

Top Student Concerns About Distance Learning

A review of student feedback reveals that students from all disciplines are reporting challenges in the distance learning environment. This fact sheet highlights the most commonly reported pain-points. We hope you will find this information helpful when working with your students. By acknowledging these concerns and making adjustments when possible, we can work together to ease student burden during these difficult times.



Learning expectations.

Increased workload. Students feel some professors are overcompensating by assigning additional work. Students are also experiencing challenges if professors have changed lecture times or if lectures aren't posted on a regular basis.

Less instruction time. Students are missing in-person lectures and their connection to professors and teaching assistants. They feel they have to learn more on their own, and some are challenged by the lack of classroom discussion that aids in comprehending the material.



Personal well-being.

Students are feeling stressed. They are concerned about falling behind in coursework. Many have had their summer internships and employment canceled. Overall, students report their mental health has been negatively impacted by feelings of fear, isolation and change.



Technology challenges.

Email overload. Students are being bombarded with emails. They say sifting through the myriad communications adds stress to prioritizing.

Multiple platforms. Faculty are using multiple learning platforms, which students have been expected to learn and master quickly.

Lack of equipment. The majority of students do not have access to printers or scanners at home, yet are being asked to print and scan coursework. Some students lack adequate internet access.

Screen burnout. Students are experiencing a new type of fatigue from learning in front of a screen for extended periods.

LockDown Browser. This technology only works on certain devices and it prohibits students from going back to review previous questions. This contradicts the way most students have been taught to take tests.



Learning environment.

Learning space. Many students lack conducive study spaces at home. Quiet space is limited, which adds to students' stress.

New obligations. Some students are required to help out at home by either caring for younger siblings or managing the impact of ill family members.



Faculty-student relationships.

Flexibility and empathy. Students will be more productive and successful when faculty can provide flexibility and show care/empathy.

Communication. Students appreciate faculty who respond in a timely manner and communicate clear requirements and deadlines. They respond positively to professors who are available for one-on-one sessions.

Here to help you finish strong.

Academic Resources: buffalo.edu/academicaffairs/academic-resources

Center for Educational Innovation: buffalo.edu/ubcei

Office of Academic Integrity: academicintegrity.buffalo.edu

Office of Educational Effectiveness: buffalo.edu/oeo

Student Life Gateway: buffalo.edu/studentlife