

Student Survey 2020: Results



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Executive Summary

This year's *Yukon University Student Survey* was conducted fully online, due to the remote learning environment created by COVID-19. A total of 245 responses were received, for a response rate of 30% among all credit students (and 40% among full-time credit students). Topics on this year's survey include: admissions and registration; support services; the remote learning experience; textbooks and e-texts; housing; student success; and overall satisfaction.

YukonU: close to home, affordable, with northern and Indigenous content in a small-class setting

One out of three students had considered applying to another institution besides YukonU. Ultimately, they chose YukonU because it's close to home and affordable, as well as offering relevant northern and Indigenous content. The small class size and individualized attention are also part of its draw.

Four out of five are satisfied with online registration

Online registration was new this year. Four out of five students were satisfied with the experience. Despite some glitches, confusion, and need for staff to provide manual assistance or overrides, many students said that the experience is preferable to registering in person.

Two out of five used Connect2YukonU; nine out of ten are satisfied

Two out of five students said that they had used the Connect2YukonU services, either online or in the Kaff. Nine out of ten users are satisfied, characterizing the service as responsive, helpful, and approachable.

Remote learners face challenges with Internet access, maintaining focus, and getting good grades

Students were asked about a range of challenges they might be facing with remote learning this year. Half had issues with unreliable Internet. Half have difficulty focusing in a remote learning environment, and prefer to be face to face. Grades are a concern for half of all students, with some saying that they struggle with their own learning or with unclear expectations around assignments. Students in university-level programs have found the experience particularly challenging.

Three out of four students are satisfied with YukonU's response to COVID-19

COVID-19 resulted in a lot of changes this year – most classes went online; students and staff have had limited access to campus; support services may be accessed online or in person under public health restrictions; and students in campus housing face some additional restrictions to protect the campus community. Although many students find these restrictions onerous, three out of four said they are satisfied with the response. Many students feel that they have been well supported by their instructors and by academic support services in the context of COVID-19.

One out of three students prefers e-textbooks

Three out of five students have used e-textbooks. Among those who have tried them, one out of three prefers them to physical textbooks. This is largely for reasons of cost and convenience (i.e. portability and searchability). Only one out of five actually finds e-textbooks to be better for learning. Reasons for preferring a physical textbook include minimizing screen time, being able to mark up a physical text, and just preferring the feeling of having a book in one's hands.

One out of five students lives in housing that is not suitable for their needs

One out of five students said that their current housing situation is not suitable for their needs as a student. Affordability continues to be a major issue here. This year, with online learning being the norm, privacy and Internet access became more significant issues as well. Students who are living with parents or other relatives were more likely to say their housing is unsuitable, partly due to these issues of trying to study and participate in online classes within the chaos of family life.

Students face barriers related to finances, but are supported in their studies by friends and family

Students were asked open-ended questions about barriers they have faced, and supports that are helping them to succeed in their education. The biggest barriers are related to finances, including the challenges of juggling school with work. Between work, school, and child care, many students are squeezed in terms of self-care and maintaining positive mental and physical health, motivation, and focus. That said, many students benefit from a strong support network of friends and family who may provide financial assistance, emotional support, and advice along the way. Instructors, classmates, and YukonU support services also play a part in students' success.

Success is more than grades and graduation

Students were asked an open-ended question about what success means to them. Many said that success is all about passing courses, getting good grades, and graduating. However, success is more nuanced and transcends these traditional markers. For some, success is getting a good job. Others said that they don't care about grades so much as knowing that they have thoroughly learned and understood the material, will retain it, and will be able to apply it in the real world. Effort is its own reward – students feel successful when they put in hard work, persist, and overcome obstacles in their path.

Overall satisfaction remains high

The remote learning experience had some minor effects on satisfaction with quality of instruction and with the overall learning environment, but in general satisfaction remains high: more than nine out of ten students agree that Yukon University offers a positive learning environment, and that there is an environment of cultural sensitivity for all. At least nine out of ten are satisfied with quality of instruction, course content, and support services. And more than nine out of ten agree that their time at Yukon University has increased their knowledge and understanding of Yukon First Nations, continuing three years of upward trends.

Background and Methods

Yukon University runs an annual survey of current students in the Fall semester. Traditionally, this survey has been conducted in class, on pencil and paper, in a representative sample of selected classes at Ayamdigut and at community campuses. This year, due to the remote learning situation created by COVID-19, the methodology was changed to an online survey.

The survey was created in SurveyMonkey, and the link was emailed to all current credit students using a Banner email to their @yukonu.ca address. The emails were sent on Monday, October 26th. In addition, notices about the survey were posted in the Connect student newsletter and on social media. Instructors were asked to promote the survey to students through Moodle. All students who completed the survey could enter a prize draw to win a 16-inch MacBook Pro.

The change in methodology means that this is no longer a sample survey with sampling error, but rather an attempted census with non-response error. For this reason, it is no longer appropriate to calculate p-values when comparing sub-groups in the survey. Sub-group comparisons have been carried out and notable differences have been reported. A p-value of 0.05 was still used as the threshold for reporting “notable differences,” but the concept of statistical significance does not strictly apply.

The following sub-group comparisons were performed:

- Gender (female versus male)
- Age (Under age 25, versus 25 and up)
- Indigenous self-identification (self-identified as Indigenous, versus self-identified as not Indigenous)
- Racially minoritized (self-identified as racially minoritized, versus self-identified as not racially minoritized)
- Location of K-12 education (at least some K-12 education in the Yukon, versus all K-12 education outside of the Yukon)
- Location of current residence for students living in the Yukon (Rural Yukon community, versus Whitehorse)
- Type of program taken (university-level (degree, post-graduate, or university transfer), versus college-level or ABE (pre-apprenticeship trades, career certificate or diploma, or Adult Basic Education))

Overall, 30% of currently enrolled credit students responded to the survey. The response rate varied from 7% among Open Studies students, to 38% among university-level students in degree, post-graduate, and university transfer programs. A total of 245 responses were received.

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Table 1

Survey Respondents by Type of Program			
SOURCE: Yukon University Student Survey 2020, and Data Warehouse accessed November 16, 2020			
Type	Survey Respondents	Actual Enrolled	Response Rate
Adult Basic Education	12	55	22%
Career Certificate and Diploma	35	142	25%
Pre-apprenticeship Trades	3	24	13%
University Transfer, Degree and Post-graduate	175	465	38%
SUB-TOTAL:	225	686	33%
Open Studies	10	138	7%
Unknown	10		
TOTAL:	245	824	30%

The response rate was higher among full-time students (40%) than among part-time students (13%).

Table 2

Survey Respondents by Full-time/Part-time Status			
SOURCE: Yukon University Student Survey 2020, and Data Warehouse accessed November 16, 2020			
Type	Survey Respondents	Actual Enrolled	Response Rate
Full-time	202	510	40%
Part-time	42	314	13%
SUB-TOTAL:	244	824	30%
Unknown	1		
TOTAL:	245	824	30%

A set of appendices has been produced as a separate document. See the appendices for:

- Details on respondent demographics
- Data tables for all quantitative survey questions
- Complete text of written responses to all qualitative survey questions, grouped by theme

Throughout this report, illustrative samples of written responses are quoted to give nuance and texture to themes identified through qualitative analysis. Responses quoted within the report may be lightly edited to correct typographical errors, though these are retained in the appendices. Where a partial comment is quoted, the omissions are identified by ellipses ("...").

Results

Applying to Yukon University

One-third of students considered applying somewhere else

Survey respondents were asked, "When you applied to Yukon University, did you consider applying to any other post-secondary institutions?" One-third of respondents (34%) said yes.

"When you applied to Yukon University, did you consider applying to any other post-secondary institutions?"

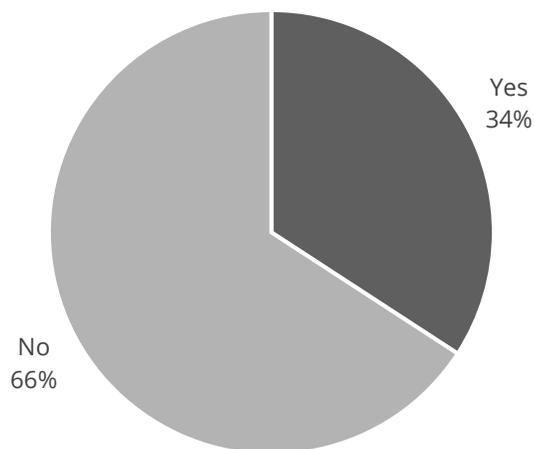


Figure 1

Students taking university-level programs are more likely to have considered applying to other post-secondary institutions: 41% of students in degree, post-graduate and university transfer programs had considered applying elsewhere, as compared with 16% of students in college-level or ABE programs.

Students chose YukonU because it's close to home, it's affordable, and it offers northern and Indigenous content in a small class setting

Students who had considered other schools were asked, "What are the main reasons why you chose to attend Yukon University, rather than any other post-secondary institution?" The most prominent theme in their responses is that Yukon University is close to home. This is especially important in 2020 due to the impacts of COVID-19, and wanting to be with family.

"It is close to family ..."

"Location close to home. Working full time in Whitehorse and being able to attend courses here."

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"Covid. I didn't want to leave home."

YukonU is seen as an affordable option, due to cost savings of staying at home, as well as having lower tuition than many other universities.

"... Yukon U is far more affordable than other institutions."

"I wanted to stay in the Yukon for one more year before moving away so I could make and save money for when I move somewhere else."

Northern and Indigenous content is important to some students, and was the deciding factor in their enrolment.

"... - importance of incorporating indigenous and first Nations teachings into our learning"

"The northern based programming. I like that there are many place based learning options here."

Some students found that the programs and courses on offer were a good fit with their interests, and some had heard good things before they applied.

"... I also knew people who had completed the program through what was then Yukon College and I had heard great things."

Yukon University is a smaller institution, with a welcoming environment for students. Small class sizes mean that students can expect to receive individual attention.

"... I had studied at southern universities before and they were too large, both in class size and general community, for my liking."

"... At Yukon University, you are not just a number in the system, people know you by names and are happy to see you attending classes."

Finally, for students coming from outside the territory, the Yukon has a certain appeal as a place to live and study.

"I've always wanted to live in the Yukon. ..."

"... Also, the scenery and different weather/people/community was going to give me the most adventure."

Close to nine out of ten respondents easily found the information they needed to apply

Survey respondents were asked, "How easy was it for you to find all the necessary information about how to submit your application?" Close to nine out of ten (87%) said it was "very easy" or "somewhat easy," while the remaining 13% found this "somewhat difficult" or "very difficult."

"How easy was it for you to find all the necessary information about how to submit your application?"

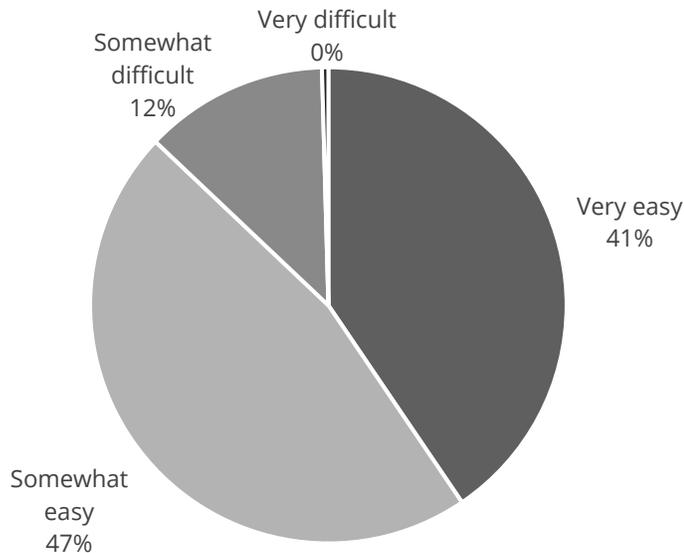


Figure 2

In their written comments, several students said that they received assistance from Admissions staff, program advisors, or other faculty and staff, which was very helpful. Several students also said that the website is easy to use. A few students received help from family members who were already YukonU students.

Some students did encounter difficulties in communicating with Admissions or other staff regarding their application, and some had confusion around processes. A small number of students had technical barriers due to their lack of access or familiarity with technology.

There were numerous comments in this section that clearly pertain to registration for courses, rather than the application for admission. This highlights the ongoing confusion between these two stages and the associated terminology.

Three out of four applicants found information on the website

Survey respondents were asked, “Where did you find information about how to submit your application?” and could choose all applicable options from the list shown. Three out of four (74%) said that they found information on the YukonU website. Two out of five (43%) obtained information from Admissions staff, and one out of four (23%) got information directly from instructors.

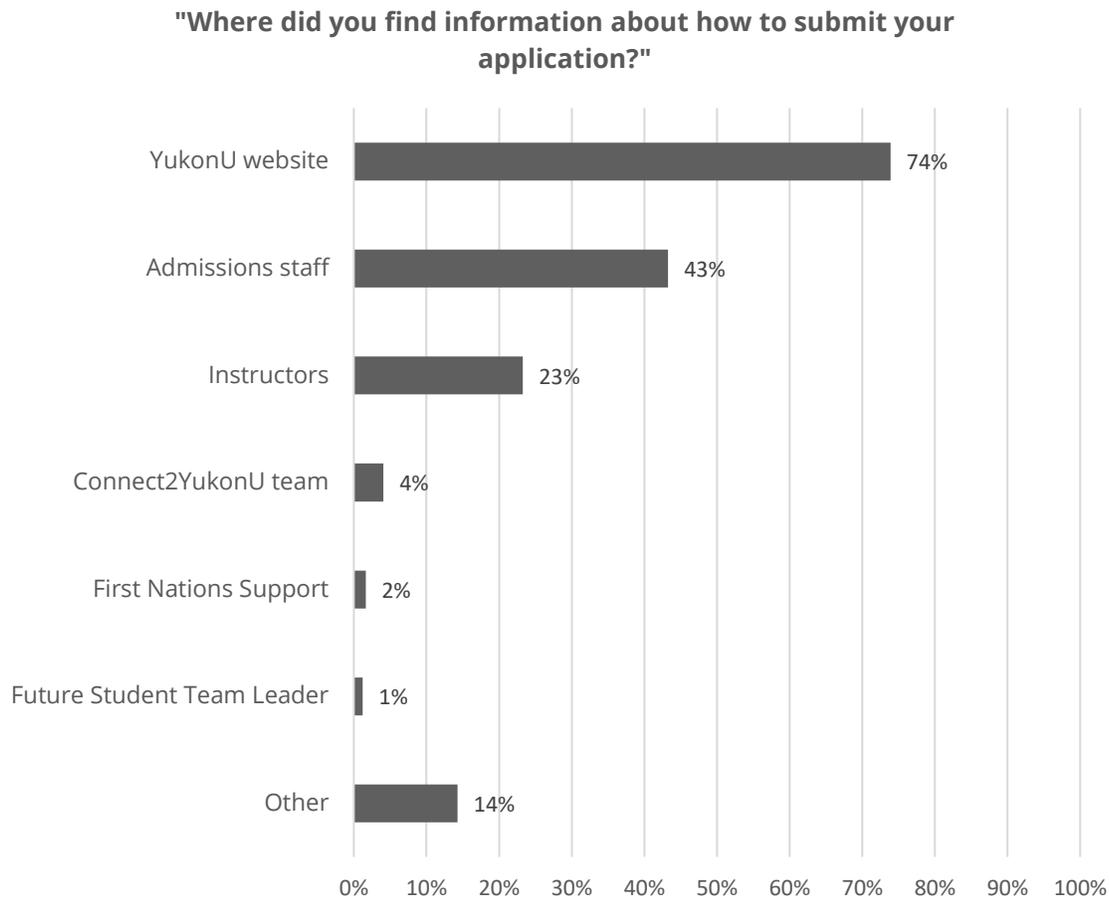


Figure 3

“Other” responses include:

- Friends, family members, or friends of the family (11 responses)
- Program advisor or instructor (7 responses)
- Student Services or Academic Support staff (4 responses)
- International student agent (4 responses)
- Other versions of the website (e.g. older version, SOVA site) (3 responses)
- Assistance from high school (2 responses)
- Individual responses such as: Employment Central; career counsellor; “just emails”; and not recalling having completed an official application form.

Nine out of ten applicants were aware of program entrance requirements

Nine out of ten respondents (92%) said that they were aware all program entrance requirements before submitting their application. Five percent were not aware of these until they received feedback on their application, and 3% don't know if they were aware or not.

"When you applied, were you aware of all the program entrance requirements?"

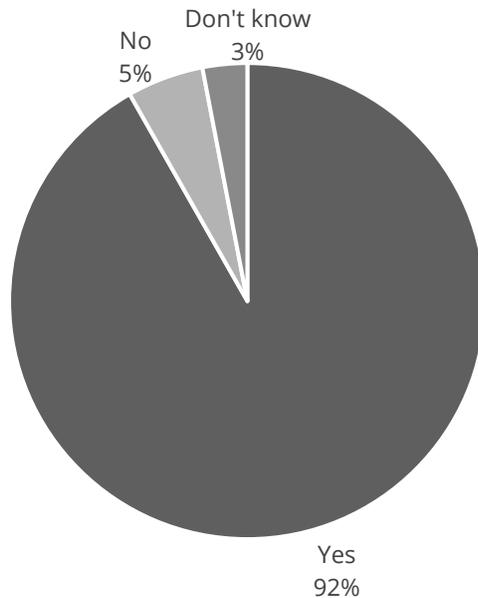


Figure 4

Close to nine out of ten students were offered the program they wanted

Close to nine out of ten students (87%) said that YukonU was able to offer them the program that they wanted. One out of ten (10%) said that the program they wanted is not available at YukonU, while 2% did not meet program entrance requirements, and 1% found that the program they wanted was full.

Students who wanted programs that are not offered at YukonU were interested in the following programs:

- Computer Science BSc
- Computer Software Engineering
- Criminal Justice (program not offered this year)
- Cultural Anthropology BA
- Engineering
- Linguistics BA or BSc
- Nursing Unit Clerk or Pharmacy Assistant
- Psychology BA [2 responses]
- Science class on how to teach science to students from K-9
- Specializations within the Bachelor of Business Administration

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- Technical program that except International students, other than the pre-apprentice trades programs available at YukonU
- Veterinary degree
- Women's and gender studies

"Was YukonU able to offer you the program that you wanted?"

