

2020 SERU COVID-19 Student Experience Survey

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington
Topline Report

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SURVEY BACKGROUND

The SERU COVID-19 Student Experience Survey was conducted from 25 May to 7 June and was sent to 20,094 students enrolled at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington.

The survey was developed by US partners of the Student in the Research University (SERU) Consortium and disseminated to universities around the world. The survey is still being run at universities, including in the US, Europe, Russia, China, Japan, and India.

6,782 students participated in the survey providing a 34% response rate.

Note: The survey was designed to evaluate the COVID-19 response and identify areas to learn from our experiences; as such, the summary text for each section highlights **areas for improvement** as well as **positive experiences**.



SERU

Student Experience in the Research University

Developed by the
Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California Berkeley
and the
University of Minnesota

SERU Consortium Members

SERU North American Division

- UC Berkeley
- UC Davis
- UC Irvine
- UC Los Angeles
- UC Merced
- UC Riverside
- UC San Diego
- UC Santa Barbara
- UC Santa Cruz
- CU Boulder
- Michigan State University
- Purdue University
- Rutgers University Texas
- A&M University
- University of Connecticut
- University of Toronto
- University of Virginia
- University of Delaware
- University of Florida
- University of Iowa
- University of Kansas
- University of Maryland
- University of Michigan
- University of Minnesota
- University of North Carolina
- University of Oregon
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Texas
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Washington

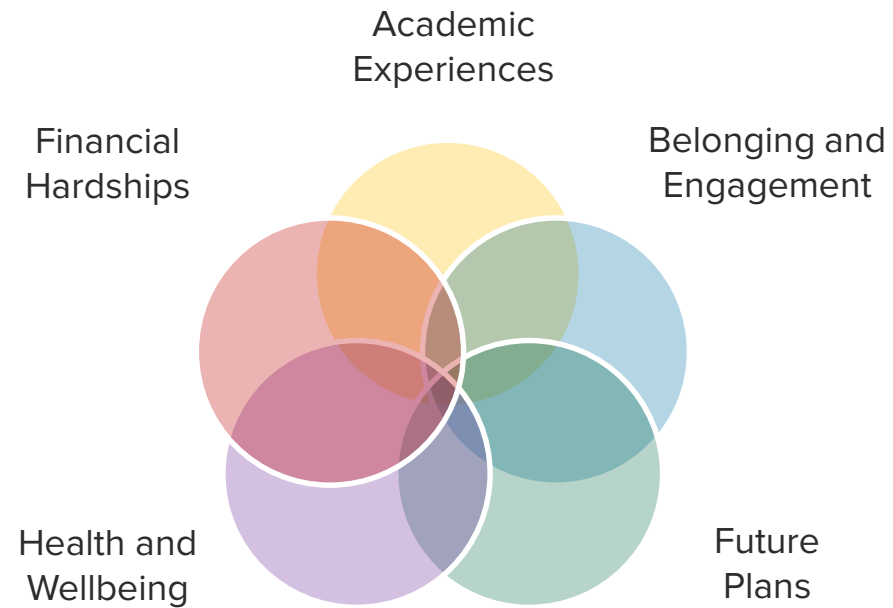
SERU International Division

- Lund University  Sweden
- HSE University Moscow  Russia
- Hiroshima University  Japan
- Osaka University  Japan
- Lancaster University  UK
- Utrecht University  Netherlands
- Bremen University  Germany
- University of Göttingen  Germany
- Victoria University Wellington  New Zealand
- Peking University  China
- Nanjing University  China
- Tongji University  China
- Hunan University  China



SERU COVID-19 Survey Design

Content Areas



Survey Development Principles

1. Actionable
2. Short
3. Mobile Friendly
4. Cost-Effective
5. Allows Benchmarking



KEY FINDINGS

- Students on the whole were **able to adapt to online instruction**
- Students didn't have a **single point of clear, timely communication** about the learning timeline, structure, and expectations.
- Some students discussed the **increased workload** generated by longer than normal lectures, overlapping deadlines across courses, and limitations in adapting in-person assignments, such as group projects.
- Students **missed the social interaction and access to campus facilities**, such as the library, labs, and study spaces
- Students enjoyed the **flexibility to watch or re-watch recorded lectures** that fit around their schedule.
- Students, in addition to their studies at Victoria University of Wellington, are **engaged in off-campus work** that often takes up time otherwise dedicated to studying and assignments.
- Many students highlighted the need for a job to cover the **cost of university fees, accommodation, and supporting family**.





TAUGHT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Going Online



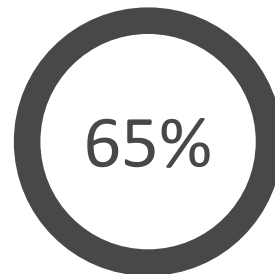
Students who have taken online courses here before



Taught Students
(n=5159)



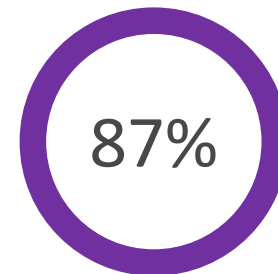
Students who have **NOT** taken online courses before



Taught Students
(n=5159)



Students adapted to online instruction

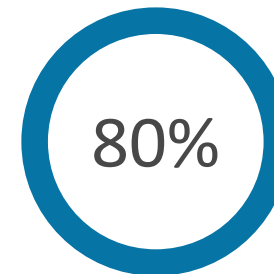


Taught Students
(n=5364)

Very well:	13%
Well:	35%
Slightly well:	39%
Not at all well:	13%



Satisfaction with support from academic staff

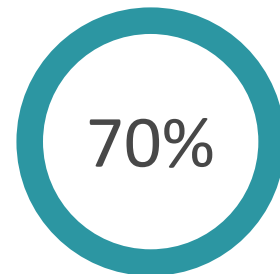


Taught Students
(n=5197)

