

## STUDENT EXPERIENCES DURING THE LOCKDOWN: A SURVEY BY STUDY ASSOCIATION SIRIUS

How do students experience the current lock-down situation? What is their home situation? Are they still motivated to study? Do they have tips for their fellow students and for university? Such questions keep us all engaged: students, study association Sirius and the programmes in Public Administration and Health Sciences. Are you, as a student, in a similar situation as your fellow students? How do they experience the lockdown?

Sirius and programme management have regular meetings with student representatives and members. These meetings give important impressions to help support students and on-line education. To have a systematic insight, Sirius and the programmes developed a joint questionnaire. We received a response of 164 students, which is approximately 30 percent. The results of the questionnaire:

- may help you, as a student, to be aware that your experiences and feelings are shared with quite a lot of others. We hope that it may encourage students to (further) discuss how to cope with the current situation. We hope that the results stimulates the community of students to be open to one another about the personal impact of the lockdown.
- help programme management and Sirius to improve education, and think about (further) measures for opening up education as of September 2020.

### 1. How students experience the lockdown

Below we first present the results of our questionnaire. Four tables provide insight in how our students experience the lockdown situation and their education. Each table presents students' level of agreement with statements on a five-point scale, varying between "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The first column presents the percentage of students who (strongly) disagree with the statement. The middle column presents the percentage students who are neutral. The third column indicates the percentage students who (strongly) agree with the statement. Smileys indicate out interpretation what would be good or bad.

*A majority of students is mentally exhausted in the current lockdown situation*

A solid majority of students agrees that they have become more lonely in the lockdown situation, have less energy since, and got more bored. In the morning, they do not look forward to start studying. Students differ with regard to their general energy level. The items form a strong scale, which indicates that the negative feelings of fatigue with the situation cumulate in students.

<i>I feel more lonely</i>	😊	26	18	56	😞
<i>I have less energy</i>	😊	31	17	52	😞
<i>I got more bored</i>	😊	22	16	62	😞
<i>I am still full of energy</i>	😞	36	35	30	😊
<i>In the morning, I am looking forward to start studying</i>	😞	69	19	12	😊

Table 1. Feelings about fatigue in lockdown in percentage (%)

*Students miss sports, friends and social activities most; then comes study*

1	Sport (fitness or team sport)
2	Meet with friends
3	Going out/party/cinema/theatre/restaurant
4	Visiting the library/studying in a quiet environment
5	Lecture without getting disturb/physical lectures/going to the Campus

Table 2. Top 5 most mentioned activities missed by students due to the lockdown.

Remarkably, students prioritize sports above going out. Study in the library and lectures come next.

*The lockdown has detached students from their study. Only few find compensating activities*

Do students employ new activities in lockdown? Do students invest more time in their study because most activities are cancelled? The results suggest the contrary. A solid majority reports that their study environment has stalled: they do not spend more time on study and they certainly do not speak more often to study friends.

Only a quarter of the students compensate this with talking to their other friends more often. Almost half of the students compensate by creating new hobbies.

<i>I spend more time studying</i>		57	24	19	
<i>I created new hobbies</i>		36	17	47	
<i>I speak to my study friends more often</i>		81	14	5	
<i>I speak to my other friends more often</i>		50	26	24	

Table 3. Positive or negative feelings about activities in lockdown in percentage (%)

*The temporary digital environment is appreciated for the moment, but students long back to their on-campus experience at University of Twente*

An overwhelming majority of our students appreciates the digital education for the moment. That is good news, especially given all the hard work of everyone to continue education.

Students, however, do not favour replacement of on-campus education by on-line education. Accessibility of online education is evaluated quite mixed among the students. Students do not attend more lectures than before. They would like to have on-campus education as soon as possible because it is more fun.

<i>Digital education nice for now, but should not last too long</i>		15	13	72	
<i>Digital lectures are more accessible for me</i>		36	26	38	
<i>I currently attend more lectures than before lockdown</i>		61	22	17	
<i>On-campus education lot more fun than digital education</i>		12	17	71	
<i>The sooner I can go back to university the better</i>		20	26	54	

Table 4. Appreciation or depreciation of distance education in percentage (%).

*Most students have difficulties concentrating, being motivated, and finding structure—even though expectations from their study are clear to them.*

A majority of students report problems with concentration and study motivation. They have problems in creating a work structure during weekdays. Fortunately, they perceive their study requirements as clear.

<i>I am able to concentrate well</i>		57	23	20	
<i>I am able to motivate myself</i>		48	25	18	
<i>I wake up every weekday at the same time for structure</i>		47	10	43	
<i>It was clear what was expected from me</i>		13	26	61	

Table 5. Positive or negative feelings about study motivation in percentage (%)

## 2. Experiences of different student groups

Are experiences similar for foreign students than for Dutch students? Do first-year students have different feelings and experiences than do well-seasoned master's students? To answer such questions, we compared different student groups on the basis of their background characteristics. We find very few significant differences.

### *Similarities between student groups*

We actually find very few significant differences between student groups. Apparently, the lock-down and online-education experiences have kicked in regardless of study context / social context. We observe no differences in whatever feelings, activities, or online-education experiences between:

- Bachelor and master students;
- First-year and later-year students;
- Students who live with their parents or not.
- Foreign students and Dutch students

These results have implications for our preparation of September 2020. The prioritization of some student groups may be driven by implicit assumptions on differences in impact of lockdown. Our survey shows that different student groups have similar needs; especially in on-campus education and socializing to stimulate motivation, engagement and joy in student life.

## 3. Student advices

Below we included a summary of the most prominent tips of students for their fellow students and teachers. Many students responded that they would like to receive tips on concentration and motivation.

### ***How to better concentrate?***

Split recorded lectures into pieces of about 20 minutes. Have a break in between.

Organise your own work intervals and work times. There is no best structure. Personally I work best in the late evening in 40 minute intervals with cooking or exercise in between.

Clean up your room and have a 'professional' workspace like a desk. Avoid watching lectures from bed.

Use time constraints (e.g. work for two hours and then take a break).

Make sure to do daily physical activity to increase energy-levels and concentration.

Study together with someone (online); have breakfast with someone.

### ***How to become more motivated?***

A structured day is so important and helps a lot for continuity.

Create one or two fixed activities throughout the week to establish fixed reference points for time planning. This can be online lectures, artificial deadlines, jogging days or online meetings with friends.

Try to create one to three goals for each day and stick to them as much as possible.

Make a schedule, including 'study-free' periods, since taking distance from your study is difficult when at home.

Don't get up too late and start on time. Do not start doing other things first, because then it will be more difficult to get to study.

Talk with people when you're worried or not feeling well.

Enjoy the little things. For example: look forward and be excited that you are going for a walk with a friend.

### ***Tips on education***

It is quite hard to ask small questions to the educational staff, because you have to send them questions online (by mail). It would be nice if there are more opportunities to ask questions to lecturers.

It is very hard to keep concentrated during online lectures. It would be nice if the lecturers can be paused or cut in smaller pieces.

A lot of lectures went online instead of physical. It was a change for everyone. The tip is to be sure of your digital lecture. The past time everything went well, so you actually can work with digital lectures!

To stimulate the interactive lecture, it would be nice if, for example, the chat possibility can be used more. This can maybe result in a discussion, which is really nice. Use polls during the lectures and ask specific individuals to give their argumentation.

It would be nice if it would be possible to rewind the video lectures with 10 or 20 seconds.

It would be nice to have the opportunity to have recorded lectures when physical lectures returns.

It would be nice if it is possible to review your made test at the end of a test-time. By handing in every question separately, this is not optimal.