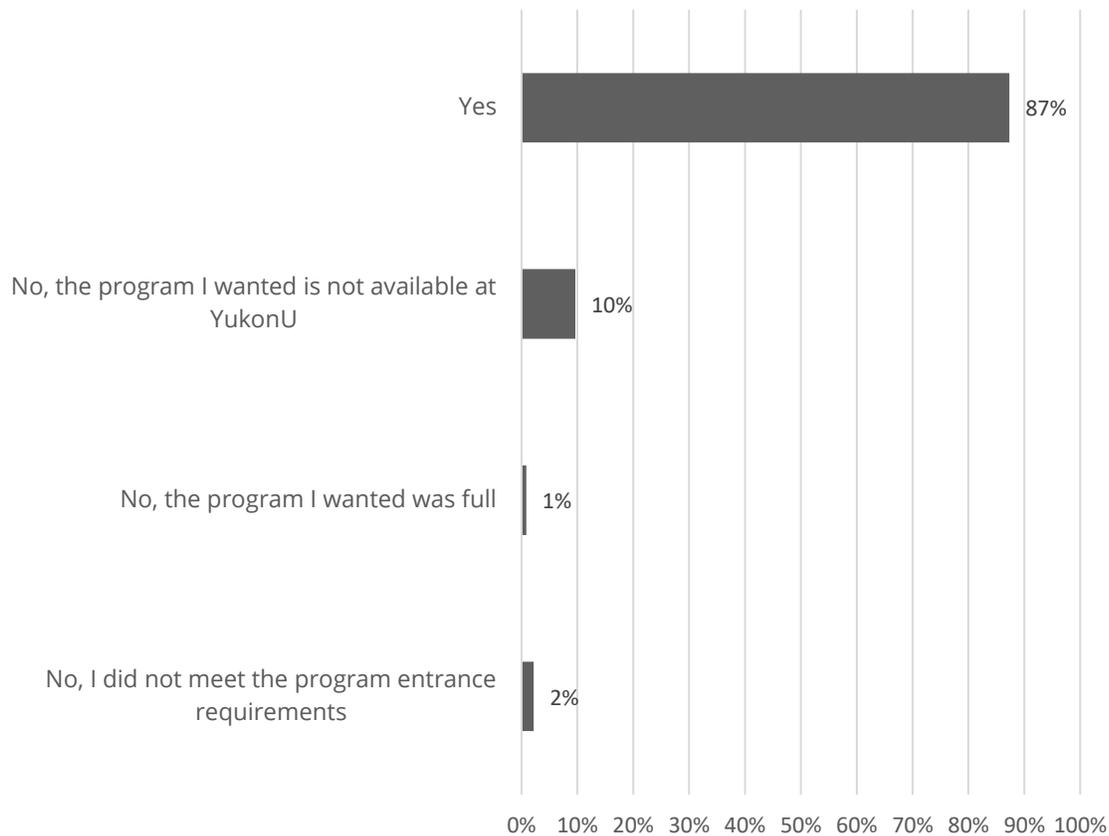


Figure 5

More than four out of five were satisfied with online registration

Survey respondents were told, "YukonU launched a new online registration platform this year." Then they were asked, "Overall, how satisfied are you with your online registration experience?" More than four out of five (84%) were "satisfied" or "very satisfied," while the remaining 16% were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied."

Students enrolled in college-level and ABE programs expressed higher satisfaction with online registration: 98% of this group was satisfied or very satisfied, compared with 81% of those enrolled in university-level programs (degree, post-graduate, or university transfer).

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In their written comments, some students noted that online registration is easier than registering in person. Others said that despite a learning curve or a few glitches, they still prefer this method.

"Soooo much easier than having to go to the registrar office"

"Much more convenient"

"Love that I don't have to wait in line for hours, is a learning process to figure out how to pick classes but I got through it!"

However, quite a few students did report that they found the process confusing, and the interface non-intuitive.

"It is hard to navigate. The way the classes are listed is non intuitive."

"I found that the online registration was hard to navigate. I remember some of my classes didn't come up in the search bar and I had to search by instructor. ..."

"It was difficult to figure out how to manage it"

Staff or faculty assistance was necessary for some students to address technical issues, or to provide authorizations and overrides.

"The registration blocked me on two course even though I had the prerequisites. There was back and forth with admissions and finally worked, this process took a few weeks."

"It was sometimes tough to navigate but staff was very willing to assist"

"Had to have an advisor override several things in order to register."

In some cases, students found it difficult to obtain the assistance that they needed. Staff were hard to reach, or were unable to solve problems quickly and easily.

"It honestly never works for me. There's something wrong with my account and every time I submit a help ticket for it, I have a hard time communicating what the issue is."

"Difficult to get ahold of a person when having difficulties and needed assistance regarding prerequisites"

"I didn't like it at all. I even tried to connect with staff to ask questions, and there would be no answers to the call, and would have to wait for an email response – so would have to try to register another time. ..."

A few students said that they experienced issues with their classes being cancelled or rescheduled.

"was fairly easy to use only complaint is that courses were changing around a lot or getting cancelled"

Information and Support

Students generally prefer to get information through emails to their @yukonu.ca address

Survey respondents were asked, "How do you usually get information that you need as a student at YukonU?" and were invited to choose all applicable options from a list. Then they were asked, "And which of those is the main way that you prefer to get information?"

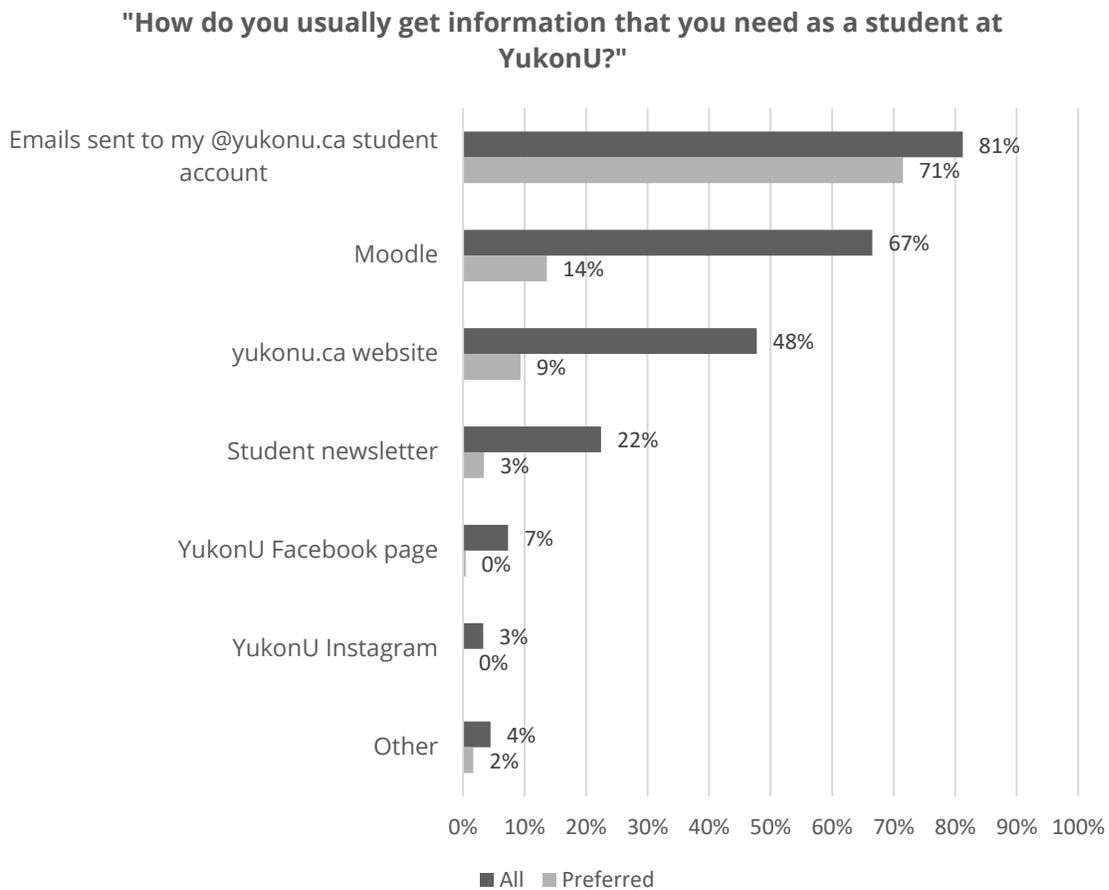


Figure 6

Four out of five respondents (81%) typically get information through emails to their @yukonu.ca addresses, and 71% prefer that method.

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The next most popular method, Moodle, is typically used by two-thirds of respondents (67%), but only 14% prefer it. About half (48%) typically get information from the yukonu.ca website, but only 9% prefer this above other methods.

About one out of five (22%) gets information from the student newsletter, and 3% said this is their preferred method. Social media (Facebook and Instagram) had low uptake, with fewer 10% getting information from these channels.

“Other” methods identified by respondents include: personal email accounts, direct communication with instructors, communication with other staff, and Teams.

Two out of five students have used Connect2YukonU

Students responding to the survey were asked, “Have you used the Connect2YukonU services at yukonu.ca/connect, or in person in the Kaff?” Two out of five respondents (41%) had used these services, including 28% who had used the services online, and 16% who had used the services in person (some had used both).

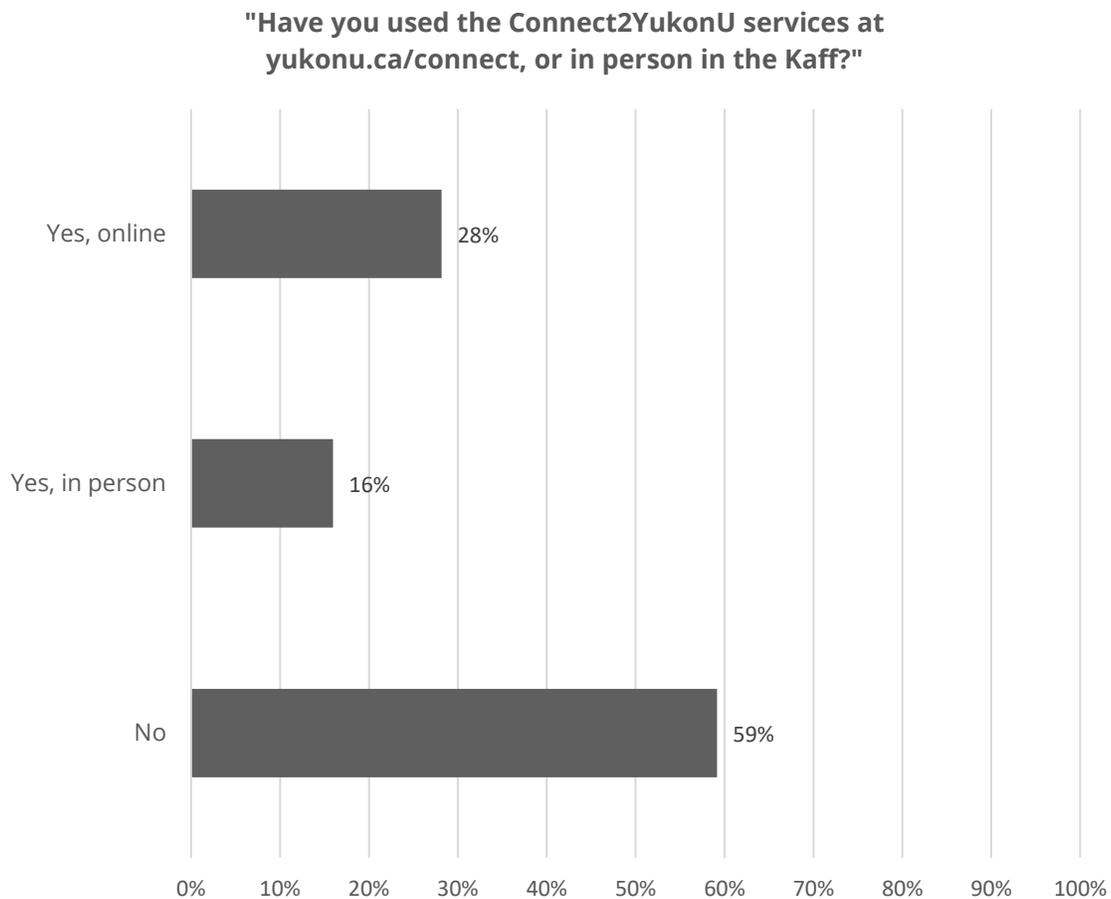


Figure 7

Students in college-level and ABE programs have made the greatest use of Connect2YukonU: 50% of this group have used these services, as compared with 30% of those in university-level programming (degree, post-graduate, or university transfer).

Students who are currently living in Whitehorse are more likely to have used Connect2YukonU: 35% of these students have used these services, as compared with 11% of those living in a rural Yukon community.

Nine out of ten users of Connect2YukonU are satisfied

Those who said they had used Connect2YukonU services were asked to rate their satisfaction. Nine out of ten (90%) were "satisfied" or "very satisfied." Only one person (1%) was "dissatisfied." The remaining 9% chose "Don't know."

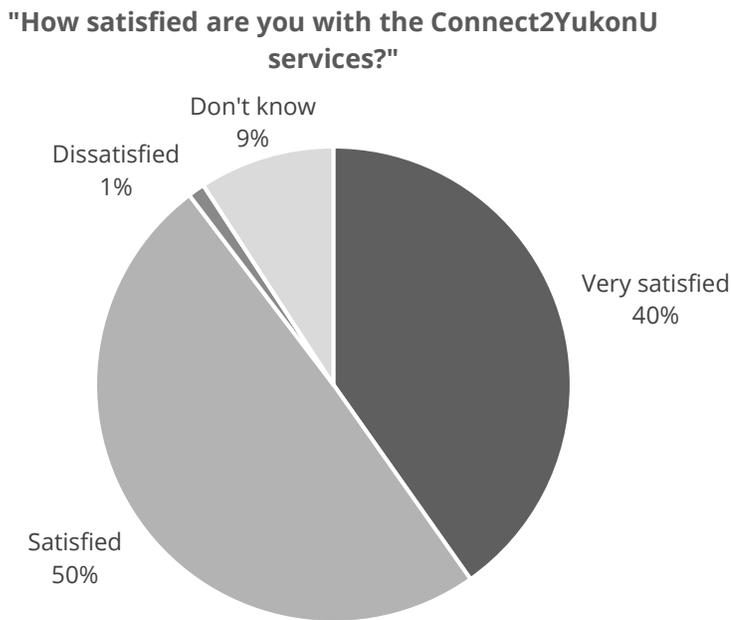


Figure 8

Most written comments characterized the service as responsive, approachable and helpful.

"The name changed but the good habits didn't. ASC is still the best the University has to offer."

"Very nice people, kind and warm. Easy to talk and very approachable."

"They were a big help with my questions with homework and leading in the right direction on how to get help. They were amazing, thank you for the service."

However, help is sometimes delayed because of capacity limitations.

“not always someone there to help when needed”

Remote Learning

This semester, most classroom activities have transitioned to remote delivery. In order to assess the impact of this transition, questions were borrowed and adapted from the “EDUCAUSE DIY Survey Kit: Remote Work and Learning Experiences” tool available for free online at <https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2020/4/educause-diy-survey-kit-remote-work-and-learning-experiences>.

Half of learners have challenges with reliable Internet access

Survey respondents were asked, “Which of the following technological issues have been a challenge for you as a remote learner?” and were invited to choose all applicable items from a list. Nine out of ten respondents (91%) indicated at least one technological issue.

“Which of the following technological issues have been a challenge for you as a remote learner?”

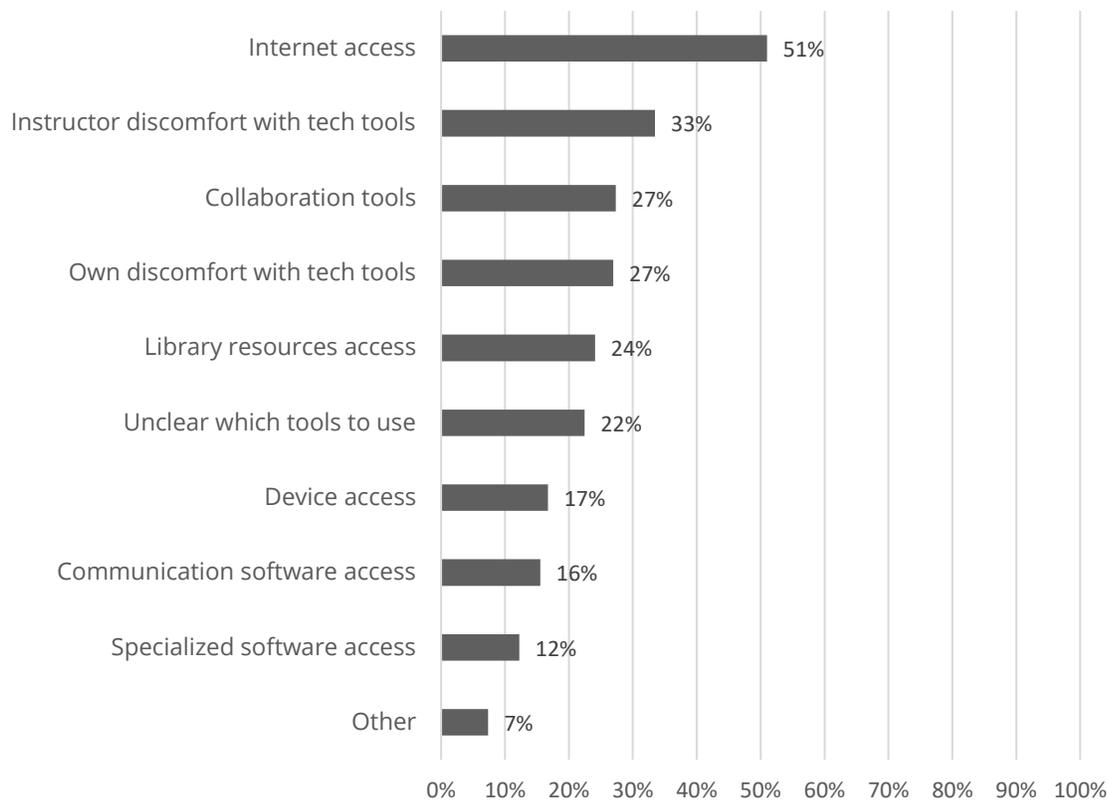


Figure 9

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The most common issue was “My access to reliable internet/service,” identified as a challenge by half of all respondents (51%).

One-third of respondents (33%) identified “Instructor discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications” as a challenge. This was a bit higher than “My own discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications,” identified as a challenge by 27%.

“Other” challenges include:

- Missing face-to-face interactions with instructors and peers (4 respondents)
- Course activities not translating well to online (2 responses)
- Instructors’ inconsistent use of Moodle (2 responses)
- Problems with on-campus Wifi (2 responses)
- Personal laptop is “glitchy” or “on the fritz” (2 responses)
- Individual responses such as: instructor lacks bandwidth for video sharing; glitches with Internet and Moodle; personal learning style not suited to online courses; flexibility of online learning versus discipline of in-person; and unclear instructions on assignments.

In their written comments, several students made clear that they have no issues and in fact greatly enjoy the remote learning experience.

“... I absolutely love remote learning. I've found everyone has been very quick to adapt to the technology and a lot of other students I've spoken to adore the online platform that makes being a student a lot less stressful.”

“I really enjoy doing school from home, and now that I have experienced it, I will not be doing in-person classes, even when they are available again. I enjoy working at my own pace and being comfortable at home. So far, my teachers have been awesome. There is always a learning curve with technology, as it is ever-changing, but I feel as though it is working extremely well for me. PLEASE keep remote programs in the future ...”

“no problems here”

Internet connectivity was a common problem. Students who are on campus experienced difficulties with the campus wifi. Others have poor connectivity at home, off campus. Instructors may also have low bandwidth which affects their remote delivery.

“Internet and technology have been the biggest challenges for me. The internet on campus is brutal but we all know that. ...”

“The Internet quality is not quite good in the remote areas and sometimes in the mid of the class it stops working with any sort of server issues.”

“some teacher wi-fi are really low. ...”

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Some students noted challenges that their instructors have had with adapting to online delivery, or with using tools and technologies in a way that feels consistent across different classes.

"Instructors can adapt to the online method of teaching but it takes time. Overall, I experienced a drop in quality in the courses I am enrolled in compared to previous semesters. I also struggle more to motivate myself."

"... Some teachers are using moodle and others are not which make it a little difficult to remember where to go look for information."

"In two of my four courses it is clear that the instructors are not comfortable with Moodle or Zoom. One of these instructor could not get the students access to many documents in Moodle."

A few students have had issues maintaining clear communication with instructors. Problems with personal laptops, various technology glitches, and difficulties accessing library resources have also affected some respondents.

Half of learners have difficulty focusing in the remote environment

Survey respondents were asked, "Which of the following learning/educational issues have been a challenge for you as a remote learner?" and were invited to choose all applicable items from a list. Nine out of ten respondents (89%) indicated at least one learning or educational issue.

The most common challenge, identified by half (49%) of respondents, is "Difficulty focusing or paying attention to remote instruction or activities." In addition, nearly half of respondents (47%) expressed a "Personal preference for face-to-face learning."

