



Working Remotely

Four Key Findings

The Early Impacts of COVID-19 on Graduate Students Across Canada

Find out more about the COVID-19 Graduate Student Survey at:
toscipolicynet.ca/covid19-report

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1 Students were dissatisfied with updates

42%

of graduate students were unsatisfied with updates regarding financial support and funding.

89%

of graduate students received some form of instruction to begin remote work.

2 Insufficient resources to work remotely

27%

of graduate students did not have access to a safe and quiet work space.

3

Negative impact on degree components

76%

of graduate students reported a negative impact on their ability to conduct research.

50%

of graduate students reported a negative impact on their ability to find/complete work experiences such as practicums or internships.

4 Unclear remote work expectations

51%

of graduate students reported that expectations for remote work were unclear or received no communications about expectations.



Research

Three Key Findings

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1

Student research was severely disrupted

77%

of research-stream graduate students are dependent on some access to a physical research space.

2

Reduction in supervisory meetings

17%

of research-stream graduate students rarely met with their supervisor during COVID-19.

24%

of research-stream graduate students were unsatisfied with the frequency of their meetings.

3

International activities were disrupted

78%

of graduate students planning to study or research abroad had to cancel their plans.

41%

of such graduate students felt the cancellation and virtual format of conferences would impact their future prospects.



Funding

Three Key Findings

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1 Students are concerned about finances

Graduate students expressing concern regarding income from:

69% Stipends

66% Teaching Assistantships

62% Research Assistantships

Graduate students expressing concern regarding ability to pay:

67% Tuition Fees

66% Rent

54% Credit Payments

2

Long-term financial crisis imminent

88%

of professional-stream graduate students were not contacted about how COVID-19 would impact their time-to-completion or associated costs.

30%

of research-stream graduate students do not receive a stipend.

3 Loss of critical work experience

40%

of professional-stream graduate students report not being able to complete their scheduled summer internship, practicum or work term as planned.



TSPN

Health and Wellness

Four Key Findings

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1 Students experienced housing changes

9%

of graduate students
required additional housing
support due to COVID-19.

2

Students considered leaves-of-absence

26%

of graduate students are considering taking a long term leave-of-absence from their degree.

Reasons for considering taking a leave-of-absence included:

- Inability to work remotely
- Financial challenges
- Caretaking needs

3 Dissatisfaction with health supports

23%

of graduate students were dissatisfied with access to primary care.

21%

of graduate students were dissatisfied with access to mental health services.

52%

of graduate students were uncertain whether resources were provided

Graduate students level of satisfaction regarding additional mental health supports during COVID-19:

30%

No resources were provided

21%

Insufficient resources were provided

17%

Sufficient resources were provided

4 Student mental health declined

Graduate students experiencing an increase in severity of mental health challenges:

- 77%** Feelings of anxiety
- 72%** Feeling of being overwhelmed
- 76%** Feelings of helplessness
- 71%** Feelings of loneliness
- 63%** Feelings of depression



TSPN

Teaching Two Key Findings

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1 Support for remote teaching needed

30%

of graduate teaching assistants (TAs) and course instructors (CIs) reported receiving no support in the transition to remote teaching.

79%

of graduate TAs and CIs received no financial compensation for the additional work involved in transitioning to remote teaching.

2

Concerns with teaching requirements

34%

of graduate TAs and CIs reported dissatisfaction with departmental supports for completing their teaching requirements.

58%

of graduate TAs and CIs expressed concern about availability of future teaching opportunities.



TSPN

Courses

Two Key Findings

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1 Practical components cancelled

29%

of graduate students said the physical lab or field component of their course was cancelled.

2 Dissatisfied with course quality

Graduate students expressing dissatisfaction with quality of course delivery:

43% Practical Aspects

29% Lectures

Increased dissatisfaction also expressed regarding:

- Assignments
- Grading
- Instructor(s)
- Teaching Assistant(s)



International Students

Three Key Findings

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1 Students were unable to return home

60%

of international graduate students were intending to travel home but were unable to do so.

Reasons for their inability to go home:

- 14%** Canadian travel restrictions
- 13%** Limited flights
- 12%** Home country travel restrictions
- 12%** Finances

2 Insufficient travel & housing support

29%

of international graduate students were dissatisfied with their institution's travel support.

46%

of international graduate students said they received no housing assistance from their institution.

3 Students concerned about study permits

54%

of international graduate students were worried about their ability to complete degree requirements before the expiration of their study permit.



Future Outlook

Three Key Findings

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1 Concern about time-to-completion

40%

of research-stream graduate students said COVID-19 would impact their degree timeline.

15%

of professional-stream graduate students said COVID-19 would impact their degree timeline.

2

Concern about degree completion

44%

of research-stream graduate students were concerned COVID-19 would impact their ability to complete their degree.

33%

of professional-stream graduate students were concerned COVID-19 would impact their ability to complete their degree.

3 Concern about ability to graduate

50%

of graduate students intending to graduate before August 2020 are now unable or unsure about their ability to do so.