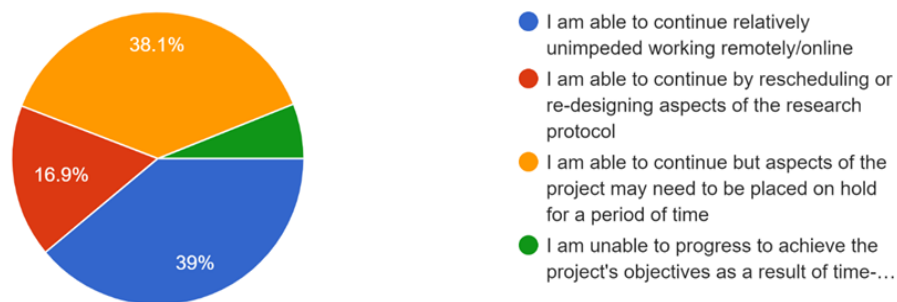


## Griffith University Higher Degree Research Candidate Covid-19 Impact Survey

The survey was created to assist candidates and their supervisors understand how the current Covid-19 situation is impacting on candidate's ability to advance projects in the ways originally planned, including the ability to fulfil thesis milestone obligations.

The survey results are reported here as a summary of perceived concerns and impacts on thesis progression. Below is an analysis of 231 responses received from 513 surveys sent (45% response rate).

Which of the options below best characterises how you expect your research project to progress?  
Please discuss this with your Supervisor/s and provide further detail in the following question

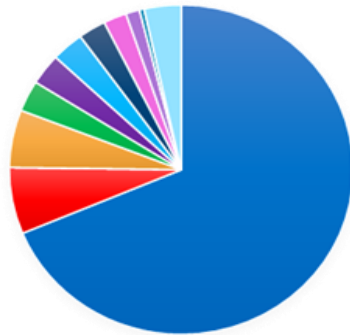


Note that at the time of survey (late April) ~6% of candidates consider they will be unable to achieve project milestones as a result of time-critical COVID-19-related disruptions and this will likely increase as the period of disruption increases.

### Reasons students reported being unable to progress towards set project objectives

- Access to campus facilities
  - Require access to facilities but not approved/labs closed
  - Limited access approved but needs additional access that has not been approved
  - Unable to begin new experiments or experiments have been put on hold
  - No access to servers
- Research delays
  - Delayed shipment of specimens, chemicals or consumables
  - COVID-19 restrictions (not specified)
- Research collaboration
  - Collaboration and hence projects on hold
  - External facility closures (CSRIO/Universities in China)
  - Feedback on current progress delayed and hence stopping further research
- Unable to return to Australia due to travel restrictions

Are there other concerns that you perceive that may impact your research?

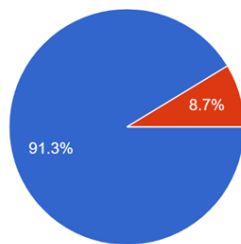


- No 68%
- Limitations of working remotely and online (inc. household distractions and inadequate facilities) 7%
- Physical / Mental Health 6%
- Delays in training, fieldwork, research or publications due to COVID-19 3%
- Implications if COVID-19 restrictions continue long term 3%
- Decreased contact/collaboration with supervisors 7%
- External collaborations (including overseas conferences) cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19 3%
- Unable to access on campus facilities 2%
- Delays to deliveries (equipment, specimens, chemicals) 1%
- Financial Hardship < 1%
- Other 4%

Note that some students reported multiple impacts and that each case has been followed up individually.

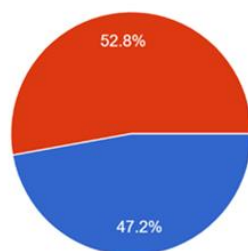
### Access to facilities during COVID-19

Do you have adequate working from home arrangements in place?



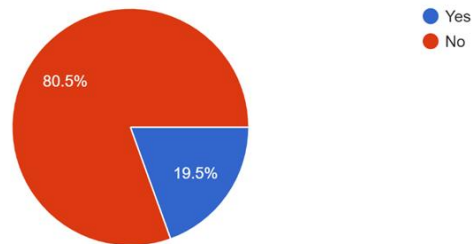
- Yes
- No

Do you require access to facilities on campus[s] to continue all or part of your studies/research?



- Yes
- No

Are you required to complete off-campus (fieldwork) activities?



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### Summary of additional points gathered from the text sections and actions:

- a) Anxiety due to uncertainty was the number one issue for candidates, although different candidates expressed this in different ways. Those who self-identified as having mental health issues as a direct result of COVID impacts on their thesis progression have been individually contacted and provided professional support.
- b) Inability to resume laboratory or other on-campus related research activities is causing stress and anxiety for many of the cohort. Whilst many candidates have revised their work duties (e.g. making use of the time to construct thesis chapters and/or papers), the unknown factor of how long the physical disruption will be in place is clearly placing stress on individuals (and not just on those close to completion).
- c) Restrictions to fieldwork are impacting many candidates, particularly with respect to timelines for completion where seasonal or time-critical data is planned for collection.
- d) Some candidates have taken an extended leave of absence from their candidature and scholarship as a direct result of currently not being able to continue their physical research activities.
- e) Some candidates have expressed concern about continuity and flow of their thesis if certain experiments are not able to be undertaken as planned, and would like an ability to include a declaration of COVID-related impact in their thesis for special consideration by Examiners.
- f) Candidates that are currently overseas and unable to return to Australia are potentially greatly impacted. This situation has potential longer-term impacts and individual situations widely differ in determining how much research can be completed whilst they are overseas.
- g) Many candidates have expressed challenges in working from home due to i) poor internet; ii) disruptive environment including children not at school and/or iv) inappropriate or lack of relevant office furniture. We are following up on all of these and where possible ensuring special permission for candidates to come on to campus to use quiet workspaces and facilities be granted as well as ability for individuals to borrow computers, chairs etc to take home.
- h) A major point of concern is around thesis milestone / scholarship / maximum submission date extensions. At Griffith University, we are ensuring candidates officially record their COVID-related impacts on their thesis progression for inclusion in applications for candidature

extension. We have developed several special COVID-related scholarship extension schemes for those nearing submission and have created financial hardship bursaries for those most in need.

i) We are currently working to develop a uniform set of guidelines for a staged back-to-work processes that is aligned with governmental regulations and anticipate those candidates in the last 6-12 months with critical experiments to undertake on campus will be given priority.