More than two out of five respondents experienced challenges with "Unclear expectations around course/assignment requirements" (44%), and 43% struggled with "Personal motivation/desire to complete coursework."

One-third of respondents had challenges with "Course lessons or activities that haven't translated well to a remote environment" (34%). As well, one-third (33%) had difficulty "Finding time to participate in synchronous classes (e.g., live-streaming lectures or video conferencing at a set time)."

"Which of the following learning/educational issues have been a challenge for you as a remote learner?"

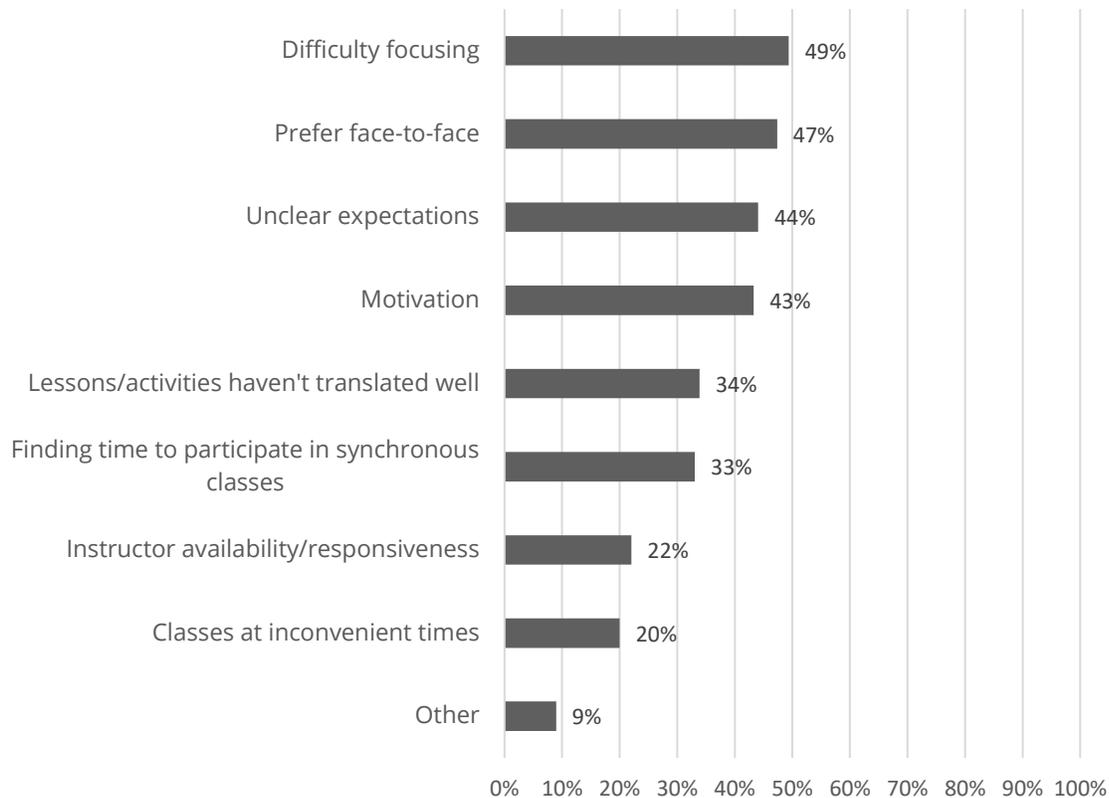


Figure 10

"Other" challenges include:

- Distractions and lack of a quiet study space at home (5 responses)
- Poor conversion of course content or activities into online modalities (3 responses)
- Higher-than-usual workload in some courses (3 responses)
- Struggling with motivation (3 responses)
- Screen fatigue (2 responses)
- Instructors slow to respond to communication (2 responses)
- Other difficulties learning in online modalities (2 responses)
- Other individual concerns such as struggling with online tests; balancing school with full-time employment; difficulties coordinating group work; and a preference for asynchronous over synchronous learning.

In their written comments, some students reiterated that they had no issues, and in fact may have a preference for remote learning.

"I am actually really liking being able to take classes and do work when it works for me. ..."

"No problem."

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"I haven't had any personal challenges with this, I think it's fantastic and has allowed me to work school into my busy work schedule. It's taken a lot of stress off of me, and honestly, I don't know if I would have been able to keep my jobs and full-time school if the remote learning didn't make it so easy to work around. The lack of traveling time has saved me."

The most common challenge that was reported in this section was having difficulties in communicating with instructors, particularly around expectations for assignments.

"Unclear expectations about assignments has been a major issue for me this semester in three of my courses."

"... Again communication is sometimes not the greatest with all teachers."

"Unclear expectations how to be able to participate in class discussions, when class was and is stated as "self-paced" and non-synchronous."

A few students said that their instructors had not successfully adapted course content or pedagogy to the online environment. Some students find themselves struggling more with time management, discipline, and motivation while learning online. The home environment may prove distracting, or they may not have access to a quiet study space that allows separation from personal life. A few students feel that their instructors have "piled on" more work than usual. Finally, synchronous class times create scheduling issues for some students as they try to balance school with employment.

Grades are students' biggest concern

Survey respondents were asked, "What are your biggest concerns with remote learning so far?" and were invited to choose all applicable items from a list. Nine out of ten respondents (90%) indicated at least one concern.

Half of respondents (53%) identified "Grades/performing well in class" as a concern. In addition, about one-third had concerns about "Not being able to see classmates" (35%), "Missing out on extracurricular/on-campus activities" (34%), "Not being able to communicate with instructors" (31%), and "Not having a private space to study or participate in remote learning" (31%).

More than one-quarter are concerned about "Possible delays in graduating/completing my program" (29%), and "Completing my practicum requirements" (26%).

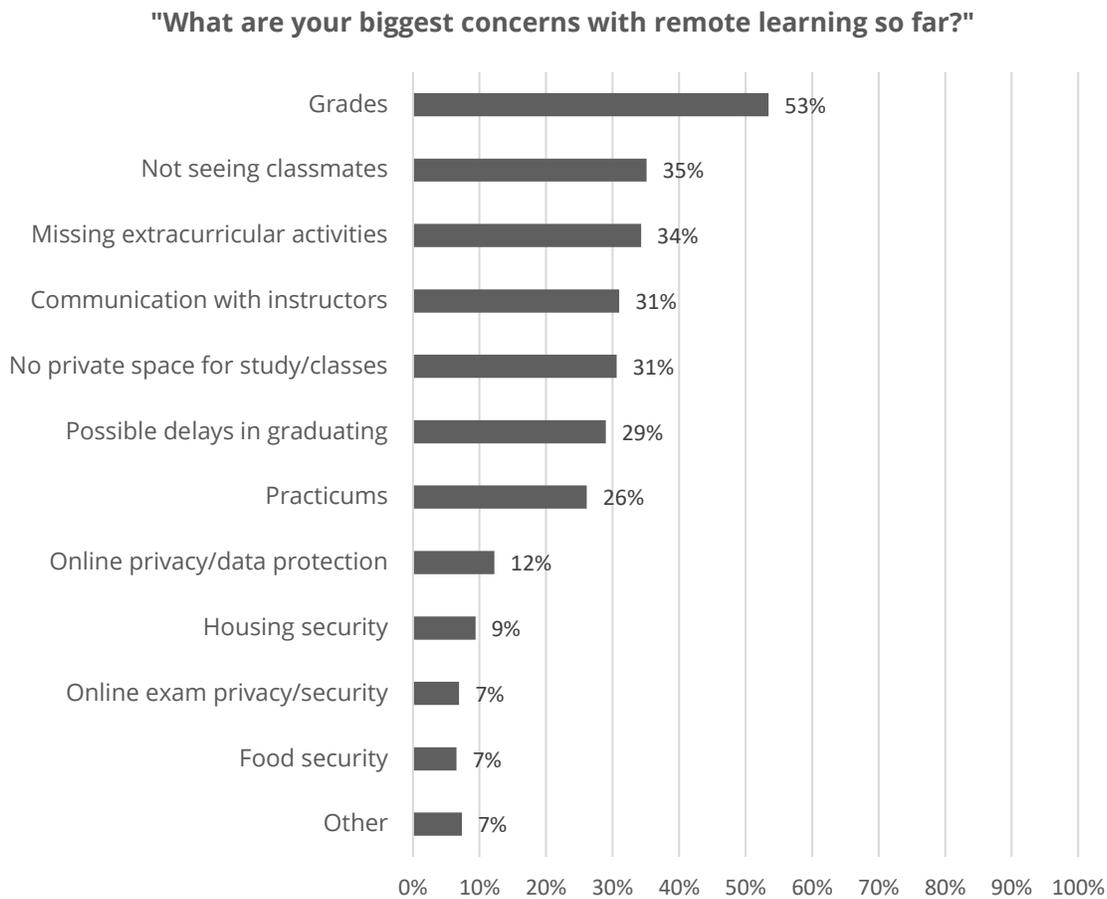


Figure 11

"Other" concerns include:

- Instructional approach, and communication with instructors (4 responses)
- Financial concerns, and being able to work while studying (3 responses)
- Academic difficulties, including difficulties staying on track and motivated (3 responses)
- Mental health (3 responses)
- Internet cost and reliability (2 responses)
- Other individual concerns such as: delays in graduation due to course cancellations; study spaces on campus not accommodating group work; instructors' microphones not picking up clearly; and "just juggling everything."

In their written comments, students outlined some of the factors that are negatively affecting their grades and performance. These include: online exams with video surveillance; having fewer assignments to get regular feedback; having more assignments and an increased workload; lack of quiet study space at home; time management issues; and navigating new class formats and/or "teaching yourself" with limited communication with instructors.

Some students feel that the loss of in-person classes has resulted in a less valuable learning experience overall.

"It's not the Universities fault but I don't feel like I am getting the value I was expecting. I've contemplated taking a leave from studies until everyone figures out how to deliver an adapted curriculum."

"There is a sense of disengagement. I prefer, need, the ability to relate to teachers and classmates, this is obtained by sharing stories, experiences and time. The online class makes it difficult to communicate as many people have their cameras off and are muted to allow better use of time on line"

"I moved from Alberta to the Yukon away from family to complete my degree because I prefer face to face learning. I am struggling with almost all of these bullets significantly"

Students in university-level programs, and students who attended K-12 in the Yukon, experience more challenges with remote learning

Cross-comparisons were performed for different demographic groups on the various challenges that were reported in this section. Notable differences are itemized below.

Students who are from the Yukon, in the sense of having done at least some of their K-12 education here, experience greater challenges than students from outside the territory in regards to:

- "Instructor discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications" – 43% versus 30%
- "Unclear expectations around which technologies and applications I am required to use" – 32% versus 19%
- "Personal preference for face-to-face learning" – 58% versus 41%
- "Unclear expectations around course/assignment requirements" – 54% versus 40%
- "Instructor availability/responsiveness" – 31% versus 19%
- "Grades/performing well in class" – 66% versus 49%
- "Not having a private space to study or participate in remote learning" – 40% versus 24%

Students enrolled in university-level programs (degree, post-graduate, or university transfer) experience greater challenges than college-level and ABE students in regards to:

- "Instructor discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications" – 42% versus 10%
- "Adequate digital replacements for face-to-face collaboration tools (e.g., whiteboards)" – 31% versus 14%
- "My access to library resources" – 29% versus 14%
- "Unclear expectations around course/assignment requirements" – 49% versus 26%
- "Personal motivation/desire to complete coursework" – 47% versus 26%
- "Finding time to participate in synchronous classes (e.g., live-streaming lectures or video conferencing at a set time)" – 37% versus 16%
- "Classes scheduled at inconvenient times" – 24% versus 6%
- "Grades/performing well in class" – 58% versus 40%
- "Not having a private space to study or participate in remote learning" – 36% versus 14%

Student Survey 2020: Results

Students enrolled in college-level or ABE programs experience greater challenges than university-level students in regards to:

- “My access to a reliable digital device (e.g., laptop, mobile device)” – 34% versus 12%

Racially minoritized students experience greater challenges than those who do not identify as racially minoritized in regards to:

- “My own discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications” – 40% versus 18%
- “My access to a reliable digital device (e.g., laptop, mobile device)” – 27% versus 10%
- “Food security” – 19% versus 5%

Students who do not identify as racially minoritized experience greater challenges than racially minoritized students in regards to:

- “Not being able to see classmates” – 45% versus 25%

Non-Indigenous students experience greater challenges than self-identified Indigenous students in regards to:

- “Completing my practicum requirements” – 31% versus 15%

Students who are currently living in Whitehorse experience greater challenges than those in rural Yukon communities in regards to:

- “Unclear expectations around which technologies and applications I am required to use” – 30% versus 7%

Male students experience greater challenges than female students around:

- “Instructor discomfort or lack of familiarity with required technologies or applications” – 48% versus 32%

Female students experience greater challenges than male students around:

- “My access to library resources” – 27% versus 13%

Students aged 25 and older experience greater challenges than traditional-aged students in regards to:

- “Housing security” – 13% versus 3%

One out of ten students requires academic accommodations, and many of these students report accessibility issues

Students completing the survey were provided with a brief explanation of academic accommodations: “Some students with disabilities require academic accommodations to support their access to education. Academic accommodations are adjustments to the environment, curriculum format or equipment that allows students with disabilities to gain access to their course content and/or complete assigned tasks.”

Then they were asked, “Do you require academic accommodations for disabilities?” One out of ten (11%, or 24 respondents) said yes.

"Do you require academic accommodations for disabilities?"

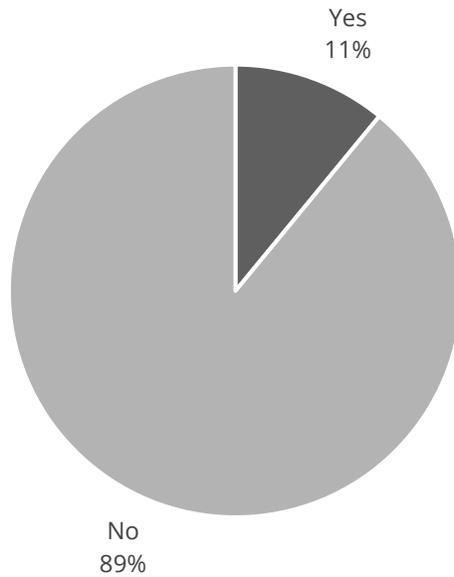


Figure 12

"Which of the following technical accessibility issues have been challenging for you as a remote learner?"

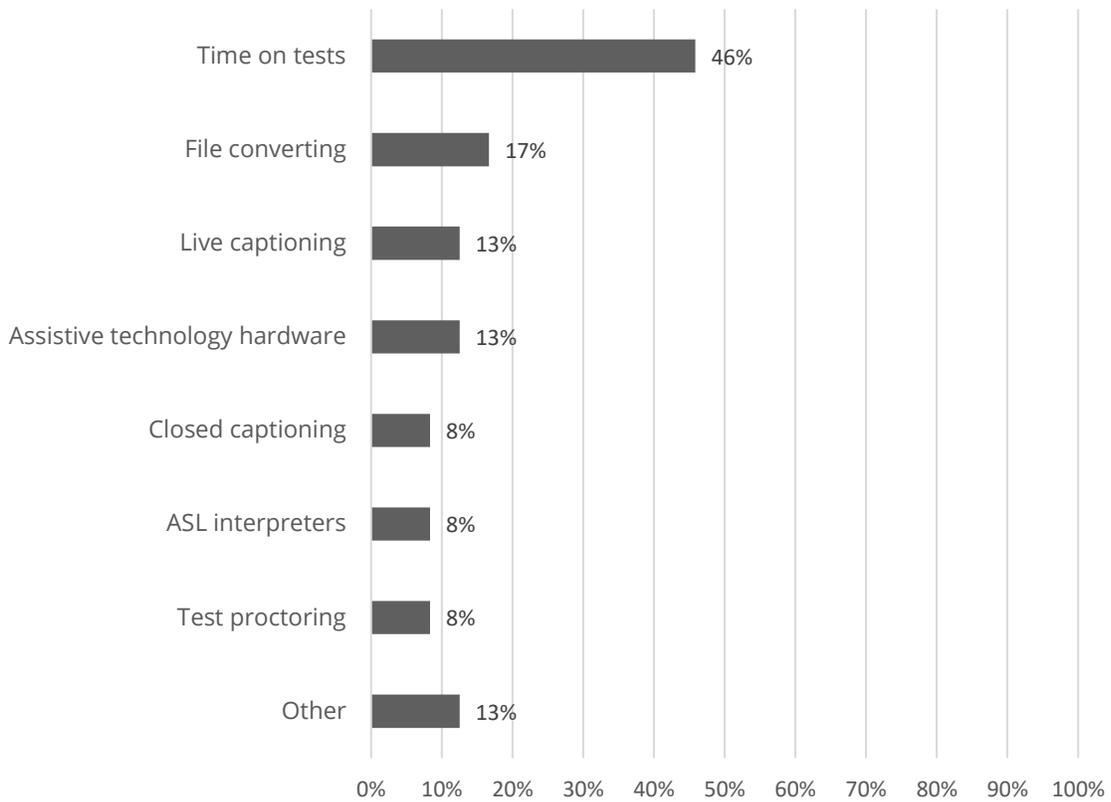


Figure 13

Students who require accommodations were presented with a list of technical accessibility issues, and were asked which of these had been challenging for them as a remote learner. Two-thirds (67%) reported at least one technical accessibility issue. The main issue, experienced by nearly half (46%) of students requiring accommodations, was having time on tests.

“Other” issues include: managing screen time and lighting with a disorder that creates sensitivities, not being able to download Zoom recordings for offline access, access to library resources, and access to a laptop. In addition, two students commented about unstable internet connections that can cut out during class or even during exams. One student said that their home setup is better than what is available at school.

Students requiring accommodations were also asked about teaching-related accessibility issues that have been challenging for them as remote learners. Four out of five (83%) identified at least one teaching-related accessibility issue.

Half (50%) experienced issues with timed tests. More than one-third (38%) had issues with instructors holding only synchronous classes, and one-quarter (25%) had issues with instructors not using a tool that is supported by the institution.