Very satisfied:	17%
Satisfied:	64%
Dissatisfied:	17%
Very dissatisfied:	3%



Satisfaction with overall quality of online classes



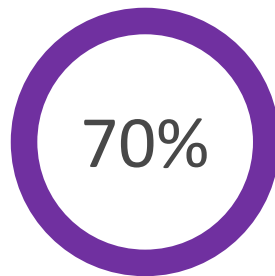
Taught Students
(n=5171)

Very satisfied:	11%
Satisfied:	60%
Dissatisfied:	24%
Very dissatisfied:	5%

Top 5 Obstacles to Online Learning



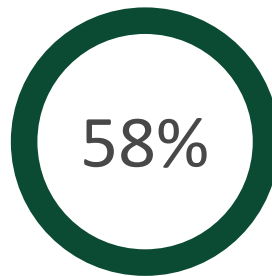
Lack of motivation
for online learning



Taught Students
(n=5268)



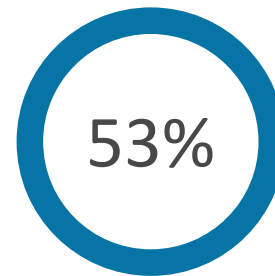
Lack of interaction/
communication with
other students



Taught Students
(n=5268)



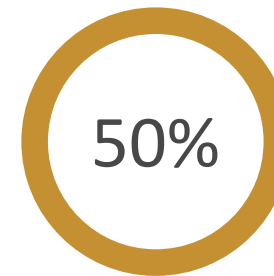
Inability to learn
effectively in an
online format



Taught Students
(n=5268)



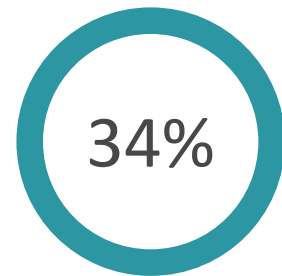
Lack of access to an
appropriate study
space



Taught Students
(n=5268)



Lack of clear
expectations from
academic staff

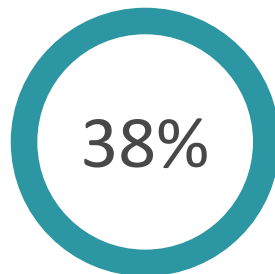


Taught Students
(n=5268)

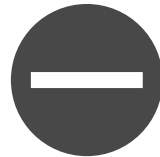
Top 5 Positives of Online Learning



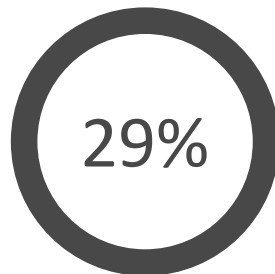
More time for
academic work



Taught Students
(n=5134)



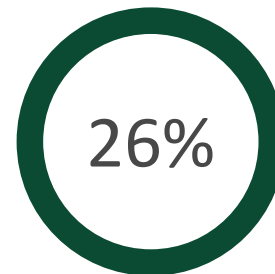
None



Taught Students
(n=5134)



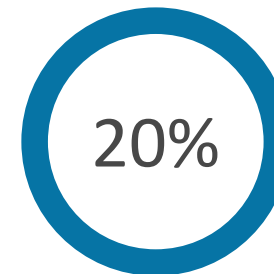
Enjoyed learning in
an online format



Taught Students
(n=5134)



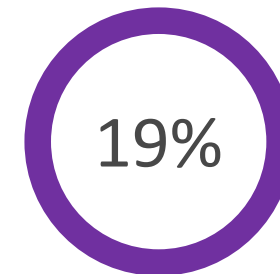
More productive
completing
assignments



Taught Students
(n=5134)



Able to prepare
more for classes



Taught Students
(n=5134)

A large majority of taught students have never taken an online course before the COVID-19 pandemic, yet **most were able to adapt to online learning** over Trimester 1 2020. This was helped by the **support students received from academic staff**.

Students did **struggle with a lack of motivation**, which may have been due to the **structure of online courses**, but it was also clear that students had **issues with communication**.

Comments highlighted the **increased workload** of online courses, **limited access** to resources/technology, their **health and wellbeing**, and the **unclear and sometimes conflicting communication** across the University.



While a quarter of students said they **enjoyed learning in an online format**, the survey also indicated that a portion of students deciding not to continue did so **because the University had transitioned online**.

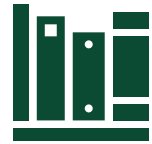
Student comments repeatedly mentioned the **benefits of recorded lectures** on their learning and having a **more flexible schedule** to manage their balance of study, employment, and social activities.



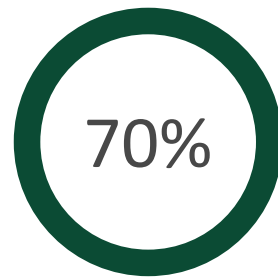


RESEARCH STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Top 5 Obstacles During COVID-19



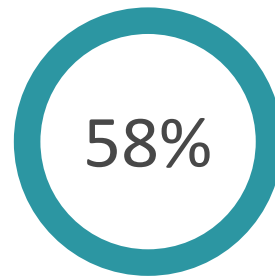
Lack of access to an appropriate study space



Research Students
(n=598)



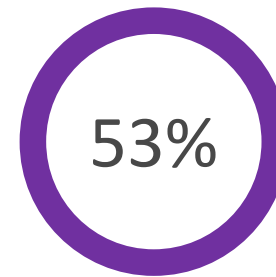
Inability to conduct research



Research Students
(n=598)



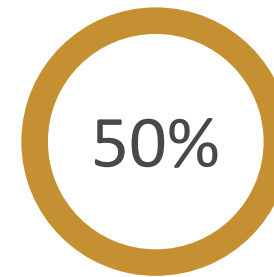
Need to provide additional care for family members



