



youth affairs council
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The effects of COVID-19 on student wellbeing

Open Your World key priority focus area: Supporting learning and skill development

A topical and emerging area of research with ongoing and firsthand student experience is the impacts and effects of COVID-19 and the changes that have come with the pandemic on student wellbeing. The term wellbeing encompasses physical, mental and social health factors and as students are already faced with multifaceted challenges so there are lots of indicators that can be used to look at parts of student wellbeing from each of these perspectives.

The effects of the pandemic and changes to the structure of different types of schooling can be observed through, for example, student's mental health, engagement with learning, academic performance, social connectivity, stress levels and confidence in academics. A documented area of concern has been the mental health of students, with survey studies, particularly of college and university students looking at [increasing levels of stress and anxiety](#) and [student preparedness and confidence before exams and assessment](#). Along with decreases in student preparedness and confidence reported in medical students, [a study of students enrolled at a college of pharmacy](#) reported significant decreases in overall wellbeing and their specific career, community, financial, physical and social wellbeing, when compared to that reported by cohorts pre-COVID-19.

The negative impacts of the pandemic and public health safety precautions on the mental health of the [general public](#) has been quickly documented, and as educational institution closures began these same trends have been reported in [students](#) as well. Findings from these studies show significant impacts on the mental health of students, not only from functioning within a pandemic, but having to meet academic assessments without the placements and in-person learning opportunities they would have had access to if not for changes due to COVID-19.

There have also however been studies showing an [increase in academic performance of students during online and remote learning](#). Two studies of university students in Spain where all learning was required to move online found increased student outcomes in comparison to those of students the year before, whose face-to-face learning was not impacted by COVID-19. One of these [studies](#) found that this was consistent even in subjects where assessment volume increased.



Areas suitable for further research could include:

- Has COVID-19 affected students with arts-focused course loads differently to those with STEM-focused course loads?
- What changes during the COVID-19 pandemic affected high school students' wellbeing the most?
- Does remote learning work better for some students?

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Other links:

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