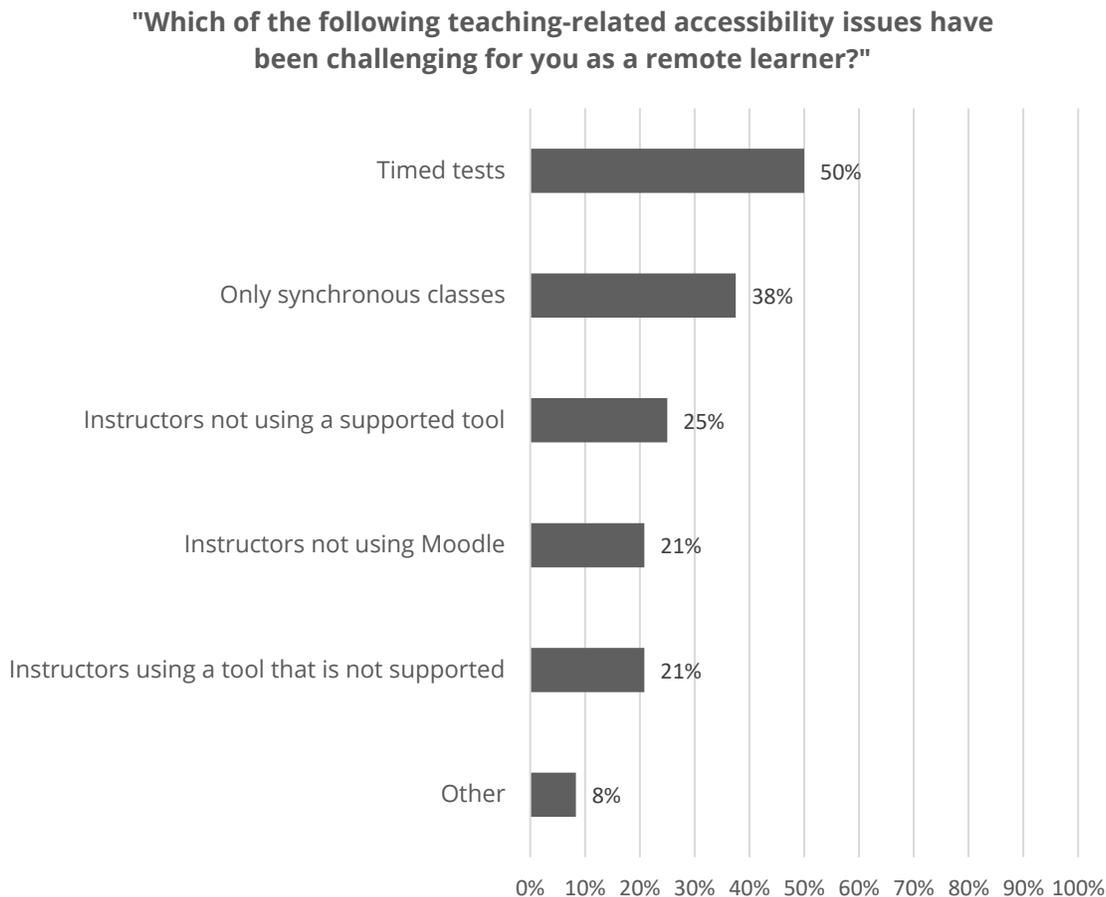


Figure 14

“Other” issues include: instructors using only recorded (not live) lectures, and assignments involving discussion forums that close as of a certain date without clear notice of the deadline. In addition, students commented about issues with timed quizzes; instructors not responding to emails; instructors not posting material on a consistent schedule; and Zoom fatigue.

Remote learning has given students flexibility to work, provide child- or elder-care, and remain in their home communities

Students responding to the survey were asked, “What has worked well for you as a remote learner?”

A prominent theme in their responses was that remote learning provides the flexibility to accommodate a work schedule, or to provide care for children or elders at home. Asynchronous courses in particular allow students to proceed at their own pace and to juggle demands.

“Learning at my own pace.”

“I like that I can log in to zoom from anywhere. I don’t need to be in a class and that makes my schedule more flexible.”

“I love that I can work and go back to school at the same time, without having to attend a class at a specific time. I hope this can continue to be an option in the future, with or without a pandemic.”

“... more flexibility with children at home and caretaking elders due to being at home ...”

“Being able to still perform well as a parent and do my own course work due to being able to sign on and study basically anywhere.”

Recorded lectures not only allow for a flexible schedule, but also enable students to go back and review material that they may not have grasped the first time.

“Recorded lectures to look back at when studying”

“I really love how my ... instructor ... records every lecture because then later on I can watch the video and I am able to pause the video and write my notes whenever.”

“... I love being able to save the class lecture notes and rewatch parts of lectures that I might have needed reinforcement. It’s also great to know that if I “miss a class” I can play the video lecture at another time.”

There are additional advantages to being at home. Skipping the commute saves students time and money. There are certain comforts to being at home, such as attending class in pajamas! In addition, the home environment can provide wellness benefits for students who struggle with mental health, or who require ergonomic or other physical supports.

Student Survey 2020: Results

"As a remote learner, I find that I can save time, I can relax and concentrate more as I am attending class from my home. I do not have to travel to university. As a student without a vehicle, it is so convenient for me to get classes online. Traveling to college in winter is hard."

"Save on gas money."

"I can do it at home in my pjs!"

"The freedom to take my classes from home or wherever I have internet, and the lack of travel time, has made school and work much less stressful. Being able to do this, and be home with my animals has reduced my stress for this year exponentially. I hope we keep this as a full time option, because I feel I've been more prompt than ever. Compared to my previous school experiences, being able to stay home some days and still participate in class is amazing. My mental health is better than ever with this."

Remote learning allows students in rural communities to remain in the community during their studies.

"I am able to participate in school without having to move to Whitehorse and rent a second home and leave my family."

"It has worked very well for my living situation. I live in a Yukon community and not having to move to Whitehorse, find housing, etc. has been one of the major positives of remote learning."

Many students said that they had experienced good communication with instructors and classmates that was working well to support their learning. Assistance and timely feedback from instructors help students to stay on track.

"... Also, I have great instructors and engaged classmates – so we still have great conversations, practice, and learning. ..."

"... Having great, compassionate instructors. Knowing that everyone is in the same boat."

"My professors are doing their best to make us feel connected, despite the distanced learning."

"When my instructors acknowledge the challenges of online learning and I'm able to reach out for extra help."

Students feel supported in their learning when they can see that instructors have taken the time to transition the course to be effective in an online format.

"It is nice to see that lots of things have transferred to an online platform without trouble. Most activities have changed to engage students remotely and that is motivating and encouraging. Also it is noticeable from last semester when classes had to be online suddenly, huge difference in terms of structure and instructors well trained"

Student Survey 2020: Results

"Instructors that have spent a lot of time including multi-media content and using platforms in lieu of discussion boards."

Zoom classes work well for students who like a synchronous experience with instructor and classmates.

"... Zoom access to classes at least somewhat compensates for the lack of human contact."

"... communicating with classmates (written & Zoom) and seeing them "face-to-face" in our Zoom classes (normally, we may not talk to each other as much in class and only see the backs of some people's heads)."

Some students are taking advantage of a variety of supports and resources that are available on campus, or remotely.

"I have been going to the Yukon U library and using the study rooms there. I've treated online school as a job and commit to 8 hours per day."

"Going to the College to get help with my work"

"The support staff and the phone calls with the disability services. ..."

Other things that are working well for some students include: having a dedicated study space at home; learning new technology skills; staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic; useful Moodle features such as calendar and checklists; and the opportunity to build and maintain positive habits and mindset for success.

Unfortunately, there are still a few students who feel that nothing is working well for them right now.

"Nothing, its so hard."

YukonU can support remote learners by supporting instructors with training on best practices, consistent standards, and tools for teaching online

Students responding the survey were asked, "How could YukonU improve the experience of remote learners?"

Many students called for the University to better support instructors to be effective online teachers. This would include training on best practices for online teaching, as well as training in Moodle and Zoom. Students would also like to see consistent standards for the use of these online platforms, for a seamless experience across different courses. Instructors need adequate tools for remote teaching, such as appropriate hardware and Internet connectivity.

Student Survey 2020: Results

"Support teachers with limited internet services. I know we can't have classes face to face but we should still be allowed to have face to face meetings with our teachers. Be able to go over our work and have conversations. I know Zoom Tube learning is hard, and sometimes forcing people to have their video's opened is hard. But staring at a black screen is worse."

"Making sure every instructor is confident in using online platforms."

"Have a consolidated, consistent use of technology for assignment submission and exam taking. Ensure all instructors know how to use the tools available."

"Ensure all instructors are engaging in their lessons and know how to use the technology. It's easy to not want to show up when the instructor isn't great at online."

"Teachers could have more training on zoom engagement"

"... have educators be consistent in the use of Moodle if it is the University's platform for online learning. ..."

Another prominent theme is around communication with instructors. Students are looking for clarity around expectations for assignments and activities, and prompt feedback on their work so that they know how well they are doing in the class. Students also ask that instructors demonstrate holistic awareness of people's individual situations and experiences as remote learners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Allow a bit more face-to-face for instructors to just go the extra mile when they see a student struggling because we're all kinds depressed"

"Offering a better way to track assignments. I am not 100% sure how well I'm doing in my classes."

"clear instruction that we need to do week by week."

"Quicker response times from instructors. We no longer have the ability to ask questions to instructors or fellow students while passing them in the hallway. Communication is key and responding to emails and questions needs to be a priority on all parts."

Students offered many suggestions for best practices in online course delivery. Depending on the student and the course, some would like to see more asynchronous delivery, while others want more Zoom lectures. There were calls for Zoom lectures to be delivered in shorter chunks, and for lecture capture to be standard across the board. There were also suggestions for the use of various multimedia materials, different tools or platforms, and course formats or activities.

"More mixed media used in online classes, combo of podcasts, videos, recorded lectures, readings etc"

"Stop synchronous classes, and have optional discussion time if people need to talk and ask questions as a class. (also have this meeting recorded for those who can't make it!!!)"

Student Survey 2020: Results

"I would say there must be more zoom sections rather than more assignments"

"By offering more asynchronous classes."

"It is improving with breakout rooms, activities within synchronous lectures."

"More Zoom classes."

"Have all lectures recorded"

"Most to a modern format of online classes. Either self paced or pre recorded lectures to watch and follow along with online discussion boards. Zoom is painful and not helpful. I haven't learned anything. I'm just ticking a box to get the class done."

Some students are struggling with workloads, meeting deadlines, and writing online exams. There were calls for greater leniency in deadlines and grading, including pass/fail options, in light of the stresses caused by remote learning and the pandemic.

"... Grading alternative - students are more stressed due to online learning and covid-19 in general. Acknowledge that and give grading options - pass/fail, grade bumping of 10% higher automatically ..."

"Less overwhelming course loads."

"Not be so strict on due dates"

"I feel like the teachers should be more considerate and really think about what is happening in the world. I feel like they expect the same results of us as if we were face to face learning which I think is unfair. We are literally at home studying and dealing with all other matters that come with covid etc. I feel like the instructors should be more thoughtful when grading us because when we get the marks back it's like I'm not understanding what it wrong? Like I read the material, I go to the zoom classes, I do that work and it's still not enough. Then that makes it harder for me to motivate myself "to go to school". If this is the way that YukonU will chose to do classes online then I will most likely leave my program until I can go back face to face learning."

"... Instructors should also be giving more leeway in online testing. They shouldn't be using the same testing structure they do with in-person tests for online tests."

Students asked for a range of holistic supports, including academic supports, technical assistance, and wellness:

"More time to help with homework, only have half hour limits, wish it was longer, and more instructors to help with homework during the afternoons"

"Have more dedicated staff available to troubleshoot issues over the phone."

Student Survey 2020: Results

"I think there should be staff dedicated to the wellness of students and if there is they need to be promoting their services everywhere."

Remote learning can be isolating, and some students are seeking opportunities to connect with their classmates, either in person or remotely.

"Giving students more access to rooms to study or meet with people in their classes (make class bubbles?) under COVID-19 guidelines"

"I don't know if there are spaces for kids to study together via zoom. I have really missed the library atmosphere where even when you do get distracted, all the other kids with their head down working reminds you to get back on track. If something like this does exist, then it needs to be broadcasted more."

Students who are using the campus facilities for quiet study space, Internet connectivity, or other on-campus resources are looking for expanded access.

"More access to campus on weekends and evenings, as I don't have unlimited internet access at my house."

"Provide quiet study areas or get teachers to provide a reduced work schedules to make up for all the other obstacles students are facing. The extra work tacked on, especially reading activities, when there is no quiet area to do the work is unfair to students who depending on the school to provide quiet areas. I have animals and kids that are always disrupting me when I'm home and I have a very hard time focusing on school work."

Students who live in Campus Housing, or who come to campus to use the wifi, are looking for more reliable on-campus Internet connectivity.

"Have better internet available to those living in campus housing."

"Have wifi on campus that can support zoom without freezing and disconnecting."

Other ways that YukonU could improve the remote learning experience include: providing or subsidizing technology for students; offering tutorials or short courses on technologies and time management skills for remote learner success; and providing face to face learning opportunities if and when that is possible.

Some students said that YukonU is doing a good job at delivering remote learning, and they have no suggestions to offer. A few students said that they hope remote options are maintained or expanded post-COVID.

"I feel that zoomuristy is a learning curve for everyone and I feel YukonU is adapting well to the changes."

"I think that YukonU is doing a great job giving the best experience to remote learners. You have access to a lot of help and guidance online and at campus."

"I can't think of anything; however, I am sure that the online experience will be refined as we go along. I hope that, post-Covid, we continue with on-line offerings as "normal" option at YU."

COVID-19 Response

More than three-quarters of students are satisfied with YukonU's COVID-19 response

Survey respondents were asked, "Overall, how satisfied are you with YukonU's response to COVID-19?" More than three-quarters (78%) are "satisfied" or "very satisfied." One out of six (16%) is "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied," and the remaining 7% "don't know."

"Overall, how satisfied are you with YukonU's response to COVID-19?"

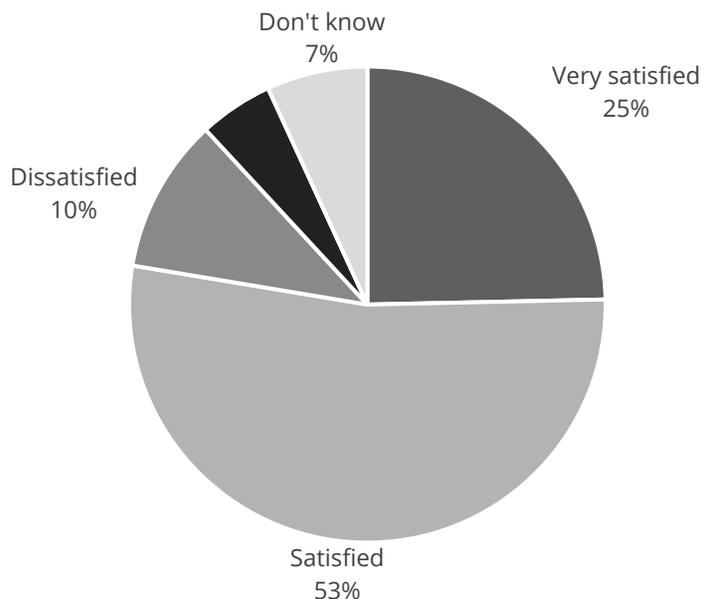


Figure 15

Students enrolled in college-level and ABE programs are more satisfied overall: 91% of this group is satisfied or very satisfied with YukonU's COVID-19 response, as compared with 76% of those enrolled in university-level programs.

Student Survey 2020: Results

In their written comments, several students said that they appreciate YukonU doing what has to be done to keep students safe. Some students also expressed appreciation for supports such as being provided with meals in Campus Housing during the initial lockdown in spring of 2020.

"Thank you for keeping us safe and adapting so quickly"

"I can enjoy learning at home where it is safe."

"So far, you have taken all the necessary actions to keep us safe and also provided us meal during the lock down. Thank you!"

Several students said that they would like to have the option of in-person classes with social distancing, limited class size, and other safety protocols in place. (It should be noted that the survey took place during a period when the Yukon's total case counts were low, and there had been no new cases reported in the territory for some time. Shortly after the close of the survey, case counts began rising as a "second wave" hit the North.)

"I hope we can find ways to start classes in school again that could be safe for both students and staff."

"I don't understand why we cannot go to campus as adults who know how to distance and wash hands but elementary school kids can."

"Being able to be on campus with a smaller cohort (less than ten) would have been a great option for our program."

Some students who are living in Campus Housing feel that the restrictions regarding visitors are excessive and onerous.

"I live in a small dorm of only 8 people and I feel that it would make more sense to consider us a pod especially as the Yukon has a low number of cases."

"I honestly don't know how to answer this, but have given you what I am going through this situation in this survey. I know that you are all making decisions to keep us safe, but please try to put yourselves in our situations. Think about the students in the dorms/family units. We are totally isolated. It has been hard on our children especially. They don't understand why the rest of Whitehorse has been able to meet with others in their own homes and yet, we do not have that clearance to do so. They have been able to see their friends at school, at the stores, in all other areas of the city, but not in our own homes. ..."

The restrictions, security protocols, and lack of access to campus spaces and services have made some students feel unwelcome at YukonU.

"Security personnel at the entrances have created an atmosphere in which students are unwelcome."

"I feel like the University is a prison. No access to teachers, labs, or even study areas. Accessing the YKU is really uncomfortable. ... Having to sign a waiver every time they enter the university and the challenges associated with not being to reach out directly to professors is incredibly stifling."

"The feeling is that within the institution there are a lot of people that truly care about students and students' academic success. However, the courses cuts, the campus not being thought through for students' use, and the stop of any activity (closure of fitness centre and gym included) have me think that the interest of the institution is not where it should be."

Other concerns include: situations where COVID-19 safety protocols (such as mask-wearing) are not being followed effectively on campus; mixed experiences with online learning; poor communication about changes; and being charged full tuition and fees despite the changes to the student experience.

Academic supports, communication with instructors, study space, and Learning Commons are the most important services for students

Students were asked, "What services are important to you during your studies at YukonU? What do you need from YukonU to better support you as a student?"

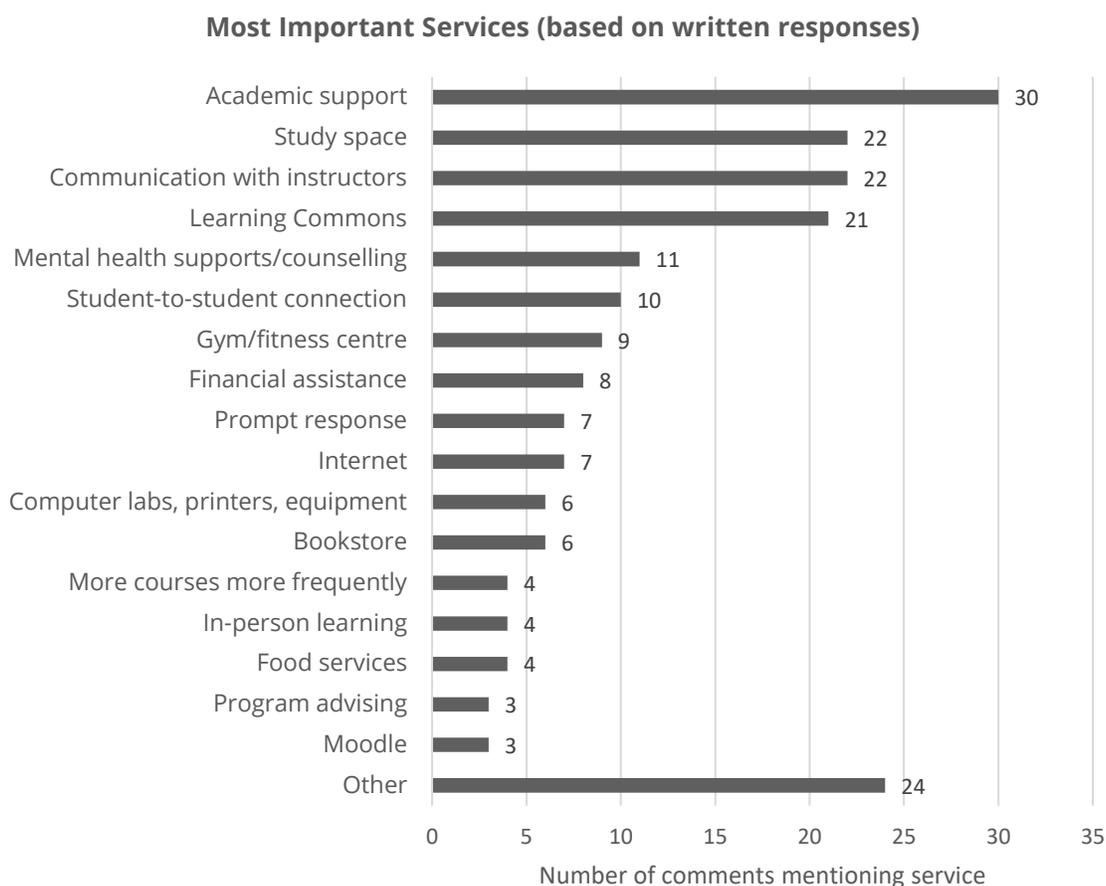


Figure 16

Student Survey 2020: Results

Based on their written responses, academic supports (including tutoring, the Academic Support Centre, and the Learning Assistance Centre) are most important. Communication with instructors, and willingness of instructors to assist and support students, are also very important to students' success.