Research Students
(n=598)



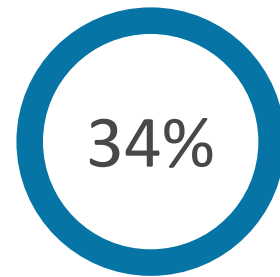
Inability to attend professional conferences



Research Students
(n=598)



Inadequate access to academic staff

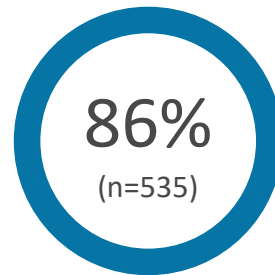


Research Students
(n=598)

Supervisor Satisfaction



Support with conducting research during the closure

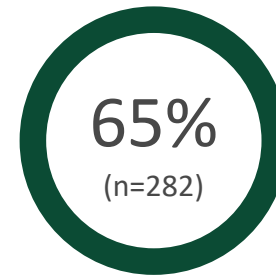


Research Students
(n=535)

Very satisfied:	50%
Satisfied:	35%
Dissatisfied:	10%
Very dissatisfied:	4%



Support with preparing for your career or job market

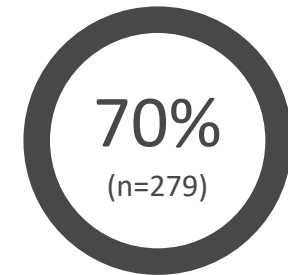


Research Students
(n=282)

Very satisfied:	20%
Satisfied:	44%
Dissatisfied:	24%
Very dissatisfied:	11%



Support with seeking funding to support education



Research Students
(n=279)

Very satisfied:	29%
Satisfied:	41%
Dissatisfied:	19%
Very dissatisfied:	11%

Research students also came across obstacles during COVID-19, most notably **access to appropriate study space, research, and facilities**. More than half of postgraduate students indicated they had to **care for family members**, which aligns with additional details in the survey demonstrating that a higher portion of postgraduate students have children or adults that they support.

Students, however, did indicate that **supervisors provided support** with keeping their research running during the campus closure.

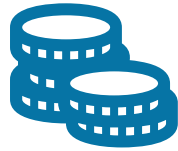
Comments focused on **academic delays**, their **health and wellbeing**, managing **stress**, and **financial concerns**.



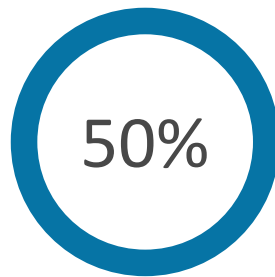


INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

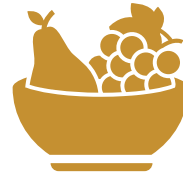
Top 5 Concerns During COVID-19



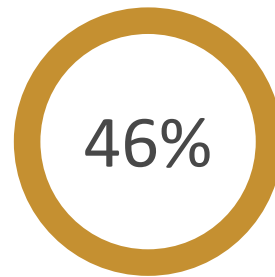
Having adequate financial support



International Students
(n=1026)



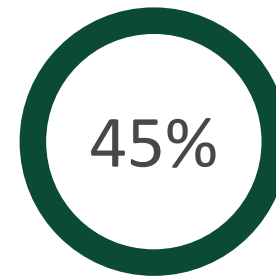
Maintaining good health while studying



International Students
(n=1026)



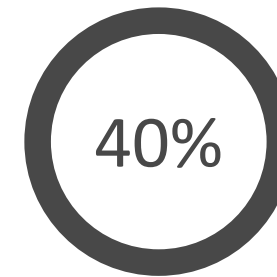
Communicating with friends, family and others abroad



International Students
(n=1026)



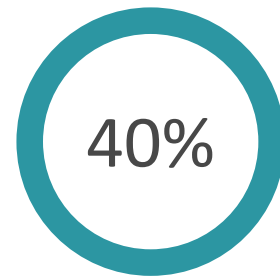
Communicating with friends, family and others in NZ



International Students
(n=1026)



Securing a job in New Zealand after graduation

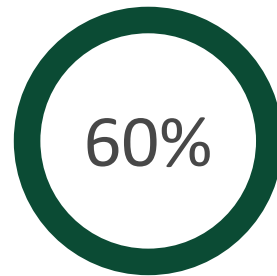


International Students
(n=1026)

Stress for Visa Holders



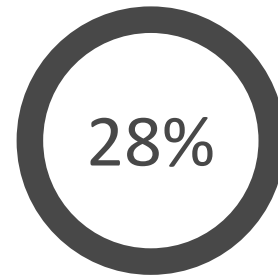
Travel restrictions
between NZ and
home country



International Students
(n=1021)



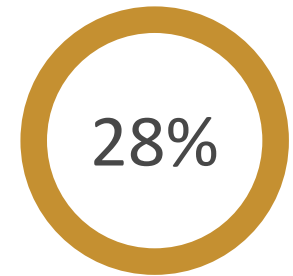
Impact on post-
study work visas



International Students
(n=1021)



Managing your visa
status



International Students
(n=1021)

International students had additional stress during the pandemic regarding the **travel restrictions between New Zealand and their home country**.

International students shared their stress and concern about **obtaining a job and work visa** in New Zealand.

There was an underlying uncertainty, reinforced through **issues with communication** both in New Zealand and abroad, about the students' **ability to remain or return to New Zealand** for study.



