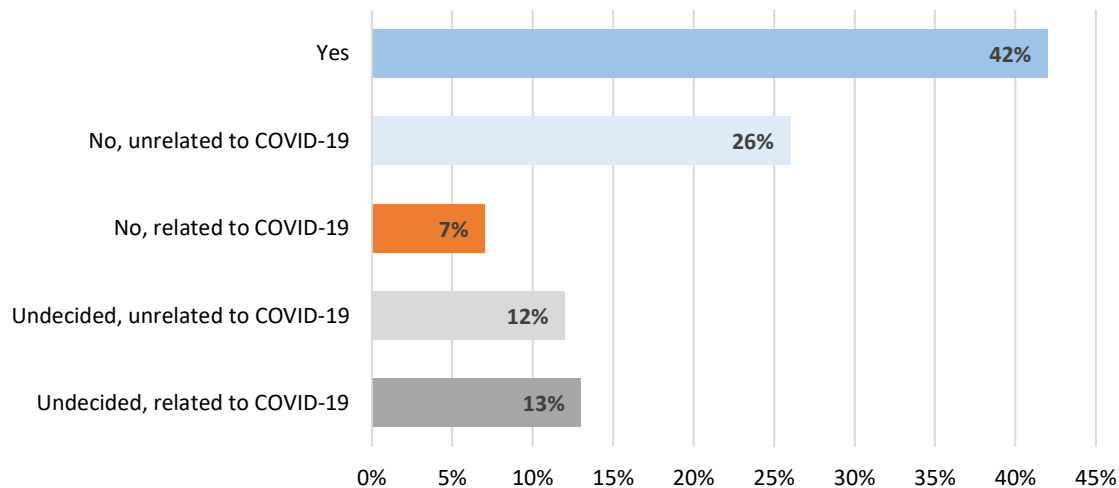
- *"I have difficulty studying with eTexts instead of physical materials."* – 62%
- *"I cannot take my exams that are booked at an AU location."* – 54%
- *"I cannot take my exams that are booked through an external invigilator."* – 53%

What issues facing you or your family have impacted your studies?



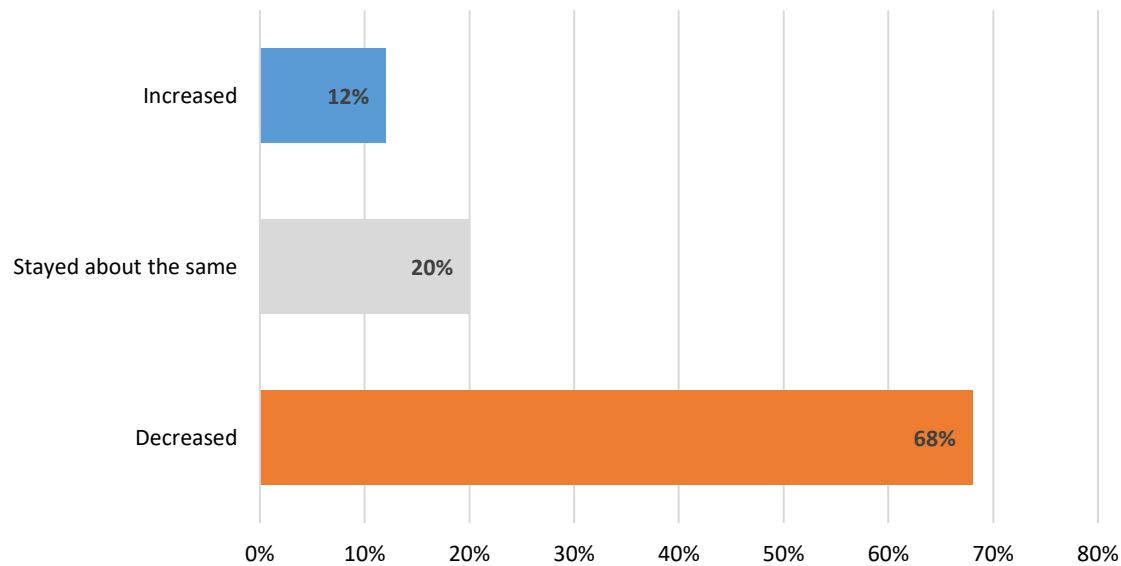
Students were asked to identify which broader issues facing them and their family are impacting their academic studies. Both *“Focusing on mental health needs makes studying more difficult.”* and *“I have to take care of family members or other additional responsibilities.”* were statements that the majority of students surveyed agreed with, and *“My family has experienced a loss of income or financial hardship.”* was identified as an issue by 40% of students. The data suggests that the greater impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting students beyond issues directly related to studying.

Do you plan on registering for a new AU course in June, July or August?

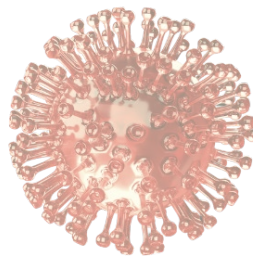


Many students are looking to continue their studies during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 42% of students surveyed planning on registering for a new course in the next three months. The pandemic was cited by 20% of students as the reason they will not continue their studies or their future registrations are in doubt, however, more students cited reasons unrelated to the pandemic for not registering in the near future.

Has your academic focus and productivity changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?



The overall impact of the pandemic on student focus and productivity has been negative, with 68% of students surveyed saying their focus has decreased and only 12% have seen it increase, going against some narratives that individual students may have more time to focus on their studies due to employment changes, quarantines, or the need to stay home more during the public health crisis.



Data compiled by AUSU June 22, 2020. For any questions regarding this survey or the data compiled, please contact Duncan Wojtaszek, Governance and Advocacy Coordinator, at governance@ausu.org.