Many students are seeking study space outside their homes. The Learning Commons was identified as an important service for providing this space, as well as for providing books and online information resources.

Students feel supported by instructors and academic support services during COVID-19

Survey respondents were asked, "Have you had supports from YukonU that are helping you to succeed as a student during COVID-19? If so, please tell us what is working to support you."

Based on their written responses, many students have benefited from the help and support of their instructors.

"My instructors have been very supportive and understanding."

"Instructors are very helpful in answering questions fairly quickly. They would be the biggest support for me at YukonU."

"Teachers are doing a great job making things work!!!"

"Most teachers are doing amazing and are very responsive to emails."

In addition, many students have been helped by academic supports such as tutoring, the Writing Centre, and the Learning Assistance Centre.

"Writing center has been helpful as usual."

"teachers at the support centre in the cafeteria have been a big help."

"Learning assistance centre was a great resource to help me determine my differing needs for academic accommodation in light of the changed learning situations"

Other supports that students have found especially helpful include: Learning Commons/library services; information updates from the University; financial assistance; the "care packages" sent out to students; and counselling services.

Textbooks and E-texts

Two-thirds buy new textbooks, and half buy used

Students responding to the survey were asked, "When a physical textbook is a required for a course, what do you normally do?" Two-thirds of respondents (65%) said they typically purchase the textbook new, and half (49%) buy used. (Respondents could check all that apply, so percentages sum to more than 100%).

One out of every eight students (13%) said that they would try to get through the course without using the textbook, and one out of eleven (9%) would arrange with classmates to share one copy of the textbook.

"When a physical textbook is required for a course, what do you normally do?"

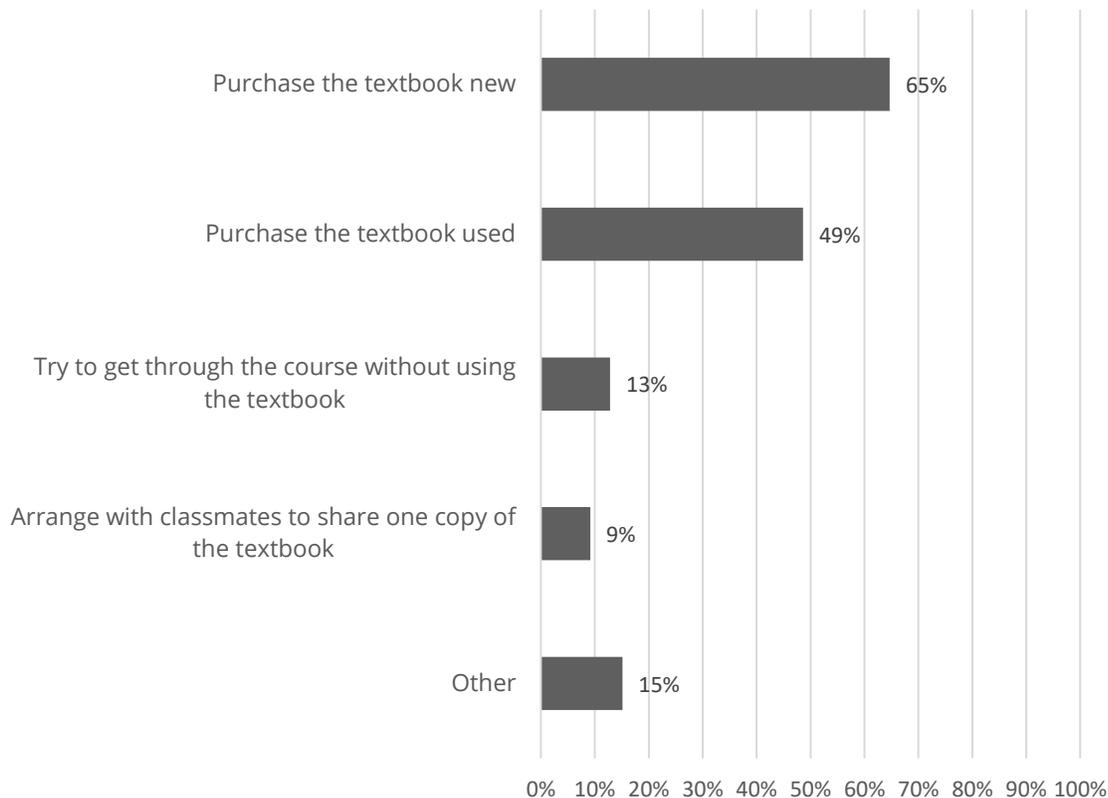


Figure 17

"Other" responses include:

- Look for an e-textbook; try to find a free or less expensive version online (12 responses)
- Have not needed physical textbooks for courses (6 responses)
- Purchase textbooks online (e.g. from Amazon, social media buy and sell groups, etc.) (5 responses)
- Try to buy used, but will buy new if a used copy cannot be found (4 responses)
- Borrow from the library (2 responses)

Student Survey 2020: Results

- Borrow from a previous student in the course (2 responses)
- Other individual responses include: printed pages in a binder rather than hardcover textbook; and receiving funding just in time to purchase textbook.

Self-identified Indigenous students are more likely than non-Indigenous students to purchase the textbook new (85% versus 54%), and less likely to purchase a used textbook (25% versus 59%) or to share with classmates (3% versus 12%).

Students who attended K-12 in the Yukon are also more likely than students from outside the territory to purchase the textbook new (74% vs 57%), and are less likely to try to by without the text (7% versus 18%).

Students in college-level and ABE programs are more likely than those in university-level programs to purchase the textbook new (86% versus 58%).

Students under age 25 are more likely than older students to arrange to share a copy with classmates (14% versus 6%).

Three out of five students have used e-textbooks

Three out of five students (62%) said that they had used e-textbooks for their classes, while 36% had not, and 2% didn't know. Students in university-level programs are more likely than those in college-level or ABE programs to have used e-textbooks (70% versus 36%). Students under age 25 are also more likely than older students to have used e-textbooks (73% versus 54%).

"Have you used an e-textbook for any of your classes?"

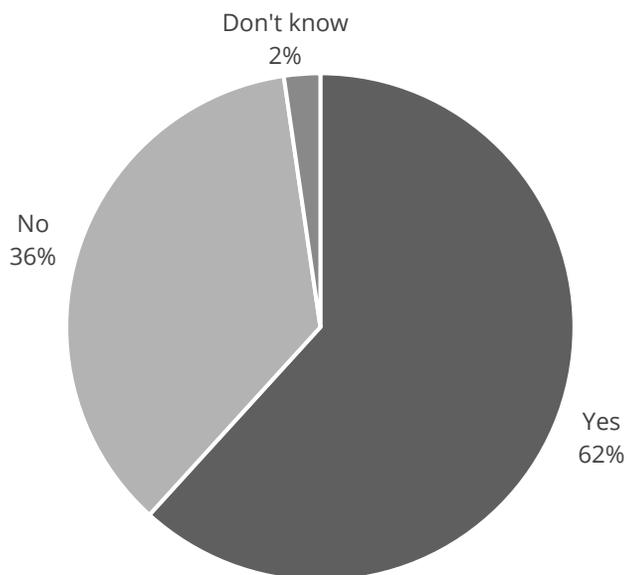


Figure 18

Only one out of five thinks e-textbooks are best for learning, but one-third still prefer them overall

Students who had used e-textbooks were asked, "Which do you find best to learn from, a physical textbook or an e-textbook?" Half (54%) said "physical textbooks are best for learning." About one out of five (18%) said "e-textbooks are best for learning." The remaining 28% saw "no difference."

"Which do you find best to learn from, an e-textbook or a physical textbook?"

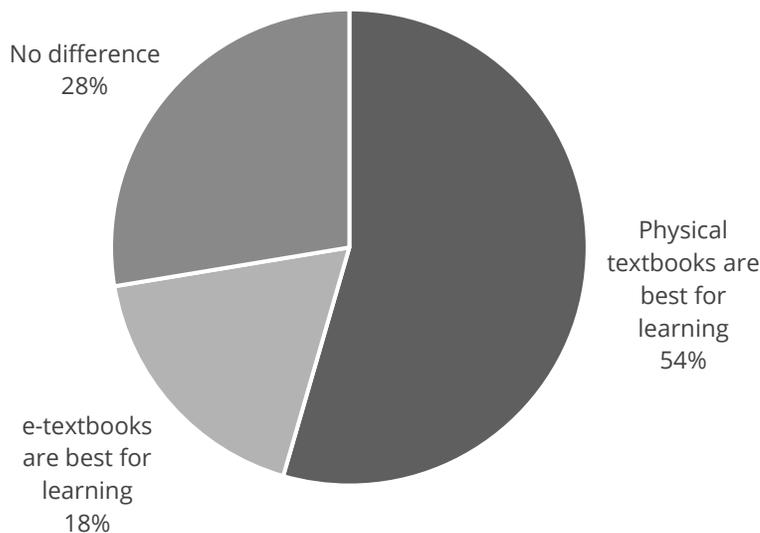


Figure 19

Preference for learning from physical textbooks is higher among self-identified Indigenous students (67%) than among non-Indigenous students (47%).

Students who had used e-textbooks were then asked, "Considering all factors (learning, convenience, cost, etc.) which do you prefer?" Half (49%) said they "prefer physical textbooks." One-third (31%) said they "prefer e-textbooks," while one out of five (20%) expressed "no preference."

"Considering all factors (learning, convenience, cost, etc.) which do you prefer?"

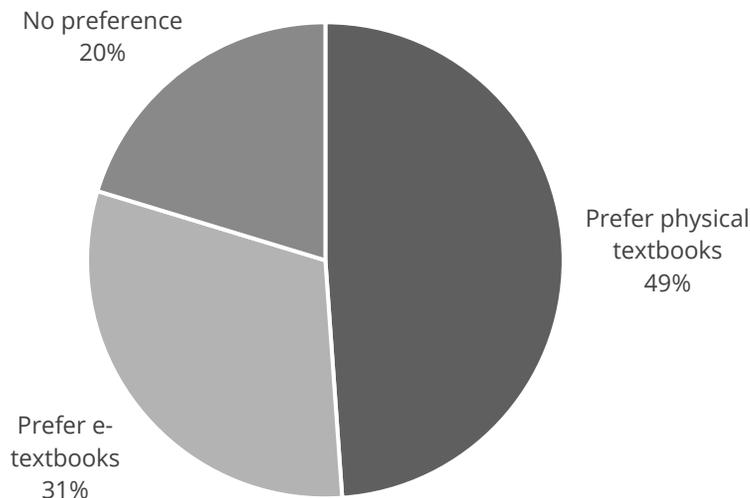


Figure 20

In their written comments, students who prefer e-textbooks tended to cite their cheaper cost, the convenience of having them with you on a device rather than carrying heavy books, and their searchability or other digital features. A few people also mentioned that e-textbooks save paper.

"because usually e-textbook is way cheaper than physical books"

"It's nice to have my textbooks available on my computer, instead of having to lug around several heavy books."

"... Easier to just search in book and additional tools that different publishers offer."

Students who prefer physical textbooks are mainly concerned about reducing screen time, with some saying that reading on the screen causes headaches or eye strain.

"I have severe migraines and screen time is a trigger"

"... I prefer to read a physical textbook than an e-textbook because then I am not staring at a screen for 7 hours."

"My eyes kill me after a day of reading a screen"

Student Survey 2020: Results

Other reasons for preferring physical textbooks include: the ability to mark up books with highlighters and sticky notes; being able to read textbooks anywhere without needing a computer or Internet connection; just needing to hold a book in one's hands; and being able to flip back and forth more easily.

"the ability to write notes/sticky tabs in certain sections, some online books don't go to specific chapters or pages so you have to scroll through 2 or 300 pages to find your spot, I'm vintage and I like pages and paper!"

"I can make notes in it, easier to refer back to sections highlighted and made notes on. I integrate information better than reading off a screen"

"I can take my physical textbook with me anywhere, especially when I need to read in a quiet location. ... I can not bring my desktop to a quiet spot to read!"

"... being able to physically hold a book is a huge thing for me."

"... easier to go back and forth between pages ..."

A few people also said that they find it easier to focus with physical textbooks, whereas e-textbooks bring the distractions of being online. The used textbook market allows some students to save money on physical textbooks, and to recoup their costs of purchase.

Students who expressed no preference for either format of textbook were in some cases weighing pros and cons (cheapness and searchability of e-textbooks, versus reduced screen time and ability to highlight or mark up physical textbooks). Others truly don't have a preference either way, and are fine with either format.

The textbook is one of several important resources for students' learning

Students were asked, "Thinking of all the resources and materials used in a course to support your learning, how important is the textbook?" One-third (34%) said that the "textbook is one of the most important resources." A majority (57%) feel that "the textbook is just one of several important resources." One out of eleven (9%) said that "the textbook is not important to my learning."

Students in college-level and ABE programs are more likely than those in university-level programs to say that the textbook is one of the most important resources (52% versus 27%).

"Thinking of all the resources and materials used in a course to support your learning, how important is the textbook?"

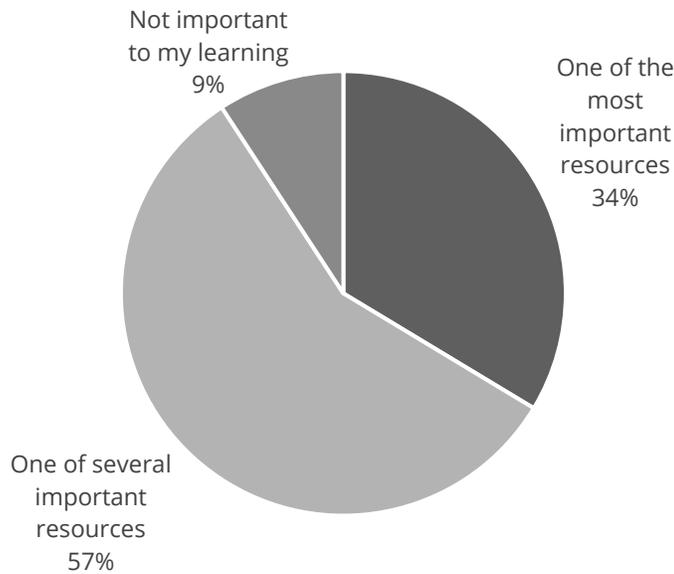


Figure 21

Students are ambivalent about the cost-value proposition of textbooks

Students were asked, "Overall, how does the cost of your textbooks compare to their value as a learning tool?" Three out of five (61%) said that "it depends on the class and the textbook – some are worth it, and some are not." One out of five (20%) said that "textbooks can be expensive, but the cost is worth it." The remaining one out of five feels that "textbooks are not worth the cost."

"Overall, how does the cost of your textbooks compare to their value as a learning tool?"

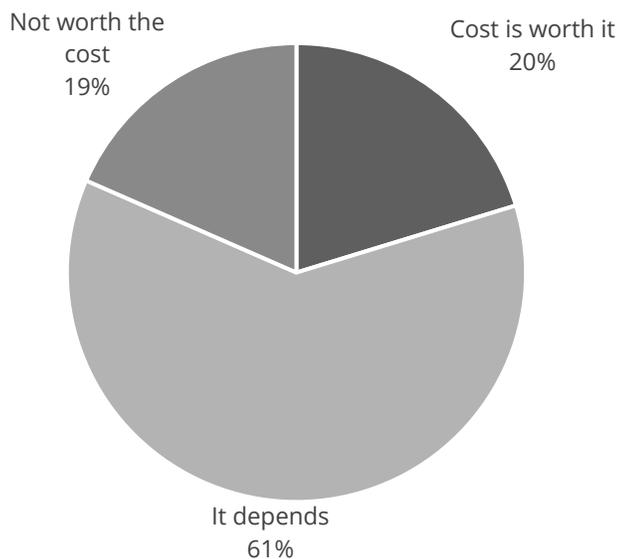


Figure 22

Students enrolled in college-level and ABE programs are more likely than university-level students to say that textbooks are worth their cost (33% versus 15%).

Housing

Close to four out of five students are living in Whitehorse

With most classes being held remotely this semester, more students have the option of taking classes that would normally be offered at Ayamdigut campus without having to live in Whitehorse. Survey respondents were asked, "Where are you living while studying this semester?" Close to four out of five (78%) are living in Whitehorse, while 12% are in a rural Yukon community, 8% are elsewhere in Canada, and 2% are living outside Canada.

"Where are you living while studying this semester?"

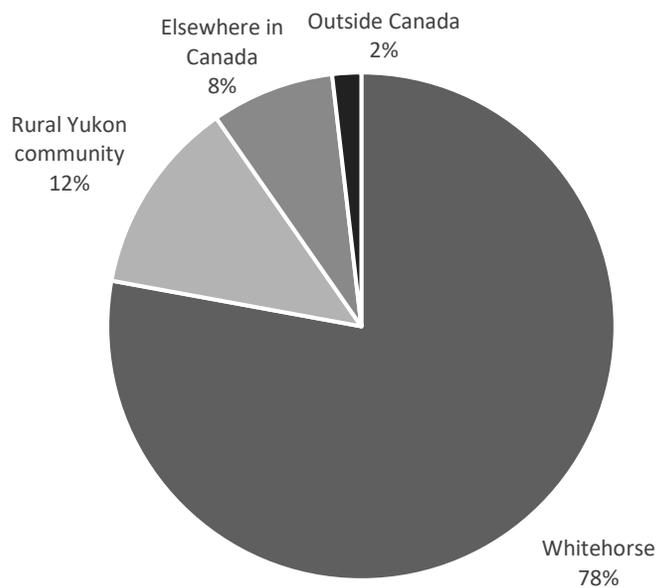


Figure 23

One-third of students rent off campus, and one-quarter own their home

One-third of students (36%) live in rental accommodation off campus, and one-quarter (25%) live in a home that they own. One out of five (21%) lives with parents or other relatives off campus. Campus Housing accommodates 16% of students. Five respondents, or 2%, are unhoused or in precarious forms of housing such as a friend's couch, or a shelter or transition home.

