

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and higher education students: England, 24 May to 2 June 2021

Experimental statistics from the Student COVID-19 Insights Survey (SCIS) in England. Includes information on the behaviours, plans, opinions and well-being of higher education students in the context of guidance on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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1 . Main points

- Almost 3 in 10 (29%) students said they had engaged with mental health and well-being services since the start of the Autumn 2020 term; among the most frequently specified services used were GP or primary care (47%), online university services (40%), and NHS or Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme (29%).
- The most frequently specified mental health and well-being services students would use in the future, in the first instance, were GP or primary care (25%) and online university services (10%).
- Over a half (61%) of students who were in higher education prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic reported that the lack of face-to-face learning had a major or moderate impact on the quality of their course; around a half (52%) said that the pandemic had a major or significant impact on their academic performance.
- Most students (81%) said that they were living at the same address as they were at the start of the Autumn 2020 term; this has statistically significantly decreased since early May 2021 (86%).
- Around a half (55%) of students that left the house in the previous seven days reported they had met up with family or friends they do not live with indoors; this has increased from early May 2021 (47%).
- There was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of students reporting that they had at least one COVID-19 test (even without symptoms) in the previous seven days (38%) compared with April 2021 (30%).
- The proportion of students who have already received at least one vaccine dose (33%) also significantly increased compared with April 2021 (28%).
- Average life satisfaction scores among students continued to increase at 5.9 (out of 10) in late May 2021, following the improvements seen in April 2021 (5.8); however, average scores remained significantly lower than the adult population in Great Britain (7.1).

The Student COVID-19 Insights Survey (SCIS) will be paused after this release. This is because most of the students in our sample will be on their summer break. The SCIS will restart when the academic term begins again in September 2021.

The statistics presented are experimental statistics, so care needs to be taken when interpreting them. It is worth noting this survey has a relatively small sample size and low response rate. While this has been weighted and is comparable with previous findings, this has an impact on the level of certainty of this research.

2 . Coronavirus and higher education students data

[Coronavirus and higher education students](#)

Dataset | Released 17 June 2021

Experimental statistics from the Student COVID-19 Insights Survey. Includes information on the behaviours, plans, opinions and well-being of higher education students in England in the context of guidance on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

3 . Measuring the data

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is conducting a survey analysing student behaviour during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This survey is called the Student COVID-19 Insights Survey (SCIS). University students included are those that are studying on Foundation to Postgraduate level programmes at universities in England.

The survey was conducted from 24 May to 2 June 2021, using an online survey tool and all answers were self-reported. Some universities were on Easter break while the survey was conducted. A total of 100,000 students in English universities were invited to take part via their email address held by National Union of Students (NUS) with an email sent from the NUS, with a response rate of 1.1%. We would like to thank and acknowledge the important role the NUS had in conducting this survey.

From 17 May 2021, government lockdown restrictions were eased in England, which advised the reopening of non-essential businesses and activities such as retail, indoor leisure facilities and outdoor attractions, as well as reopening of hospitality venues ([more information can be found at COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 \(Roadmap\)](#)).

Weighting

Estimates in this report are based on weighted counts that are representative of the population of students studying at universities in England; population totals are taken from the [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\) 2019 to 2020 estimates](#). Estimates are weighted to adjusted for sex, age and region of university provider.

Uncertainty in the data

[The experimental statistics presented in this bulletin contain uncertainty](#). As with all survey data based on a sample they are susceptible to respondent error and bias.

Adult population in Great Britain

Where possible, comparisons have been drawn with the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey \(OPN\)](#) to compare the experiences and behaviours of students with the adult population in Great Britain. The comparisons are used to give a broad idea of the different experiences of each group, but the statistics measure data from different timeframes, slightly different questions and different sampling methods, so are not directly comparable. The period of the OPN used for comparison was from 19 to 23 May 2021.

Statistical significance

The statistical significance of differences has been determined by non-overlapping confidence intervals. A [confidence interval](#) gives an indication of the degree of uncertainty of an estimate, showing the precision of a sample estimate. The 95% confidence intervals are calculated so that if we repeated the study many times, 95% of the time the true unknown value would lie between the lower and upper confidence limits. A wider interval indicates more uncertainty in the estimate.

4 . Related links

[Coronavirus and higher education students, additional demographic breakdowns: England, 19 February to 1 March 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2021

Experimental statistics from the fifth wave of the Student Covid-19 Insights Survey. Includes breakdowns of several important variables from the survey by age group and by region.

[Coronavirus and university students: England, 12 October to 18 October 2020](#)

Dataset | Released 5 November 2020

Experimental statistics from an initial pilot of the Student COVID-19 Insights Survey. Includes information on the behaviours and well-being of university students attending three English universities in the context of guidance on the coronavirus (COVID-19).

[Coronavirus and university students: Great Britain, 3 to 8 November 2020](#)

Dataset | Released 18 November 2020

Experimental statistics from a pilot of the Student COVID-19 Insights Survey. Includes information on the behaviours and well-being of university students attending four British universities in the context of guidance on the coronavirus (COVID-19).

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Web page | Updated as and when data become available

Latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roundup](#)

Article | Updated as and when data become available

Catch up on the latest data and analysis related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest insights](#)

Interactive tool | Updated as and when data become available

Explore the latest data and trends about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the ONS and other official sources.