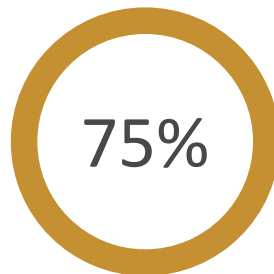


UNIVERSITY SATISFACTION

University Rating



Satisfied with the balance of research and health & safety

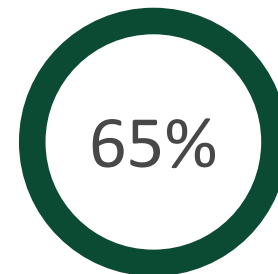


Research Students
(n=568)

Very satisfied:	11%
Satisfied:	64%
Dissatisfied:	17%
Very dissatisfied	8%

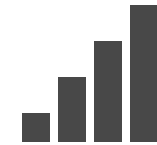


Satisfied with the University response to COVID-19

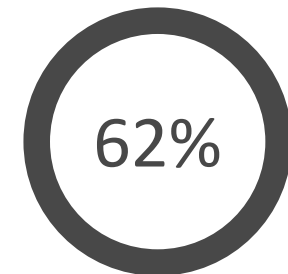


All Students
(n=6529)

Very satisfied:	13%
Satisfied:	52%
Dissatisfied:	26%
Very dissatisfied	10%



Good/very good performance of services and facilities



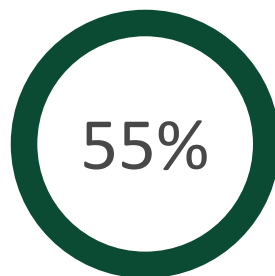
All Students
(n=6267)

Very good:	10%
Good:	52%
Neither poor nor good:	29%
Poor:	7%
Very poor:	2%

Services Used During COVID-19



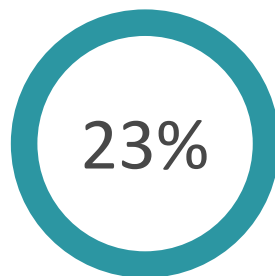
Library Services



All Students
(n=4480)



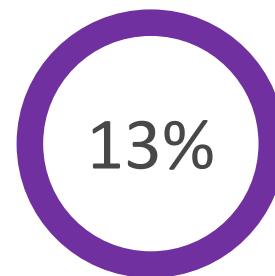
Student Health



All Students
(n=4480)



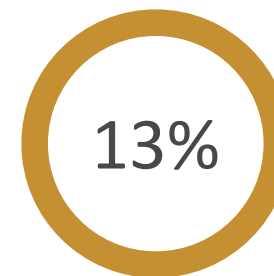
Student Learning



All Students
(n=4480)



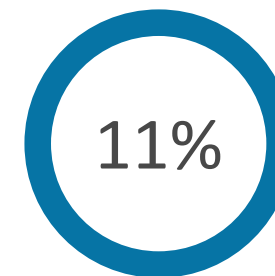
Halls of Residence



All Students
(n=4480)



ITS

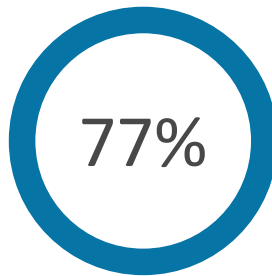


All Students
(n=4480)

University Culture



I belong at this University

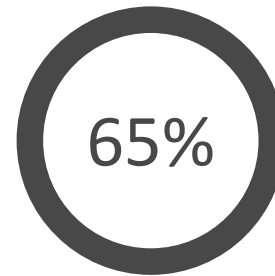


All Students
(n=6334)

Strongly agree:	10%
Agree:	34%
Somewhat agree:	34%
Somewhat disagree:	13%
Disagree:	6%
Strongly disagree:	4%



This Uni supported me during the COVID-19 pandemic

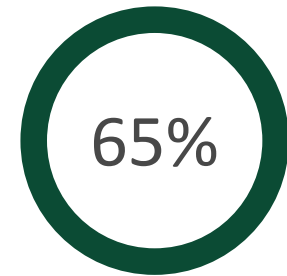


All Students
(n=6335)

Strongly agree:	7%
Agree:	25%
Somewhat agree:	33%
Somewhat disagree:	16%
Disagree:	11%
Strongly disagree:	8%



I feel valued as an individual at this University



All Students
(n=6345)

Strongly agree:	7%
Agree:	26%
Somewhat agree:	33%
Somewhat disagree:	16%
Disagree:	12%
Strongly disagree:	7%

Overall, students were **satisfied with the University and its response to the COVID-19 pandemic**. Student comments suggest that a majority of frustration was due to the uncertainty of the future, particularly when it came to **communication they received** from the University and the New Zealand government.

Research students appreciated the balance Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington took **regarding the safety of the students and the priority of research**.

The University's efforts to support students is highlighted by a majority of students stating that they **had been supported by the University during the pandemic** and an even larger majority of all **students indicating that they belong** at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington.





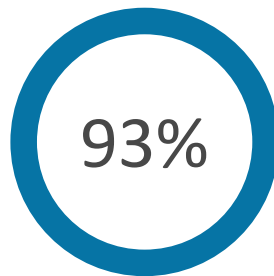
FUTURE PLANS

Continuing Education

Domestic



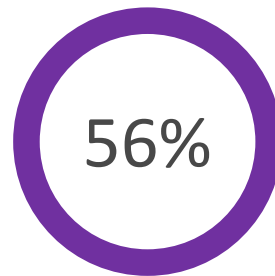
Will continue education in Trimester 2 2020



Domestic Students
(n=5020)



COVID-19 has or may delay intended graduation

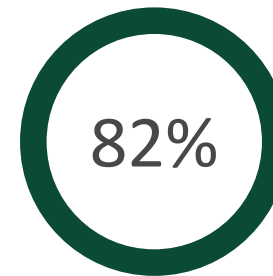


Domestic Students
(n=4997)

International



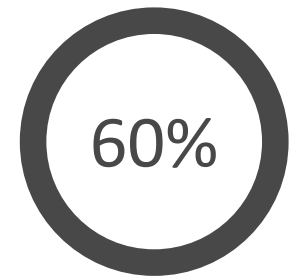
Will continue education in Trimester 2 2020