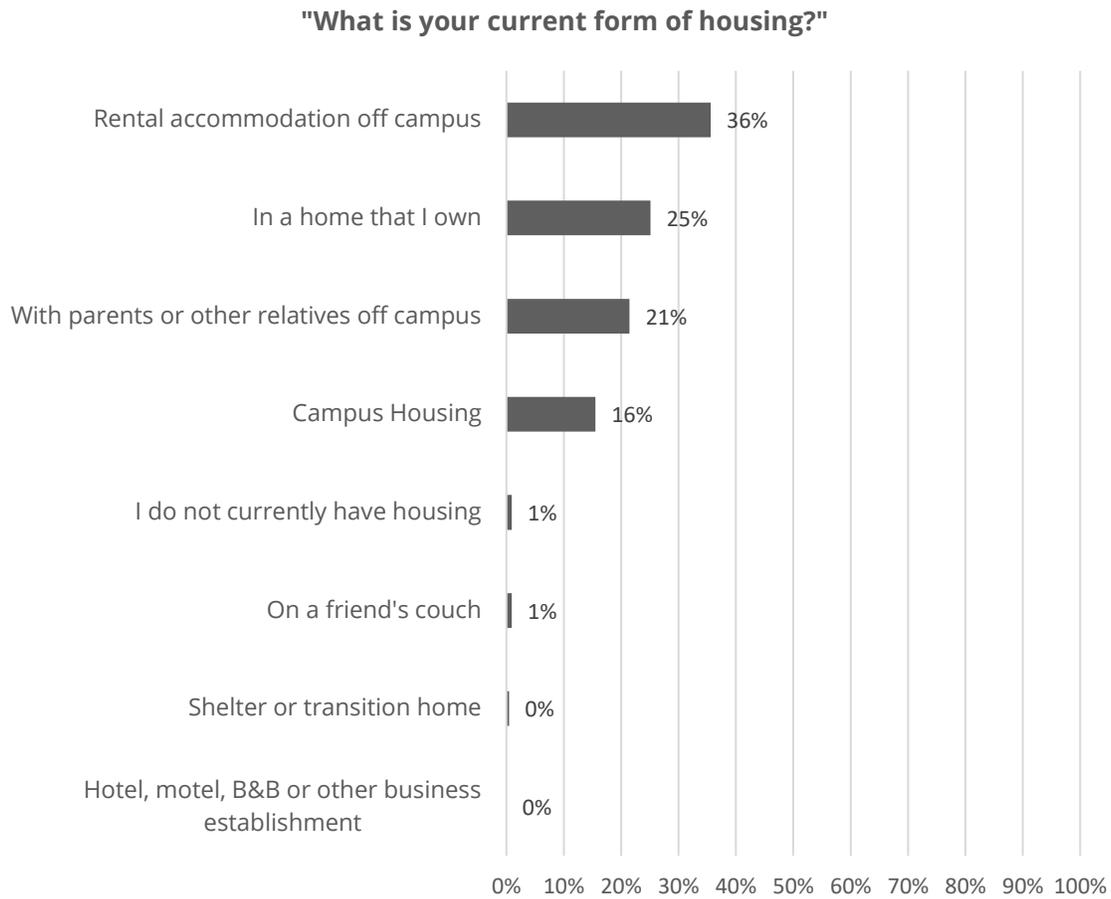


Figure 24

Affordability, privacy, Internet, and cleanliness are top housing priorities

Survey respondents were shown a list of items and asked to choose up to five that are most important to them when looking for housing. About half identified affordability (55%), privacy (53%), reliable Internet connection (51%), and cleanliness (48%) as top priorities.

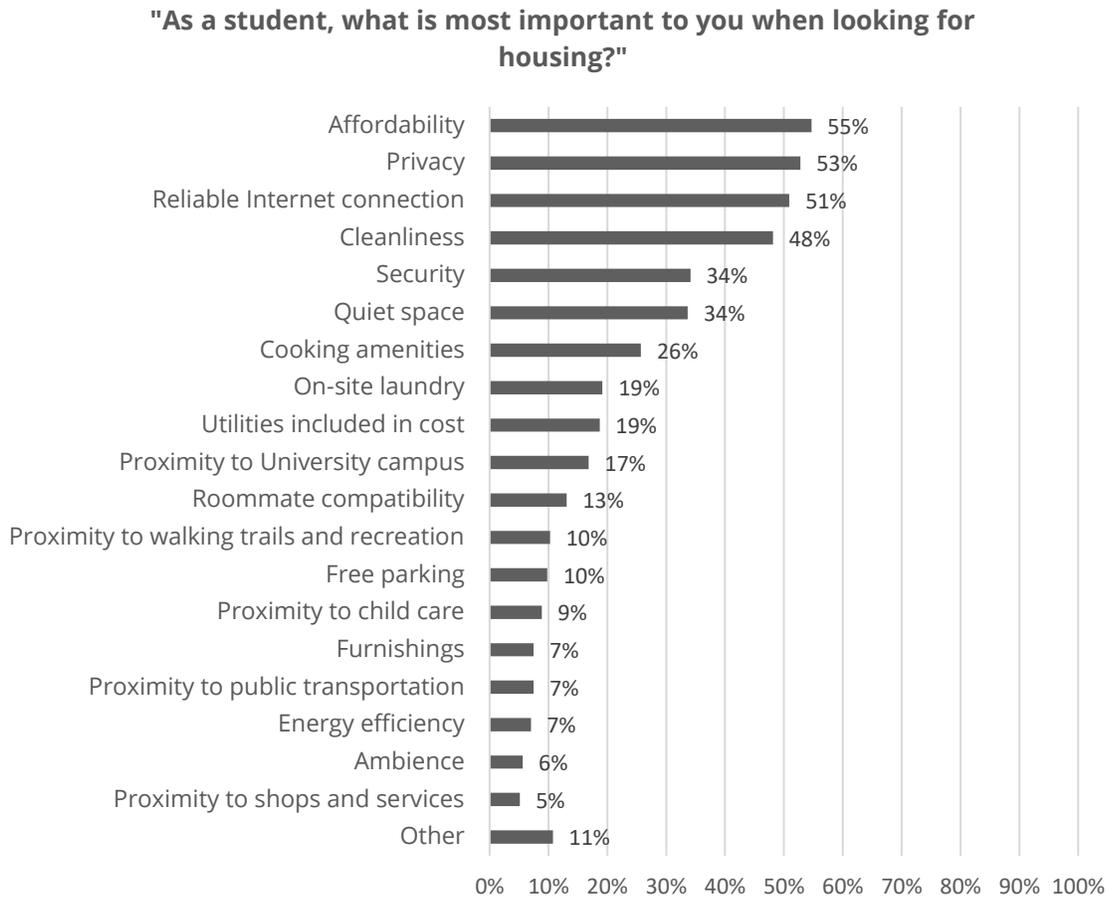


Figure 25

"Other" responses include:

- Cost (3 responses)
- Pets allowed in residence (2 responses)
- Other individual responses: living alone; being away from the city; proximity to workplace; and number of rooms.

Close to one out of five students lives in unsuitable housing

Survey respondents were asked, "Do you consider your current housing suitable for your needs as a student?" Three-quarters (74%) said yes, while close to one out of five (18%) said no. The remaining 7% don't know. This is similar to last year, when 19% of respondents reported living in housing that is not suitable for their needs as a student.

"Do you consider your current housing suitable for your needs as a student?"

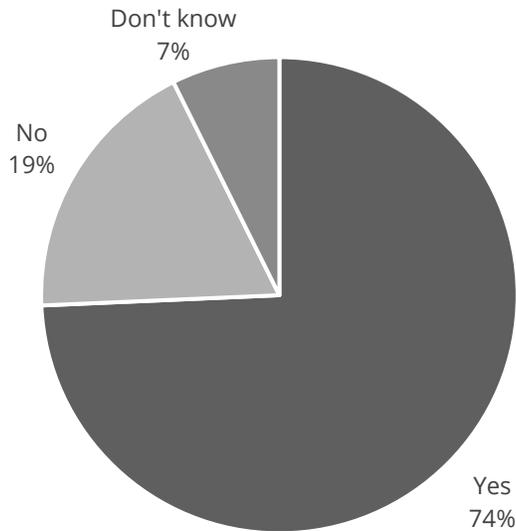


Figure 26

Four out of five students in Campus Housing (82%) consider this suitable for their needs. Similarly, 82% of student homeowners consider their housing suitable. Three out of four students who rent off campus (74%) have suitable housing, while two-thirds (66%) of those living with parents or other relatives consider their housing suitable for their needs as a student.

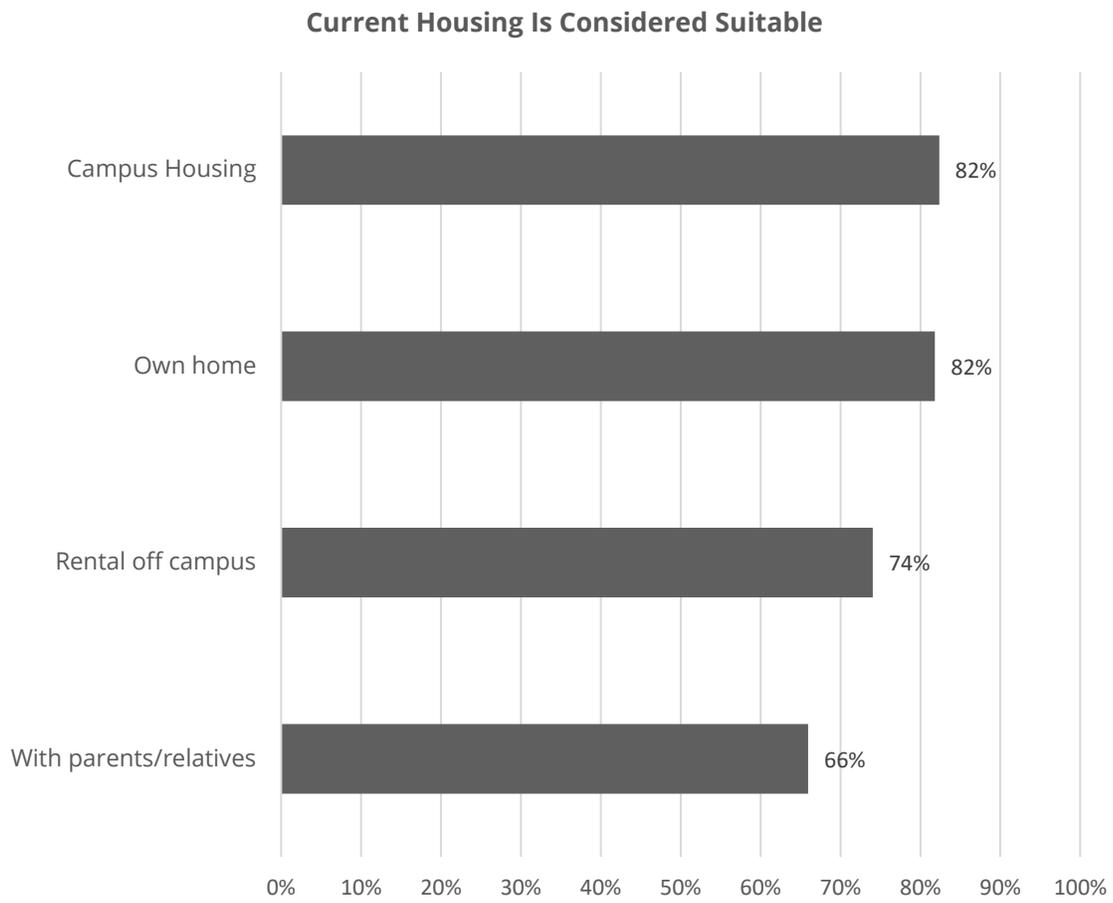


Figure 27

Privacy, affordability, and Internet are the main issues with unsuitable housing

Students who said that their current housing is not suitable were asked what aspects of their housing are not meeting their needs. Based on the list of options provided, the main issues are “Lack of private or quiet space” (54%), “Rental cost making it difficult to cover all living expenses” (49%), and “Poor or no Internet connection” (44%).

The issues of privacy and Internet access may be particularly pertinent this year while remote delivery of classes is the norm.

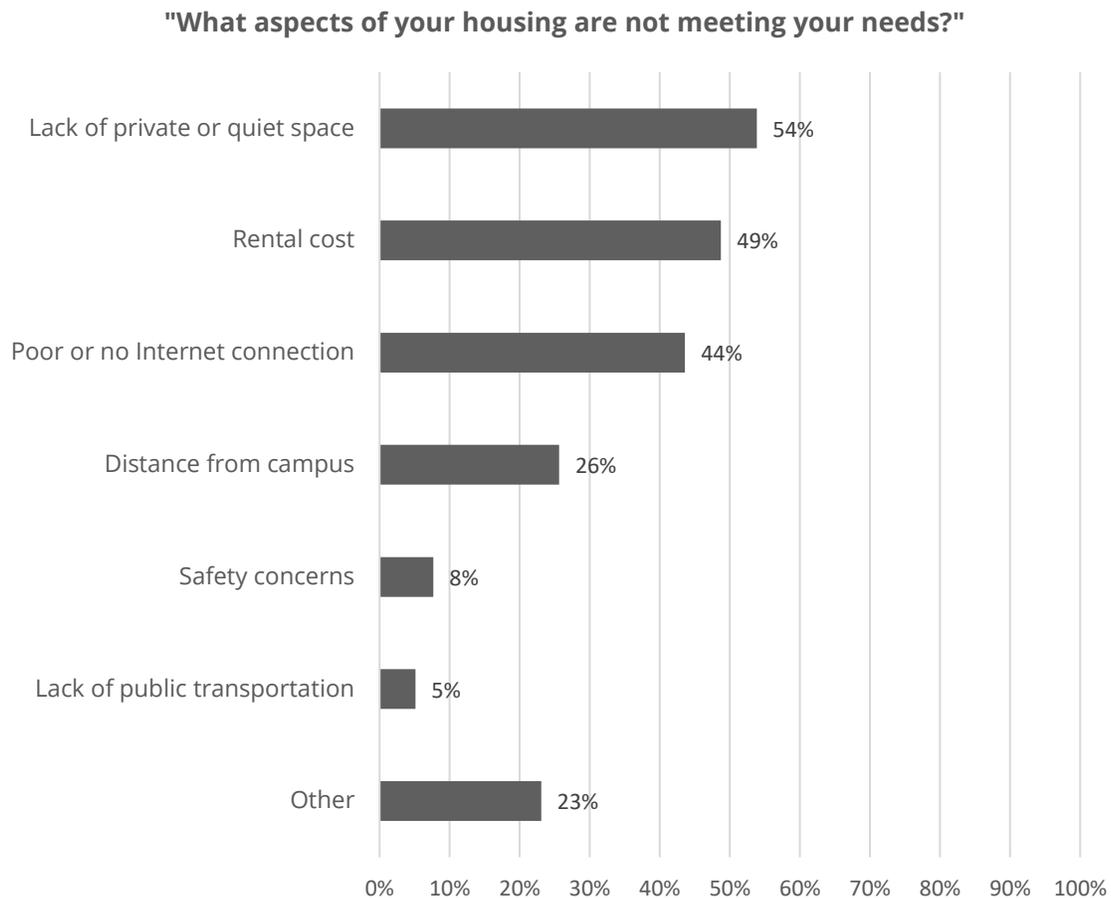


Figure 28

“Other” aspects that are not meeting students’ needs include: lack of space for a desk; loneliness; messy roommates; cold conditions; living with in-laws; living several hours away from campus; needing space from roommates; high rent; and not being set up to do school work.

Nearly one-third of students moved to attend Yukon University

Students responding to the survey were asked, "Did you move to attend Yukon University?" Nearly one-third (31%) said yes.

Unsurprisingly, students who did at least some of their K-12 schooling in the Yukon are less likely to have moved, as compared with those who went to school entirely outside the territory (19% vs 41%).

"Did you move to attend Yukon University?"

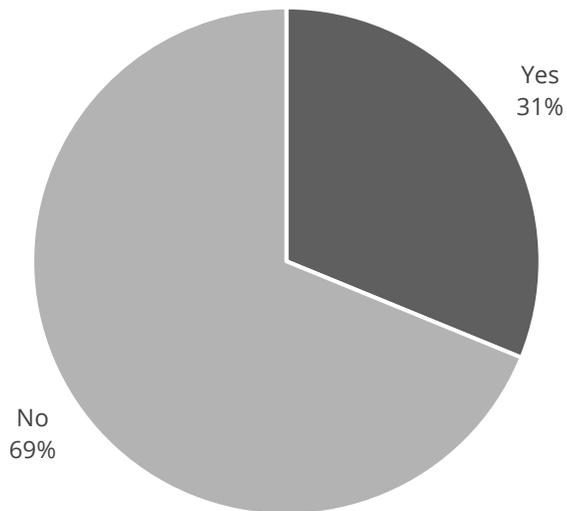


Figure 29

One-third of students who moved had a lot of difficulty finding suitable housing

Students who had moved to attend Yukon University were asked, "Did you have difficulty finding suitable housing?"

One-third (33%) of respondents had a lot of difficulty (27%) or did not find suitable housing at all (6%). Another third (37%) had some difficulty finding suitable housing.

One out of five (21%) had no difficulty, and one out of eleven (9%) did not have to look, as they already had housing arranged.

"Did you have difficulty finding suitable housing?"

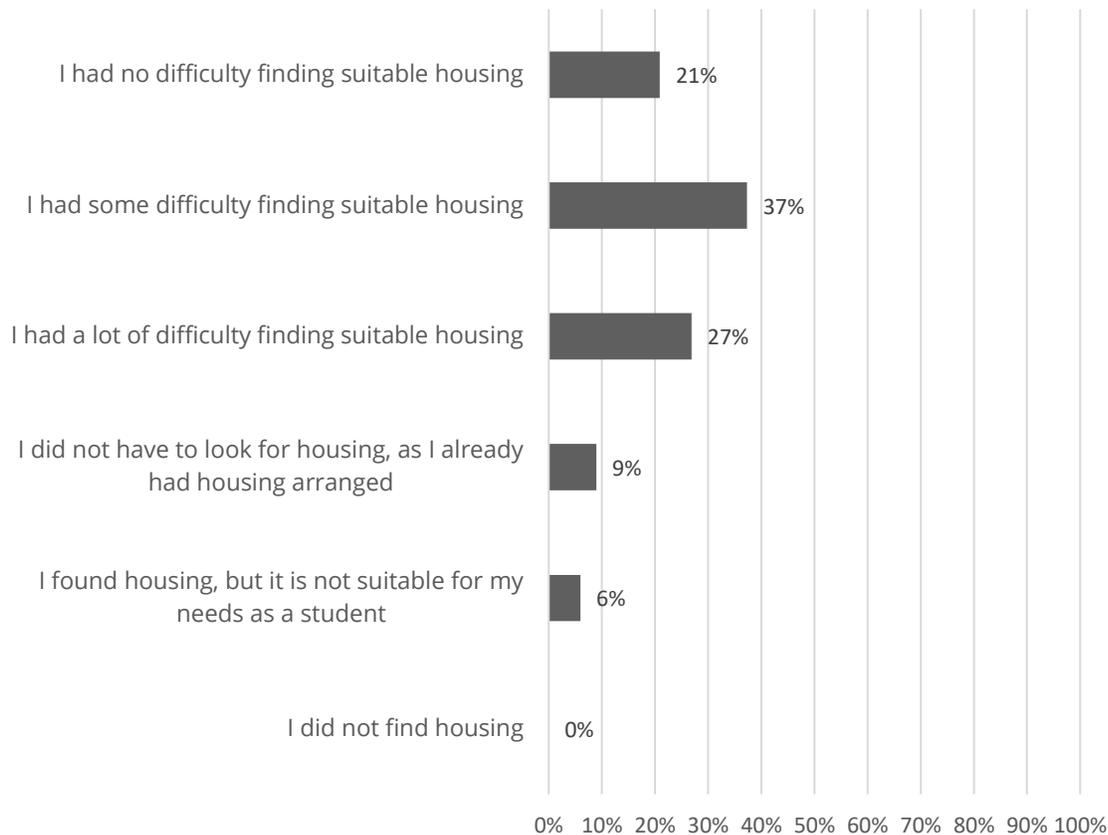


Figure 30

Although students who are from the Yukon (in the sense of having done at least some of their K-12 schooling here) are less likely to have had to move for school, those who did move had a harder time finding suitable housing than their peers from outside the territory. Specifically, 59% of Yukon students who moved to attend YukonU had a lot of difficulty or failed to find suitable housing, compared with 25% of students from outside the territory who moved for school. This is perhaps a surprising finding given that one would expect students who had grown up in the territory to have deeper networks and connections for finding housing. Furthermore, both groups were represented in Campus Housing at similar rates. The reasons for the disparity are unclear.

Two-thirds of students who moved had applied to Campus Housing

Students who moved to attend Yukon University were asked, "When considering your housing options, did you apply to live in Campus Housing?"

Two out of three (68%) said yes, while the remaining 32% said no.

"When considering your housing options, did you apply to live in Campus Housing?"

