

# TREY's coronavirus survey: summary of results

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## Background and execution

TREY launched a survey on remote studying and the effects of coronavirus regulations on 4 September. The survey was open until 30 September. The purpose of this survey was for TREY to obtain more information on students' experiences of how the coronavirus pandemic had affected their studies and well-being.

Students have been hit hard by the coronavirus-related regulations and restrictions. Many students live alone, and their social lives mostly revolve around their studies and the campus. The shift to remote learning and the limited campus opening hours have made life more difficult for many students.

The survey included 19 multiple-choice questions and 16 open-ended questions, which allowed students to elaborate on their answers to the multiple-choice questions. The survey had four parts: background information, campus opening hours, student meals and remote learning. The survey was published via Jotform.

We received a total of 1,378 replies, with 1,322 replies to the Finnish survey and 56 to the English survey. Even though the English survey had a small sample and the results were not as comprehensive, we will discuss its results in this report.

TREY actively advertised the survey on different channels, such as various email lists, Telegram groups, TREY's website, Facebook and Instagram. Many student associations also shared the survey on their communication channels. A link to this survey was also included at the end of the University's survey for first-year students, which explains why first-year students account for such a high share of the respondents.

## Campus opening hours

The effects of limited campus opening hours and access rights were assessed by asking the respondents to react to the four following statements: “Limited access rights at the university in the evenings have made my studies more difficult”, “Limited access rights at the university in the evenings have affected my well-being”, “Limited access rights at the university during weekends have made my studies more difficult”, and “Limited access rights at the university during weekends have affected my well-being”.

### Impact of limited evening opening hours on studies and well-being

The replies reveal that students particularly missed being able to access the campus in the evening. Half of the respondents who took the Finnish survey (50%) felt that the limited evening opening hours had made their studies more difficult, and half of the respondents (51%) also felt that the limited evening opening hours had affected their well-being “very negatively” or “somewhat negatively”. Every fifth student (19% of the respondents) felt that the restrictions had made their studies significantly more difficult.

The respondents who took the survey in English did not react as strongly to the limited evening access rights. However, 40% of them still felt that the limited evening access rights had made their studies more difficult, and 26% felt that the restrictions had had a negative effect on their well-being.

### Impact of limited weekend opening hours on studies and well-being

The limited weekend opening hours had had a significant effect on the respondents’ studies: 44% of the respondents who took the Finnish survey strongly agreed (23%) or somewhat agreed (21%) that the limited weekend access rights had affected their studies. The limited weekend access rights had had a negative effect on the well-being of 39% of respondents, with 14% of respondents feeling that the effects were significant.

The students who had taken the English survey were slightly more satisfied with the situation. However, 29% of them still felt that the limited weekend access had made

their studies more difficult and 23% felt that the limitations had affected their well-being negatively.

## Loneliness and social events

The survey assessed whether the coronavirus-related campus regulations had caused feelings of loneliness and lack of social activities among students. This was done by asking the respondents to reply to one statement and one question: “Regulations on spending time at the university have caused me loneliness” and “Have you missed out on social events or meetings because of regulations on the use of spaces?”. Since the students’ social lives largely revolve around their studies and the campus, we wanted to find out what students thought about the effects of the coronavirus-related campus regulations on their social lives.

### Social events

Out of all the respondents who took the Finnish survey, 63% felt that they had missed out on social activities and events as a result of the limitations to the use of campus facilities. Seven percent of respondents felt that the limitations had not caused them to miss out on events at all. We can roughly estimate that two thirds of the respondents felt that they had missed out on social events because of the coronavirus-related campus regulations, whereas a quarter of respondents felt that they had missed out on social events rarely or not at all.

The results of these multiple-choice questions of the English survey are similar to the results of the Finnish survey. 68% of the respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the coronavirus regulations had caused them to miss out on social events, whereas 13% of respondents somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

### Loneliness

The answers to the loneliness question clearly indicate that the hobbies, activities and social lives of many students are centred around the campuses. The coronavirus-related campus regulations and remote studying and working increased feelings of loneliness among many students. The answers to this question can be compared to

the results of the 2016 Finnish Student Health Survey, in which 4–10% of students in higher education stated that they often felt lonely.

Out of the students who took the Finnish survey, 26% strongly agreed and 36% somewhat agreed that the limitations to the use of campus facilities had caused them to feel lonely. 25% of respondents stated that the limitations had caused them to feel lonely only a little or not at all.

The results of the English survey were quite similar: 30% of respondents strongly agreed and 27% somewhat agreed with the statement. In the English survey, a lot more respondents selected the “Do not know” option. As many as 14% of the respondents could not say whether the coronavirus-related campus regulations had caused them feelings of loneliness. In the Finnish survey, the percentage was two. This could potentially be explained by the fact that many respondents were still in their home countries, which meant that they were unable to assess how the coronavirus-related campus regulations of Tampere University had affected them.

## **Student meals**

The survey assessed how the limited opening hours of campus restaurants had affected students’ lives by asking the respondents to reply to the two following statements: “I would like to eat in student restaurants on weeknights” and “I would like to eat in student restaurants on Saturdays”.

### **Campus restaurants on weeknights**

Out of the respondents who took the Finnish survey, 59% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they would like to eat in campus restaurants on weeknights. It is worth noting that almost 40% of respondents strongly agreed that they would still like to eat in campus restaurants on weeknights. 12% of respondents felt that they did not need the evening meal on weeknights.

Out of the students who took the English survey, 50% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they would like to eat in campus restaurants in the evening. 36% remained neutral in this question, whereas only 2% felt that they did not need the evening meal at all.