International Students
(n=935)



COVID-19 has or may delay intended graduation



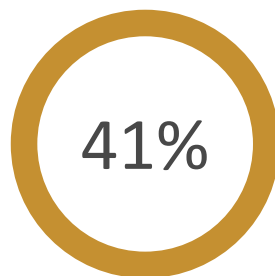
International Students
(n=932)

Not Continuing

Domestic



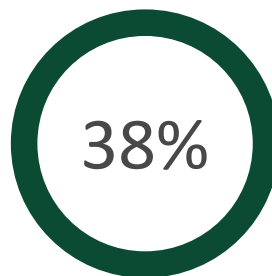
Concerns that all classes will continue to be held online



Domestic Students
(n=356)



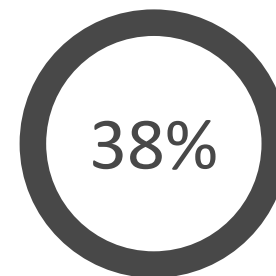
Financial constraints



Domestic Students
(n=356)



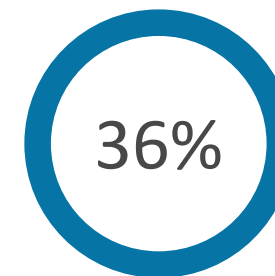
Mental health issues



Domestic Students
(n=356)



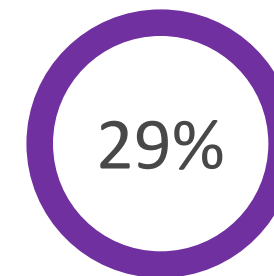
Your experience at Uni during the COVID-19 pandemic



Domestic Students
(n=356)



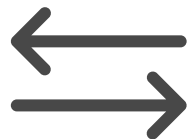
Working to support your family or yourself



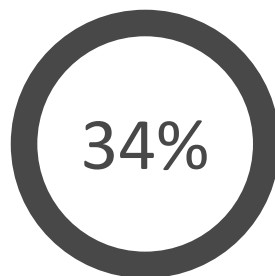
Domestic Students
(n=356)

Not Continuing

International



Continuing education at a different institution



International Students
(n=168)



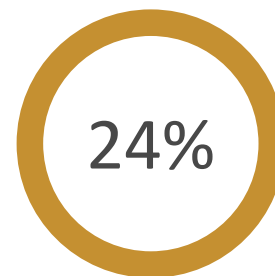
Financial constraints



International Students
(n=168)



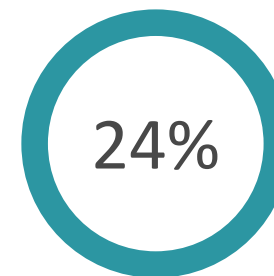
Concerns that all classes will continue to be held online



International Students
(n=168)



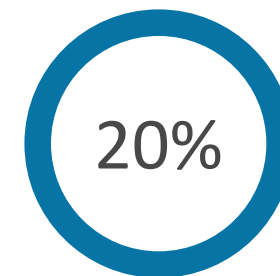
Travel restrictions



International Students
(n=168)



Your experience at Uni during the COVID-19 pandemic



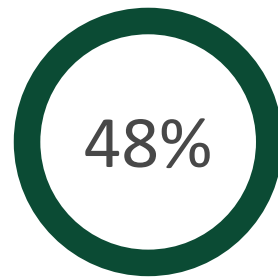
International Students
(n=168)

After Graduation

Undergraduate



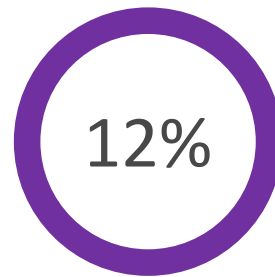
Seeking a position but have no offer of employment



Undergraduate Students who indicated completing in Trimester 1 2020 (n=195)



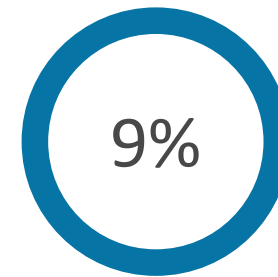
Do not currently have plans to work or study



Undergraduate Students who indicated completing in Trimester 1 2020 (n=195)



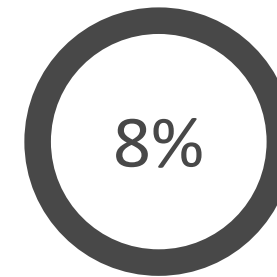
Accepted or recently began a position full-time



Undergraduate Students who indicated completing in Trimester 1 2020 (n=195)



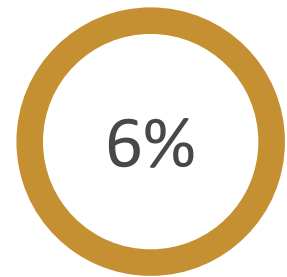
Returning to or continuing my pre-graduation position



Undergraduate Students who indicated completing in Trimester 1 2020 (n=195)



Plan to enrol in full-time postgraduate programme



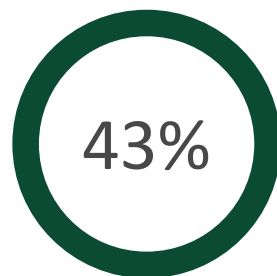
Undergraduate Students who indicated completing in Trimester 1 2020 (n=195)

After Graduation

Postgraduate



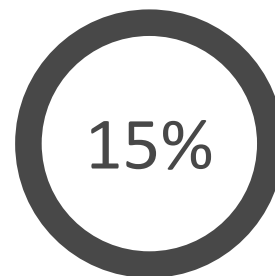
Seeking a position
but have no offer of
employment