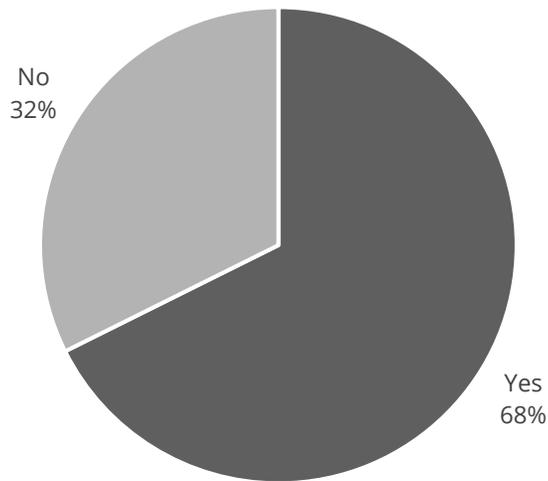


Figure 31

Of those who applied, 59% are currently living in Campus Housing, and the other 41% are not.

Based on their written comments, the most common reasons why students applied to live in Campus Housing are that it is affordable, and that it is convenient to live on campus.

As for those who moved but did not apply to Campus Housing, some said they were looking for a place where they could live with friends, family, a partner, or pets (and may not have been aware that apartment-style family housing is an option on campus). Others were able to move in with family or a partner already living in Whitehorse. Some simply prefer an off-campus lifestyle.

The most difficult thing about moving was the cost

Students who moved for school were asked, "What did you find most difficult about having to move to attend school?"

Most (57%) identified the cost of moving and setting up new accommodation as a difficulty. About half (51%) also had trouble adjusting to a new living environment, roommates, or culture. Leaving the comfort of home and community was tough for two out of five respondents (43%), and 38% had a hard time finding and securing suitable housing.

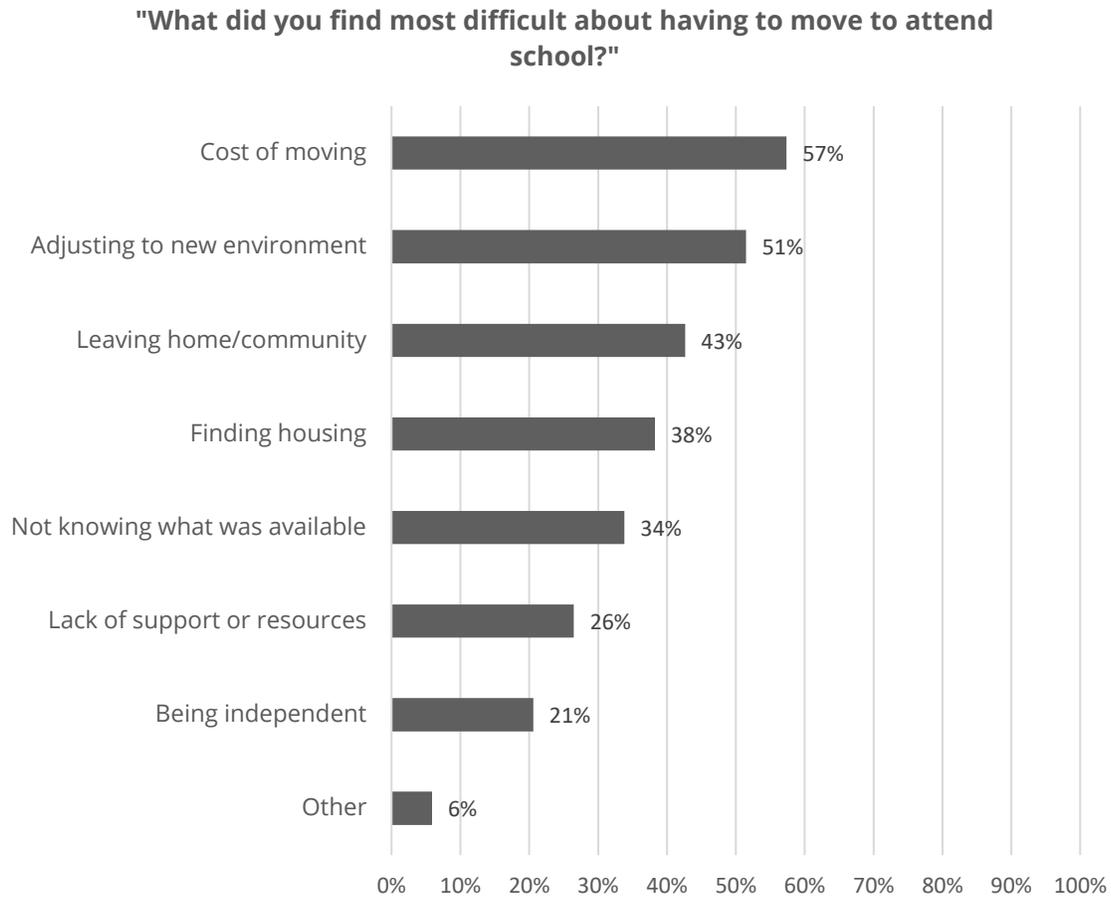


Figure 32

In their "other" responses, two people said they did not encounter any difficulties; one had issues with transportation; and one experienced noise issues after moving into Campus Housing.

Facebook Rental Pages were the number one source for finding housing

Students who moved for school were asked, "What, if any, resources or services were the most useful when finding suitable housing?"

About half of respondents (53%) found Facebook Rental Pages useful. Kijiji was tied with friends and family members for second place, at 44%.

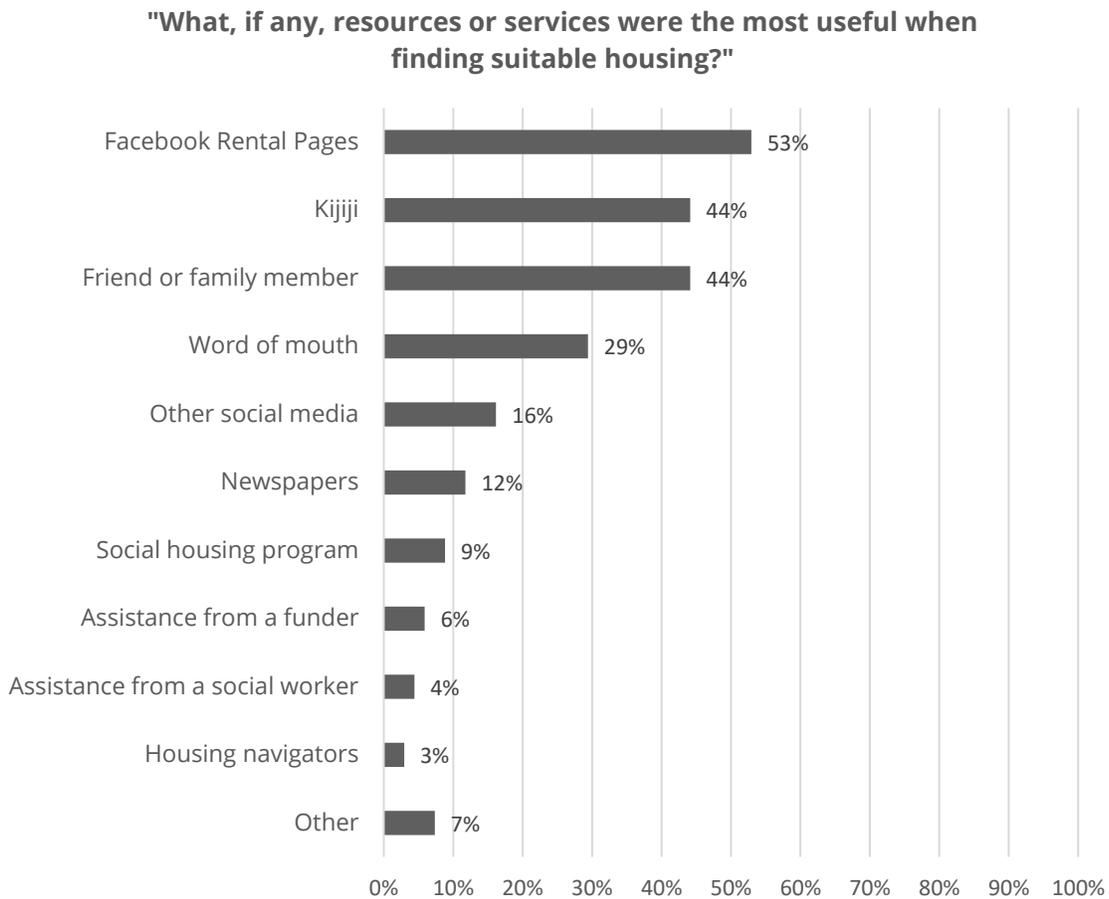


Figure 33

"Other" responses include: applying to Campus Housing; program directors at SOVA; and using other family members' social media to aid in the search.

To help students find housing, YukonU could increase available campus housing, or find ways to connect students with housing opportunities

Students who moved for school were asked, "What can Yukon University do to better support students with finding suitable housing?"

In students' written responses, the most popular solution is to increase the number of campus housing units.

"campus housing"

"Housing is an issue all over the Yukon. It would be nice to see more campus housing maybe off campus. ..."

Students also proposed various methods of connecting students to information about rental vacancies, other students seeking roommates, and so forth.

"Have the option of students looking for other students that are looking for accommodation, perhaps to become roommates if compatible."

"Connecting students with people that are renting secured, clean places."

"... Having a board for room rentals people of the public could post on."

Other suggestions include: offering a housing navigator or similar support to assist students with finding housing; reducing rental fees in Campus Housing; creating formal connections and partnerships with landlords and rental companies; developing a student homestay program; and working with or lobbying government to improve the housing situation in Whitehorse.

Student success

Finances and juggling school with work are among students' biggest challenges

Students responding to the survey were asked, "What are the biggest challenges that you have faced in pursuing your education?" Their written responses were analysed for themes.

Finances loomed large in students' lives. Many struggle to pay for the basics of life in addition to the costs of tuition and books. Food security and housing can become significant issues when money is tight.

"The biggest challenges that I have faced in pursuing my education is having the money to pay for the education."

Student Survey 2020: Results

"Funding, and being able to afford to become a student. I have two children and work is very limited in the community I live in. I looked to my First Nation to pay for my education with some living allowance as assistance. I had to put school off for a year because I did not receive funding."

"Lack of money, just being able to get ahead."

"... lack of affordable housing for students."

The need to earn money while enrolled in school leaves many students juggling work with their studies. The juggling act also includes other aspects of life, such as family and self-care. Given all these competing pressures, time management in general can be a challenge.

"finding enough time and energy. I am working full time and have a 2 and 6 year old at home."

"Paying for life while giving as much time to class as possible to succeed. Last year I worked ft and school ft, on top of everything else, and just about died. I took a leave from work, so this year we starve."

"Managing time to work, for homework, for classes and labs, and to be outside and relax."

Childcare is an issue for students with young children at home.

"Going back to university with my 2-week old daughter and my 2-year old son at home with me while doing my online classes."

"Childcare for night time classes."

Many students experience challenges related to their mental and physical health. Finding time and resources to support overall wellness is important, to reduce stress and achieve balance. Some students require additional supports for a disability or a serious health condition.

"Keeping up with the course load being a parent and having to work full time for my financial situation and mental health. There is no breathing room making it so overwhelming and stressful."

"my health and mental health have been hit hard. I have had anxiety attacks that lead to hospitalization and a lot of self care was needed."

"I have health issues and so I have to change what I had originally wanted to do for something totally different."

"my disability ..."

Student Survey 2020: Results

Academic challenges arise as students grapple with learning new and challenging material, completing assignments, and accessing academic supports. The need to complete prerequisites can pose a barrier. International students must adapt to a new educational milieu with different structure and expectations. Mature students must also readjust to being enrolled in formal education.

"trying to learn new things"

"Having to do upgrading to be eligible to the ... program. But looking back, it was a struggle but its all worth it!"

"Enrolling in a very mentally demanding program has been a challenge"

"Biggest challenges for me to become a student again after 27 years."

"It was a completely different study pattern for me as in my country we were taught differently. The schedules as well as teaching ways."

Given all the challenges students face, and their busy lives, some struggle a great deal with maintaining motivation, resisting procrastination, and exercising the self-discipline to succeed.

"The biggest challenge I have faced is being dedicated to pursuing my schooling and to keep on the right track."

"Staying motivated, and passionate about my education."

Students who thrive in a face-to-face environment are missing the experience of in-person classes. Some struggle to learn online, and some feel that the quality of their educational experience has been reduced in the remote environment. Remote learning requires a higher level of self-motivation, which some students have found especially difficult this year.

"Not being able to attend in person classes as sometimes being in a class helps with understanding materials better."

"It is difficult not to see classmates and have in person interactions. I feel like without that, my education and how much I have learned this semester is very low and sad."

"I thrive in face to face, not so much online, I have the attention span of a goldfish and easily get distracted."

A few students expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction this year. Some of this is related to the online course delivery and lack of face-to-face interaction. However, some students have had negative experiences with instructors whom they do not perceive as helpful or especially capable.

"Inexperienced teachers"

Student Survey 2020: Results

"Being overwhelmed with the amount of assignments and feeling as though the ... teacher I have had is not helpful enough and makes you feel lesser then when asking questions."

"Trying to teach myself classes. Some classes at YukonU feel like you should just learn from YouTube because the teachers are much not help at all."

Other challenges students are facing include: lack of quiet space to study and attend online classes; unreliable Internet and other technical issues; and having to move or leave one's home community to attend school.

Friends and family are among students greatest supports

Students responding to the survey were asked, "What supports do you have that are helping you to succeed in your education?" Their written responses were analysed for themes.

Friends, family, partners, and sometimes pets are among students' greatest supports. Family and partners may provide financial assistance, or help with chores and childcare. Family, friends, partners and pets are all important sources of emotional support and encouragement to continue on the education journey.

"Phoning family and friends when I need to hear a friendly and familiar voice."

"I have family, friends, and a dog that have kept me company, as well as encouraged me to continue an education."

"I have my parents that take my son sometimes so I can catch up."

"I have my parents who let me live with them and provide food."

Instructors support students in many ways, and many have gone above and beyond this year in pivoting to remote instruction, providing extra help, and taking a compassionate approach to students who are learning remotely during the pandemic.

"Great instructors for the most part who are engaged and doing their best to teach and engage students in a variety of ways."

"Emotional support from my instructors is helping me to succeed in my education"

"My instructors are quite helpful in nature and friendly too and because if that i feel comfortable to speak and ask them any question."

"My instructor is fantastic, and I feel we are very well supported by her. I do feel like she is always looking for ways to help us succeed."

Student Survey 2020: Results

Classmates can be a source of support for one another.

"Study groups ..."

"Solid group of classmates"

Students receive support from Yukon University services and staff, including academic supports, library and IT, and generally being a friendly and welcoming presence.

"Great academic support center people."

"... The staff have also been amazing in being able to chat or help when needed."

Funders and other sources of financial assistance are key to enabling many students to attend school.

"Yukon Grant is so helpful."

"Having been able to receive student training allowance is a huge thing and it helps me with my financial worries. ..."

"My First Nation is helping with tuition and monthly costs."

Some students credit themselves for having the grit, persistence, and motivation to succeed. Having a personal interest or a passion for the subject matter helps a lot with maintaining the necessary motivation.

"... taking courses with subjects close to my heart so research is for myself not only for the class."

"The drive to continue on for better career opportunities"

"... plain old grit and determination"

Other supports that are helping students to succeed include: counselling (either through Yukon University, or through other providers); work (as a source of income, or in terms of having a supportive workplace); technology such as a laptop and Internet connection; and having a quiet environment in which to study and participate in online classes.

Success has many dimensions beyond grades, course completion, and graduation

Students responding to the survey were asked, "How do you define success, when it comes to your education? What accomplishments or experiences would show that you have succeeded in a way that is meaningful to you?"

Certainly many students said that success, for them is to pass their courses, get good grades, and earn a degree, diploma or certificate. However, their responses revealed other important dimensions of success.

Graduation, after all, is just a marker on the way to the next stage in life. Job opportunities are what really matter to students who are in school in order to open doors to careers.

"... gaining skills that make me more hireable = finding a job I really enjoy"

"success would be that I pass my courses and learn something from them. using my education for my career choices and able to live a comfortable life and provide for my son."

"... - knowing that after graduation, there is a rewarding and exciting career out there for me"

Many students said they don't care so much about grades as about learning, understanding, and retaining material so that they will be able to apply it in real life long after the course is over. It is easy to get caught up in the short-term goals of completing assignments and passing exams, but these students have their eye on the long-term gains from learning.

"I care more about my general understanding than receiving a grade, harder to mark."

"That I make use of the things I have studied in my career"

"I feel successful when I can connect to a strong degree of comprehension. Sometimes this means taking longer and getting behind but ultimately the material that is learned is learned well."

Success can be knowing that one has done one's best: putting in effort, persisting through setbacks, and overcoming obstacles in one's path.

"Success is not a "thing", but a feeling. I think the fact that although I have had a lot of days where I feel like giving up on my schooling I am able to still keep going and will hopefully complete it. ..."

"I define success when obstacles I face is defeated and holding on to my diploma."

"Being able to finish this one course is a big accomplishment to me because I always drop out half way. I'm not finished yet but I know I'm not dropping out this time!"

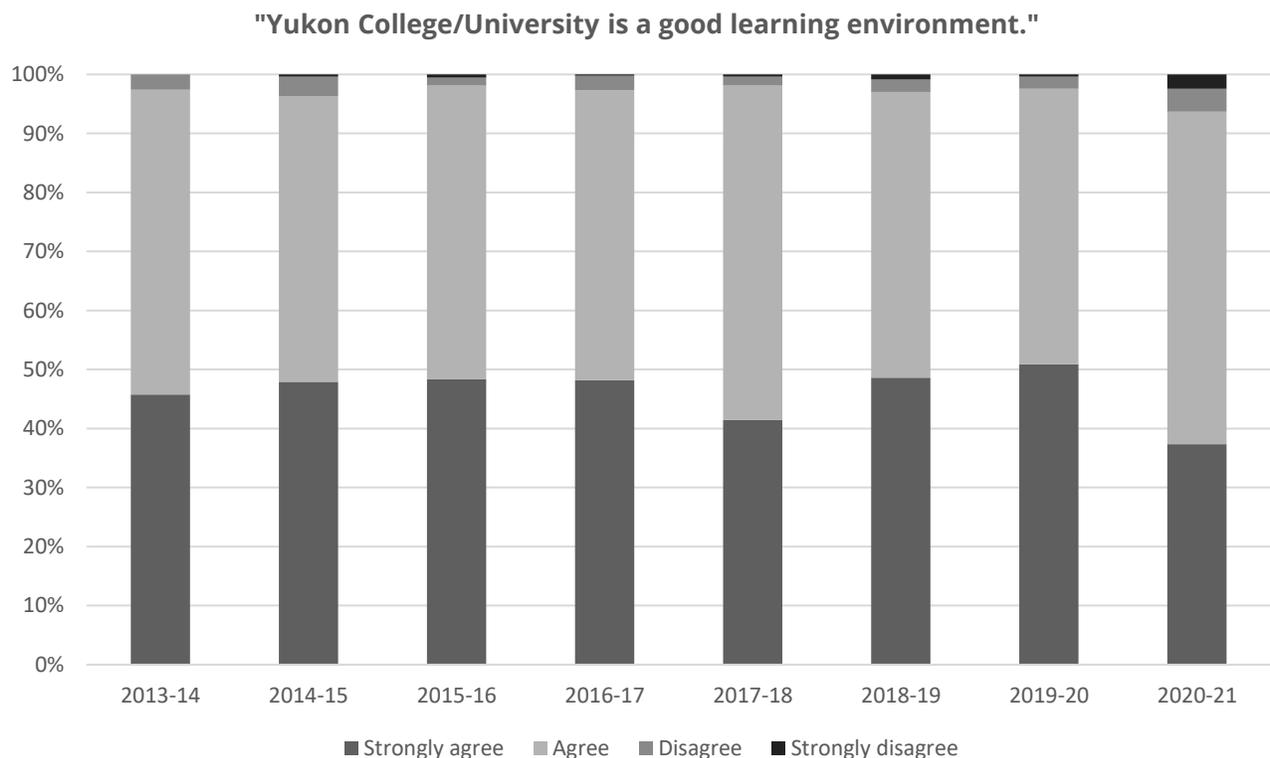
Other important dimensions of success include: maintaining balance and wellness; building relationships and networks; making a contribution to society or to one's community; and experiencing self-development.