## Campus restaurants on Saturdays

Out of the respondents who took the Finnish survey, 46% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they would still like to eat in campus restaurants on Saturdays, with 28% of the respondents selecting the “strongly agree” option. 17% did not miss having a meal on campus on Saturdays at all. The percentage of people who felt that not being able to have lunch on campus on Saturdays had not affected them at all (22%) was high compared to the answers to the similar question on evening meals. This could be explained by the fact that only one campus restaurant has been offering lunch on Saturdays, which is why some students have never been used to this in the first place.

Out of the respondents who took the English survey, 52% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they would still like to eat in campus restaurants on Saturdays, whereas 32% felt that this issue did not affect them. Only one percent of the respondents felt that they did not need the Saturday lunch at all.

## Remote studies

### Studying at home

In the first statement, “For me, studying at home is...”, respondents were asked to state how difficult or easy it had been for them to study at home. Out of everyone who took the Finnish survey, 23% felt that studying at home had been very difficult, whereas 38% felt that it had been somewhat difficult. All in all, studying at home had been challenging to at least 61% of the respondents. One third (33%) felt that studying at home had been easy.

For this question, the percentages were very similar in both the Finnish and the English survey. Out of everyone who took the English survey, 61% felt that studying at home had been either very difficult (20%) or somewhat difficult (41%), whereas 28% felt that studying at home had been easy.



## Impact on studies

When the respondents were asked to state how remote learning had affected their studies, only 16% of the respondents who took the Finnish survey believed that remote learning had had a positive effect on their studies. A total of 58% of respondents believed that their studies had been negatively affected by the period of remote learning: 44% believed that remote learning had affected their studies somewhat negatively, whereas 14% felt that it had had a very negative effect. The rest of the respondents (24%) replied either “no effect” or “do not know”.

For this question, the results of the English survey are very similar to the results of the Finnish survey. The students who took the English survey had a slightly more pessimistic opinion on the effects of remote learning. 64% of respondents believed that the effects had been negative, with 16% thinking that remote learning had had a very negative effect on their studies. Only 17% of respondents felt that remote learning had affected their studies positively. The rest of the respondents (20%) replied either “no effect” or “do not know”.

## Impact on study ability

The purpose of the next question was to understand the students’ experiences of how remote learning had affected their study ability. Out of the students who took the Finnish survey, two thirds (67%) felt that remote learning had affected their ability to study either somewhat negatively (20%) or very negatively (47%). A small but noteworthy minority (12% of respondents) felt that remote learning had had a positive effect on their study ability. In addition to this, 19% of respondents selected the “I do not know” option or stated that the remote studies had not had any effect on their study ability.

The students who took the English survey were thinking along the same lines. They had less negative experiences of the effects of remote learning on their study ability. 55% of them felt that their ability to study had been affected negatively by remote learning, whereas 19% felt that it had had a positive effect.

## Study spaces

The last question on the effects of coronavirus-related regulations and limitations on study ability was “Have you found suitable study areas for yourself during the regulations?” Out of everyone who took the Finnish survey, one third (34%) had been able to find a suitable space for studying, with 8% feeling that it had been very easy to find such a space. Almost half of the respondents (48%) said that they had found suitable study spaces “somewhat poorly” or “very poorly”. A significant share of respondents (15%) selected the “Do not know” option.

The respondents who took the English survey clearly had more positive experiences. A majority of them, 54%, felt that they had been able to find suitable study spaces “somewhat effortlessly” or “very effortlessly”. 32% of them stated that they had not been able to find suitable study spaces easily.

## Support for remote studies

The survey included two questions on students’ experiences of guidance and counselling during remote studies. The purpose of these questions was to find out whether teaching staff had offered support for studying remotely and how well guidance and counselling services had worked during the period of remote learning.

Out of everyone who took the Finnish survey, 4% felt that the guidance and counselling services had worked very well during the period of remote learning. 28% felt that guidance and counselling services had worked quite well, whereas 25% replied “I do not know” and 17% said that they had not used these services at all. One fifth of the respondents (20%) felt that the guidance and counselling services had been quite poor, and 6% felt that the services had been very poor.

As for the English survey’s question on guidance and counselling, the results were 7% for very well, 35% for quite well, 31% for I do not know, 7% for quite poorly and 0% for very poorly. 20% of the respondents who took the English survey had not used these services at all during remote studies.

Half of the respondents who took the Finnish survey either somewhat agreed (39%) or strongly agreed (11%) that teaching staff had managed to provide support for remote



learning. 16% of respondents felt that this matter had not affected them. 19% of respondents somewhat disagreed that the teaching staff had provided support for remote learning, whereas 5% strongly disagreed.

The respondents who took the English survey had a relatively more positive opinion on how well the teaching staff had managed to support students during the period of remote learning. 39% of respondents completely agreed and 38% somewhat agreed that the teaching staff had supported students and their remote studies. 14% remained neutral and 7% somewhat disagreed. Two percent of respondents did not know how to answer.

### Contact teaching and classroom arrangements

Approximately one third of respondents of both surveys had attended classes in person during the coronavirus pandemic. The respondents were mainly satisfied with how the classes had been organised.

Most of the respondents stated that things had gone well in class and that they had felt safe in the classroom. The most common safety precautions mentioned by the respondents were studying in small groups (73 responses), wearing face masks (73), adhering to safety distances (57), good hand hygiene (31), holding lectures and classes outdoors (11), wearing gloves (10) and protective visors (8). Most of the respondents considered that the safety precautions had been sufficient.

Some respondents, however, criticised the arrangements and considered that holding lectures in the classroom was unsafe (6 responses) or thought that the safety precautions had been lacking. These respondents stated, among other things, that people had not observed the safety distances in class (12 responses), that people had worn masks incorrectly (2 responses), and that not enough safety instructions had been given in class