



FALL 2020 SURVEY

JUNE 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2020, the GSA launched a Fall 2020 survey to gather graduate students' input about Fall 2020. A total of **258 responses** were recorded with representation from various departments, student groups, and program types.

Overall, graduate student respondents are **nervous or very nervous** about Fall 2020 term (54%), while some are confused and uncertain about what would happen in Fall 2020. For most, COVID-19 has impacted and changed their study plans.

Most graduate students plan to live off campus in Canada at the start of Fall 2020 (85%), and use transit to get to UCalgary campuses and facilities (51%).

Most academically employed graduate students are willing to work as a TA and RA in person with safety measures in place (53%), while large percentage is not sure (24%).

The choices are split evenly between the three delivery methods: in-person, online, and blended when respondents were asked what the best suitable method for Fall 2020 term is for their program.

Further analysis from the qualitative questions revealed that 59% of respondents and TA/RAs had a challenging time transitioning from in-person to online delivery in March 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. 33% of respondents had a positive experience with the transition. Key challenges were the lack of in-person engagement and connections and the lack of access to resources, facilities for hands-on work. Meanwhile, those respondents who experienced successes with online delivery attribute it to the effort put in by professors, faculty, and students.

Top concerns for Fall 2020 blended delivery method are:

- For in-person interactions: safety measures to prevent contraction and spread of COVID-19 on UCalgary's campus;
- For online learning: the lack of communication and engagement, decrease in quality and impact, and the loss of access to necessary physical workspace, equipment, and resources.

Besides those concerns, some respondents noted the opportunities of online learning were accessibility and safety from COVID-19.

The most impactful support UCalgary could provide to graduate students include (from most to least mentioned):

- Financial support e.g. UPass or public transportation bursaries, decrease in tuition and fees, increase in funding, complementary parking, and technology budget
- Allowing in-person classes, experiments and access to labs, facilities for hands-on research work
- Safety protocols and equipment to prevent the contraction and spread of COVID-19 on campus
- Online delivery options to ensure student safety and accommodate programs that don't require in-person work
- Access to in-person resources that can't be accessed online such as libraries, study space
- Adjustments to current programs to reflect the online learning environment
- Consistent and swift communication updates about Fall 2020 for all students to arrange accommodation, transportation and study plan
- Health and wellness support
- Training and technology support, especially for TAs, RAs, and professors to get accustomed to new tools of teaching and learning
- Access to professors, peers, community and personal support system to ensure personal and academic success
- More TA and RA job opportunities

- Understanding from the administration about the nature of different graduate student programs and personal situations to arrange flexible options that ensure student success

SURVEY DATA

Demographics

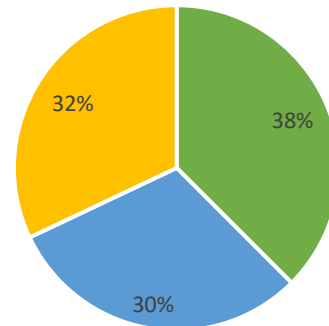
Department/Faculty:

There is representation from all departments. Below are the top departments/faculties:

Name of departments	Count
Engineering	41
Social Work	31
Haskayne	23
Computer Science	12
Arts	10
Biological Sciences	10

Program Type:

- Course-based Master's
- Thesis-based Master's
- PhD



Groups:

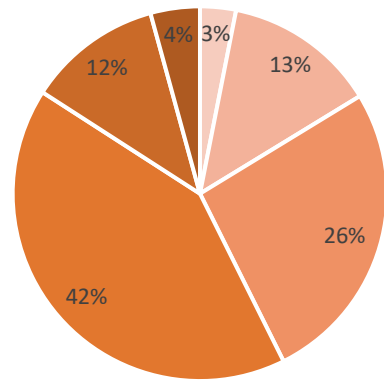
There is representation from all major graduate student groups.

Name	Count
International Students	83
Mental health concerns	18
Students with families	18
Indigenous students	8
LGBTQIA2S+	18
Students with disabilities	10

About Fall 2020

Overall, how are you feeling about Fall 2020 term?