Postgraduate Students who
indicated completing in
Trimester 1 2020
(n=172)



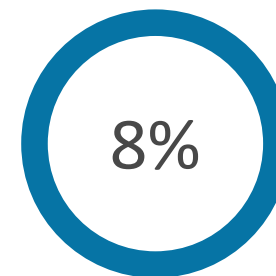
Returning to or
continuing my pre-
graduation position



Postgraduate Students who
indicated completing in
Trimester 1 2020
(n=172)



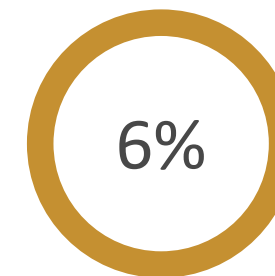
Accepted or recently
began a position
full-time



Postgraduate Students who
indicated completing in
Trimester 1 2020
(n=172)



Plan to enrol in full-
time postgraduate
programme



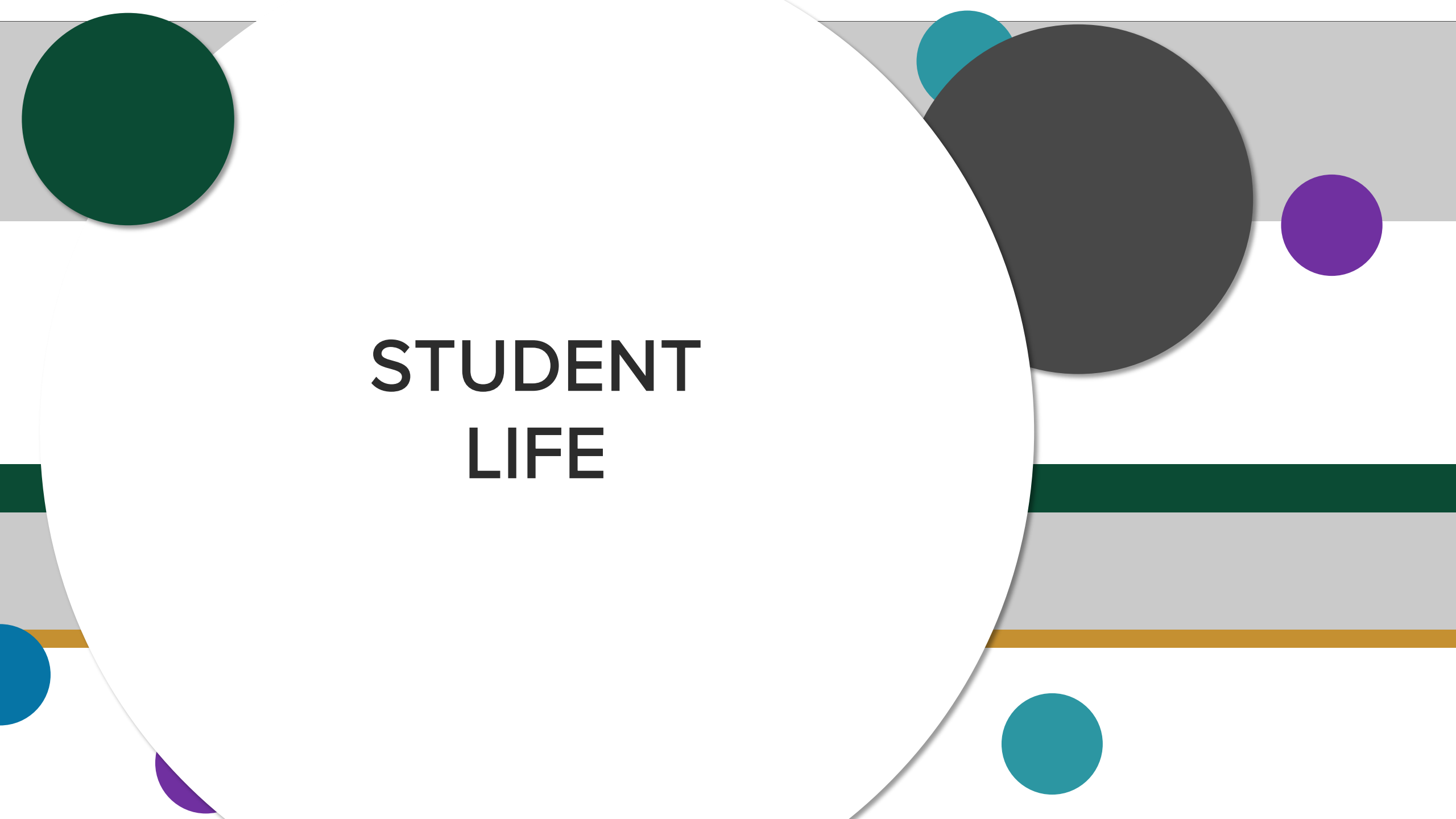
Postgraduate Students who
indicated completing in
Trimester 1 2020
(n=172)

A large majority of domestic students are **intending to continue studying** at Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington.

The international and domestic student minority indicating that they won't or aren't sure about continuing mention the **financial costs, online courses, and their experience** during COVID-19 as the most common reasons.

A low number of undergraduates completing their degrees intend to **continue into postgraduate studies**. Most students that have completed their degree are **focused on employment**, with nearly half currently seeking a position.