Overall satisfaction

Student satisfaction remains high overall

Over the past several years, students have generally expressed high satisfaction with most aspects of their overall learning experience. This year was no exception, despite the changes and challenges posed by COVID-19 and remote learning.

Ninety-four percent agree or strongly agree with the statement, "Yukon University is a good learning environment." This is down only two to four percentage points from previous years, even though the proportion choosing "strongly agree" is more noticeably down, to 37% this year from 51% last year.

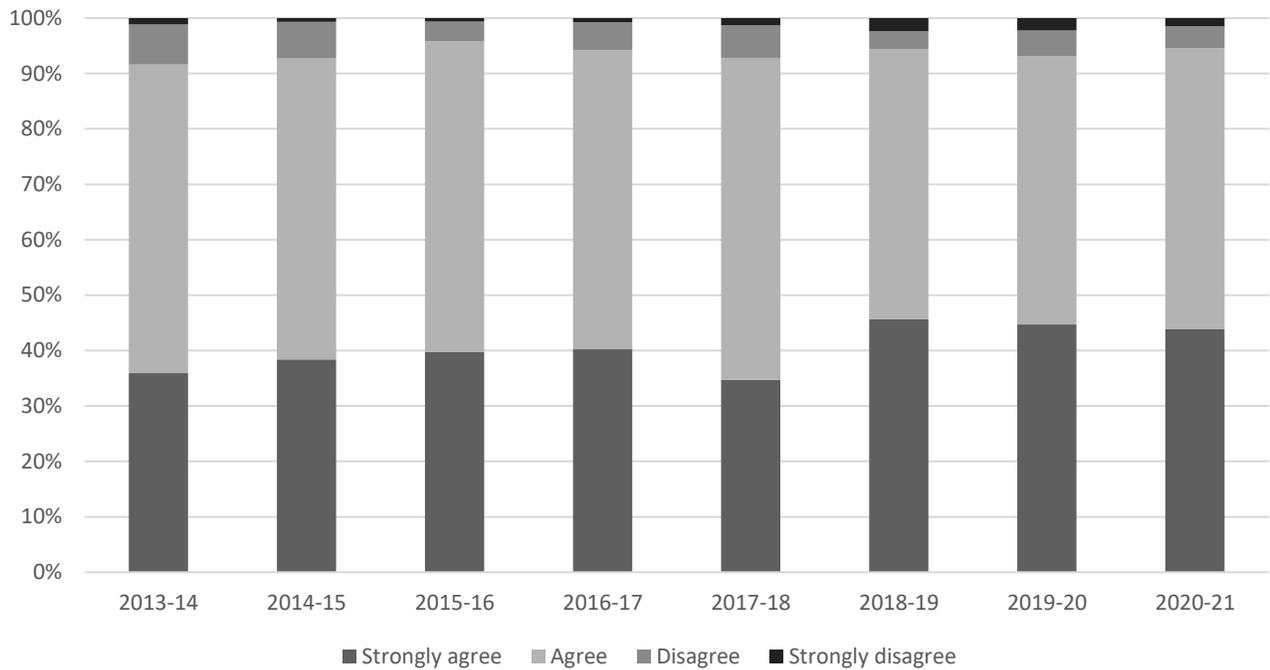


Students enrolled in college-level and ABE programs were more likely to "strongly agree", as compared with those in university-level programs (54% vs 34%).

Ninety-five percent of all students, and 99% of Indigenous students, agree or strongly agree with the statement, "Yukon University provides an environment of cultural sensitivity for all." This is consistent with previous years.

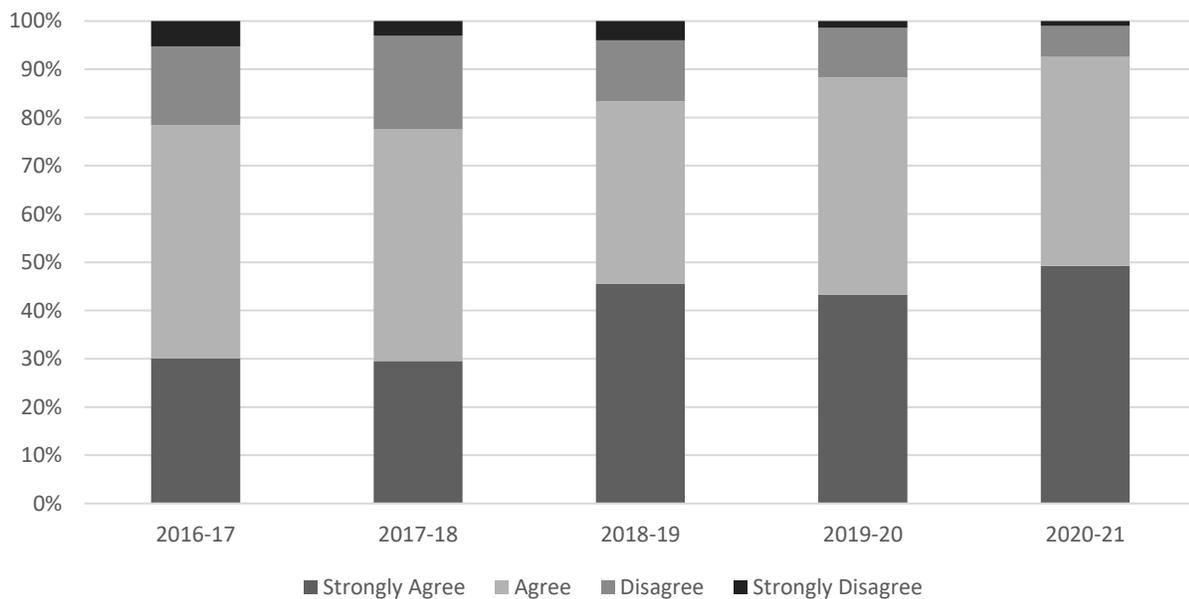
Students enrolled in college-level and ABE programming were more likely to "strongly agree", as compared with those in university-level programming (67% vs 40%).

"Yukon College/University provides an environment of cultural sensitivity for all."



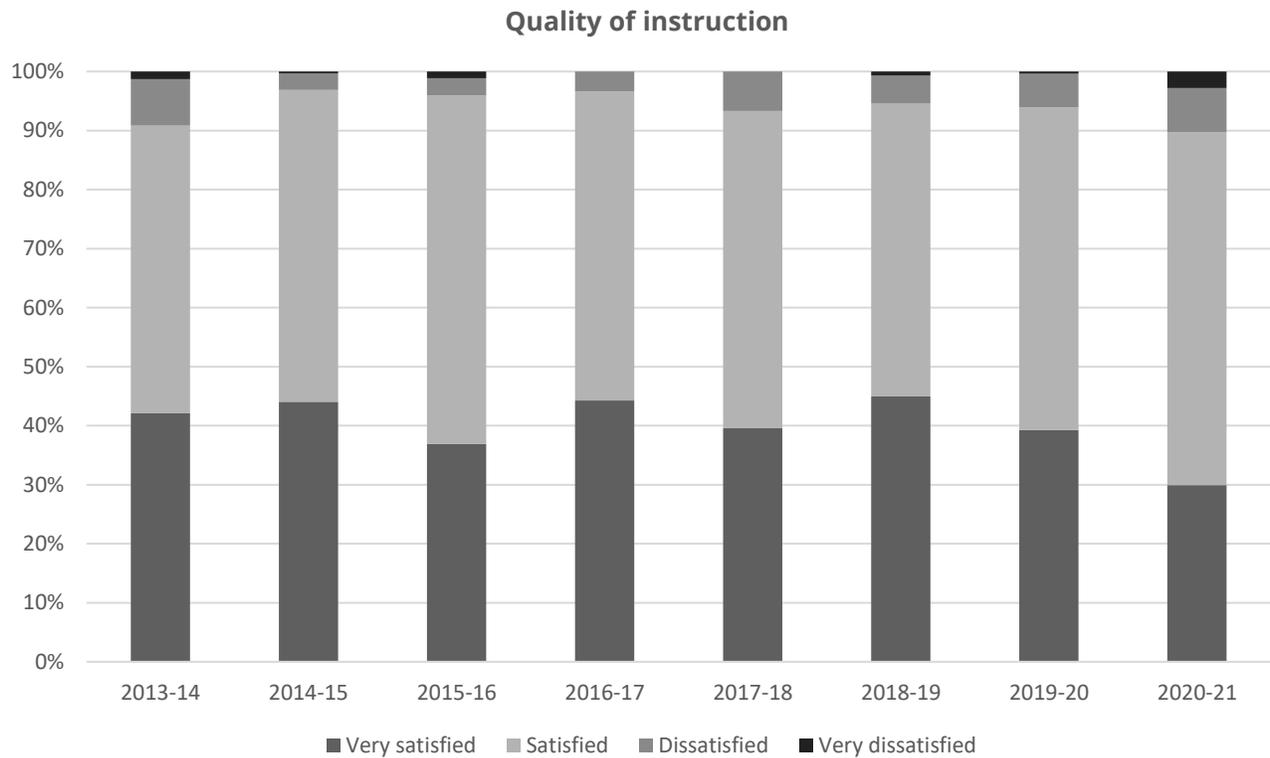
Ninety-three percent of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, "My time at Yukon University has increased my knowledge and understanding of Yukon First Nations." This continues a slow and steady increase seen over the past four years.

"My time at Yukon College/University has increased my knowledge and understanding of Yukon First Nations."



Student Survey 2020: Results

Ninety percent of survey respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of instruction. This is down only one to seven percentage points from previous years, despite the challenges faced by instructors and students in teaching and learning online.



Students in college-level and ABE programs were more likely to say they are “very satisfied” with the quality of instruction than those in university-level programs (55% vs 22%).

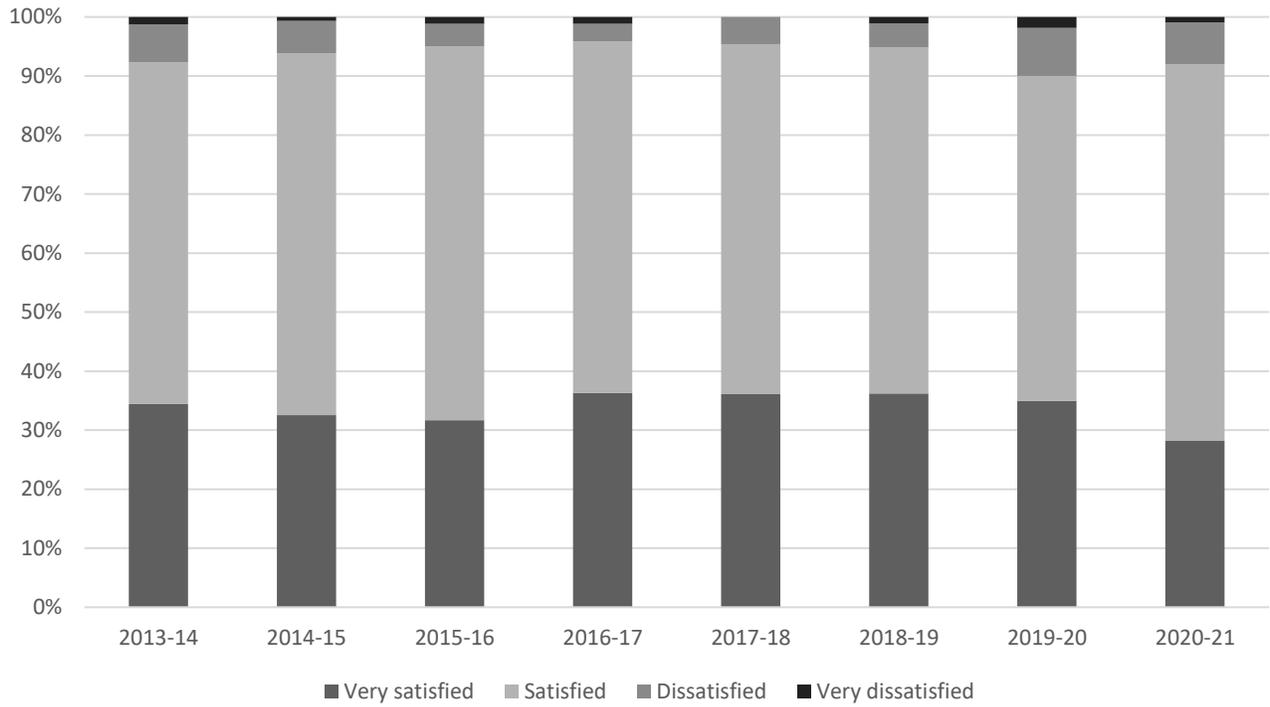
Ninety-two percent of students surveyed are satisfied or very satisfied with course content. This is consistent with previous years.

Students in college-level and ABE programs are more likely to be “very satisfied” with course content than those in university-level programs (40% vs 24%).

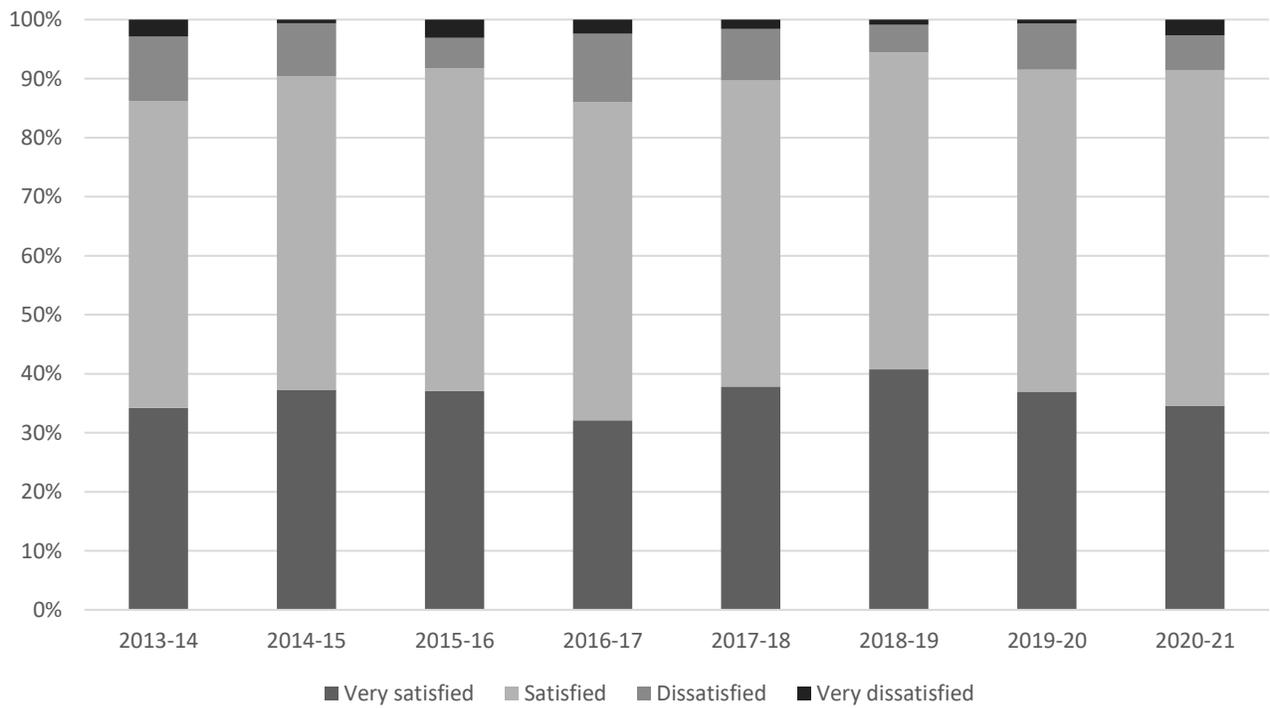
Ninety-one percent of survey respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with support services. This is consistent with previous years.

Student Survey 2020: Results

Course content

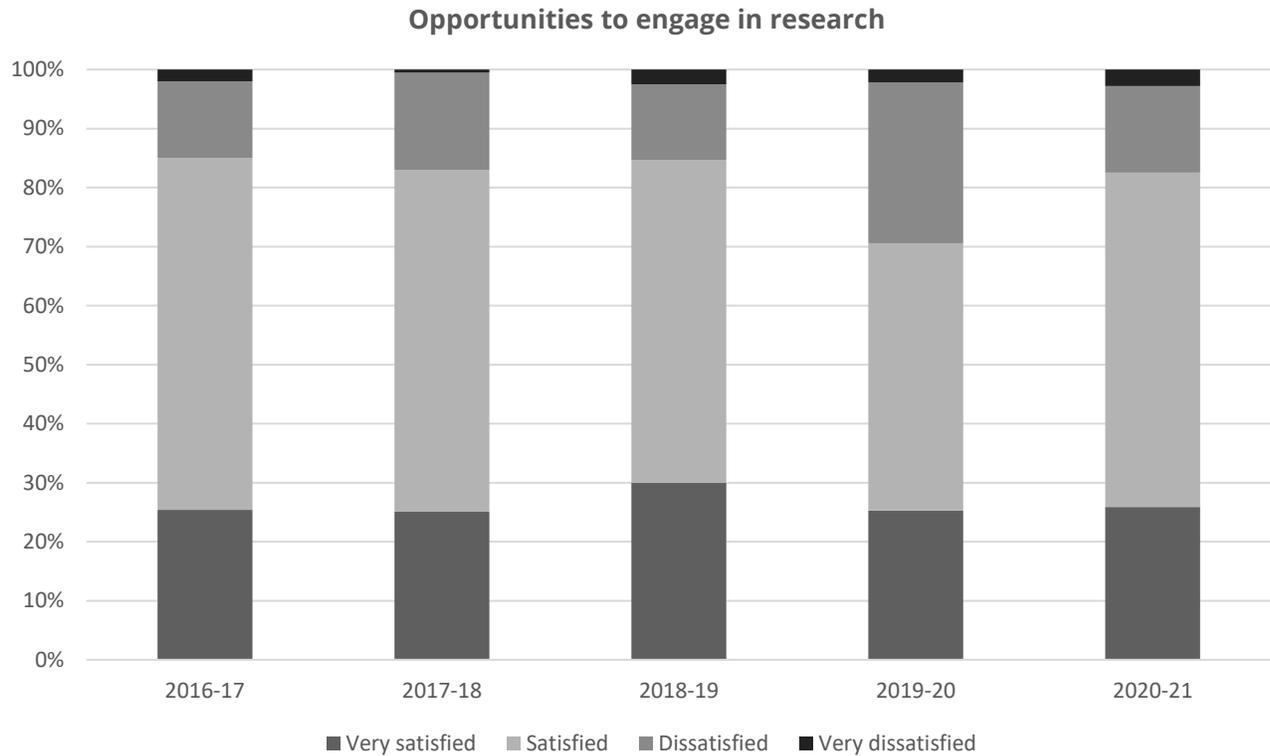


Support services



Student Survey 2020: Results

Eighty-three percent of students surveyed said they are satisfied or very satisfied with opportunities to engage in research. This is back up to previous levels, after a dip last year that may have been caused by priming effects – last year’s survey asked several questions about students’ experiences engaging with research, which may have temporarily “raised the bar” on expectations.



Students in college-level and ABE programs are more likely to be “very satisfied” with opportunities to engage in research, as compared with those in university-level programs (40% vs 22%).