- Excellent
- Good
- Neutral
- Nervous
- Very nervous
- Other



Does COVID-19 impact your Fall 2020 studies plan?

- Yes 178
- No 60
- Other 19



Where do you plan to live at the start of Fall 2020?

- On campus 17
- Off campus in Canada 219
- Off campus outside of Canada 10
- Other 11

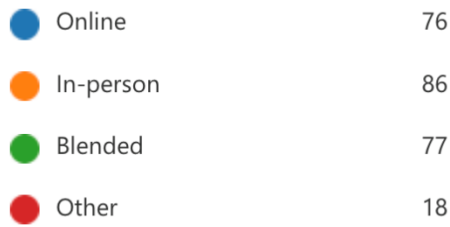


How would you be getting to school each day during Fall 2020?

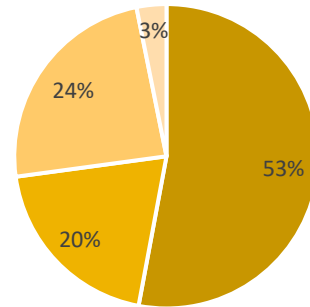
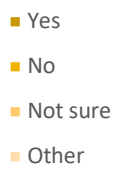
- Public transit (train, bus, etc.) 130
- Private transit (walking, car, bi... 89
- Other 38



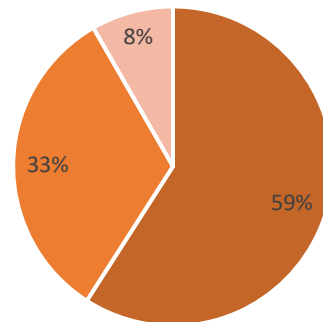
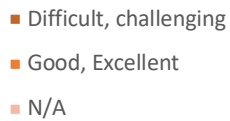
What course delivery method would best fit for your current academic work?



Are you willing and able to do in-person TA and RA work in Fall 2020?



How was your experience transitioning from in-person to online courses in the last term (e.g. successes and challenges)?-



Name	Count
Difficult, challenging	25
Lack of engagement, communication	38
Not productive	31
Lower quality (content, communication from professors)	13
Heavier course or workload that were not adjusted for online delivery	12
Mental health or health concerns	12
Lack of access to space, resources	10
Struggles with technology and equipment	9
Lack of necessary hands-on work	8
Lack of communication for transition	7
Not enough support	6

School work life balance	6
No course adjustment for online delivery	5
Financial concerns	4
Academic misconduct	2
Class cancellation	2
Lack of impact	2
Good, excellent	88
Great professor support	9
Save commute time	4
Safe from COVID-19	3
Was able to focus	2
NA	27

UCalgary's current Fall 2020 plans involve a blended delivery model. What are the concerns or opportunities you see with this model as a student and a TA/RA (if applicable)?

Name	Count
Safety concerns for in-person interactions	48
Opportunities with learning online	47
Concerns with learning online	
Difficulty in communication, engagement	45
Decrease in impact, quality	28
Loss of or the need to access workspace, resources	24
Changes to course progress & workload	21
Uncertainty	13
Decrease in job opportunities, practicums	11
Accommodations, travels	9
More training requires	5
Tuition, fees, finances	5
Mental health	4
Feasibility to complete courses	2
Lack of support network	2
Security	1

What would be the most impactful support UCalgary could provide to help you be successful in Fall 2020?

Name	Count
Financial support including UPASS, reduced tuition and fees, increased funding, grants, award opportunities, free parking or parking support at Foothills, tech budget	58

In-person class, experiments, services	48
Safety equipment and protocol for in-person settings	32
Online classes and services	27
Access to in-person resources, study or workspace	26
Adjustment to current programs to fit with the current situations and online delivery	21
Communication on Fall 2020 decision	20
Health support and motivation	18
Training and Tech support	19
Flexible options	17
Access to professors, peers, community, and personal support system	14
TA opportunities	7
Understanding graduate students	7
Childcare, separate study from home	3