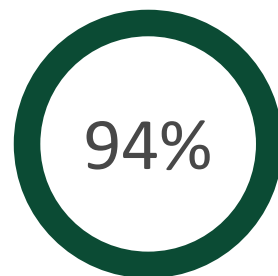


**STUDENT
LIFE**

Civic Response



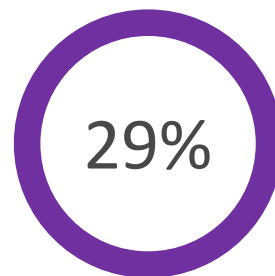
Checked in with friends and/or family



All Students
(n=6315)



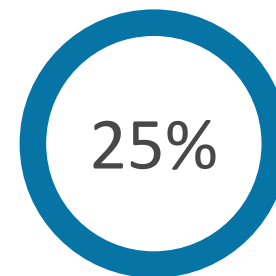
Helped others obtain food or other necessities



All Students
(n=6315)



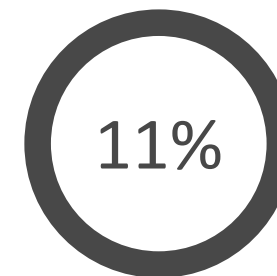
Made a donation (e.g., money, supplies, blood)



All Students
(n=6315)



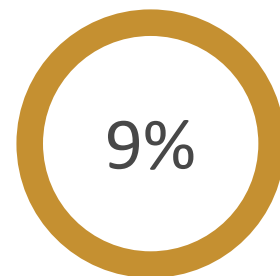
Engaged in academic research on COVID-19



All Students
(n=6315)



Volunteered with community groups



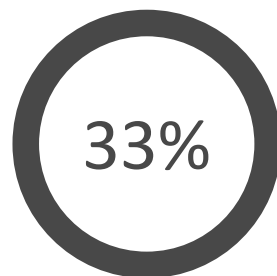
All Students
(n=6315)

Activities During COVID-19

Taught



Students had
non-University paid
employment

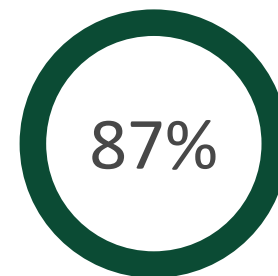


Taught Students
(n=5594)

Research



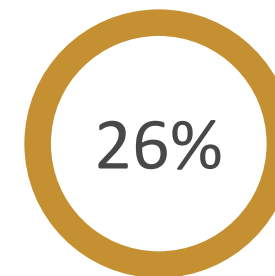
Worked on my
thesis/dissertation



Research Students
(n=580)



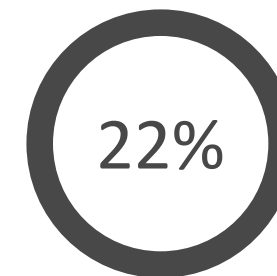
Taught classes or
tutorials at the
University



Research Students
(n=580)

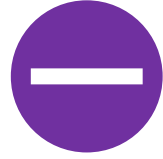


Students had
non-University paid
employment

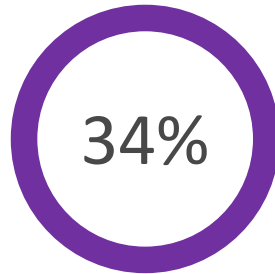


Research Students
(n=580)

Financial Hardships



None



All Students
(n=6319)



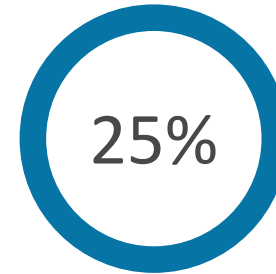
Unexpected increase
in living expenses



All Students
(n=6319)



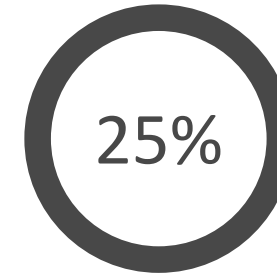
Unexpected increase
in spending for
technology



All Students
(n=6319)



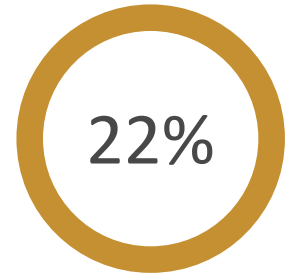
Loss or reduction of
income of other
family members



All Students
(n=6319)



Loss of wages from
non-university
employment



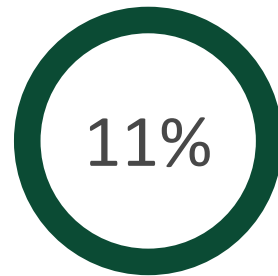
All Students
(n=6319)

Family Care

Undergraduate



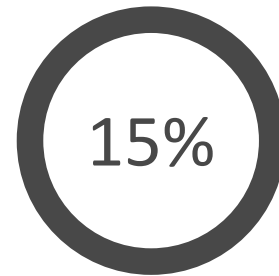
Responsible for caring for children during COVID-19



Undergraduate Students
(n=4711)



Responsible for caring for adults during COVID-19

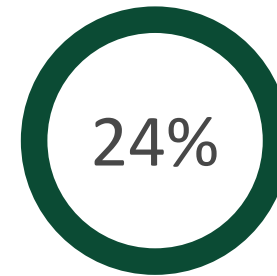


Undergraduate Students
(n=4687)

Postgraduate



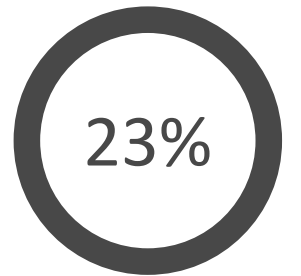
Responsible for caring for children during COVID-19



Postgraduate Students
(n=1547)



Responsible for caring for adults during COVID-19

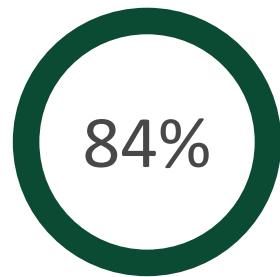


Postgraduate Students
(n=1531)

Health & Wellbeing



Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge

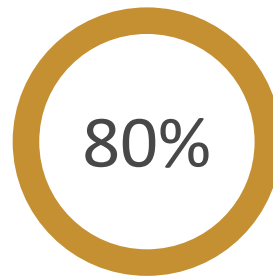


All Students
(n=6427)

Nearly every day:	21%
More than half the days:	24%
Several days:	39%
Not at all:	16%



Little interest or pleasure in doing things

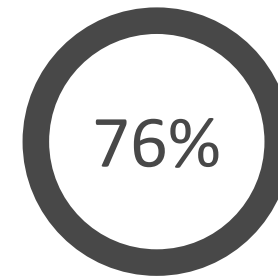


All Students
(n=6433)

Nearly every day:	18%
More than half the days:	21%
Several days:	42%
Not at all:	20%



Not being able to stop worrying

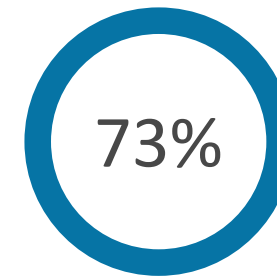


All Students
(n=6406)

Nearly every day:	21%
More than half the days:	19%
Several days:	36%
Not at all:	24%



Feeling down, depressed or hopeless



All Students
(n=6412)

Nearly every day:	13%
More than half the days:	18%
Several days:	41%
Not at all:	27%



Average WHO-5 Well Being Index Score



All Students
(n=6190)

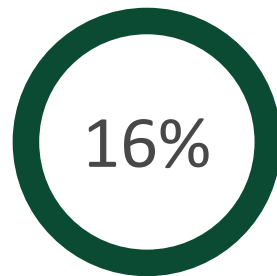
2019: 13	2018: 15
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An index score below 13 indicates poor wellbeing

Student Housing



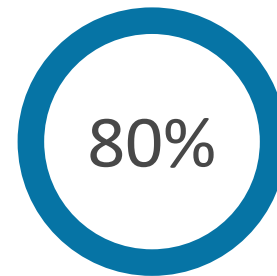
Lived in University accommodation before COVID-19



All Students
(n=6265)



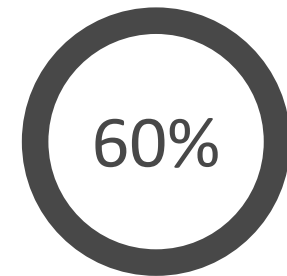
Lived in private accommodation before COVID-19



All Students
(n=6265)



Did **NOT** relocate during COVID-19

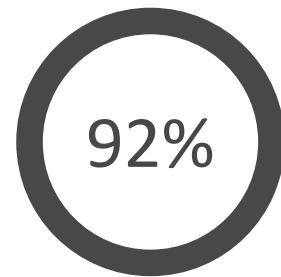


All Students
(n=6267)

Student Housing



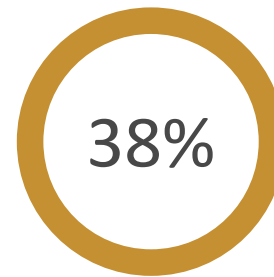
I had a place where my identity was respected



All Students
(n=6383)



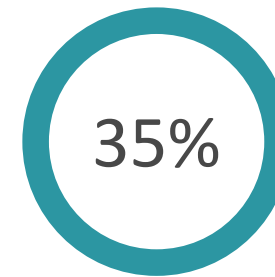
I worried I would not have enough money to cover my housing



All Students
(n=6412)



I felt anxiety about private accommodation



All Students
(n=6287)



I felt anxiety about university accommodation



All Students
(n=6162)

Almost all students have **checked in with friends and family** during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, a significant portion of the **student community stayed engaged in non-University employment** during the COVID-19 pandemic. This corresponds with the level of concern students have with the costs of fees, accommodation, food, and, sometimes, supporting family.

Health and wellbeing focused questions highlighted the **increased stress and uncertainty** students are dealing with under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Student comments did highlight their frustration with the **communication regarding the timeframe and cost of university accommodation housing**.





APPENDIX

	Victoria University of Wellington
Female	65.7%
Male	30.9%
Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming	1.4%
Prefer to self-describe	0.5%
Transgender	1.1%
Asian	22.1%
European	13.4%
New Zealand European/Pakeha	61.5%
Black or African American	N/A
Latinx	N/A
Māori	9.8%
Pasifika	5.2%
First generation	37.3%
Continuing generation	56.3%
Physical disability	3.3%
Learning disability	4.3%
Cognitive or neurological disability	3.6%
Emotional or mental health disorder or disability	28.3%
International students	16.6%
Students studying offshore	3.3%

Student Respondents

	Victoria University of Wellington	US Preliminary Data (5 US Institutions)
Female	65.7%	62.1%
Male	30.9%	35.5%
Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming	1.4%	0.9% Non-Binary
Prefer to self-describe	0.5%	
Transgender	1.1%	0.7%
Asian	22.1%	23.0%
European	13.4%	45.8% White
New Zealand European/Pakeha	61.5%	
Black or African American	N/A	6.2%
Latinx	N/A	19.0%
Māori	9.8%	N/A
Pasifika	5.2%	0.3%
First generation	37.3%	25.2%
Continuing generation	56.3%	74.8%
Physical disability	3.3%	2.2%
Learning disability	4.3%	3.0%
Cognitive or neurological disability	3.6%	4.9%
Emotional or mental health disorder or disability	28.3%	26.3%
International students	16.6%	11.3%
Students studying offshore	3.3%	N/A

Student Respondents

The SERU Consortium is managing benchmark data across universities running the survey in the United States and globally. The surveys are still being run across various universities, so final results are still pending. The SERU Consortium may decide to only include certain institutions in the benchmark data and report on a selection of all questions in the survey.

However, SERU provided a first look at preliminary data they had collected in June from 5 US institutions. The demographic data they provided is listed here to show the comparison, where applicable, with Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington’s survey audience.



Capital Thinking. Globally Minded