# Lessons worth keeping: How have instructors adjusted to new classroom realities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?

## More instructor respondents had a positive experience teaching in Fall 2021 than in Fall 2020.

More than eight out of ten instructors said their experience this semester was positive or somewhat positive. Although, variation was found in respondents’ experiences depending on teaching experiences prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instructors are likely continuing to address a host of issues introduced by teaching and learning within the context of a pandemic.

More instructors and students had a positive coursework experience in Fall 2021 than in Fall 2020.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive Coursework experience | Instructors | Graduate Students | Undergraduate Students |
| Fall 2021 | 84% | 70% | 71% |
| Fall 2020 | 73% | 81% | 36% |

The majority of instructors of all course levels had a positive coursework experience.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Undergraduate Courses | Graduate Courses | Mixed |
| Positive Coursework experience | 83% | 87% | 82% |

## Instructors serve as critical resources for students for both academic and non-academic concerns.

Instructors helped students with COVID-19 protocols and managing stress and anxiety. They were also approached about concerns related to housing and food access.

More instructors are helping students with Accessibility and Disability services and dealing with stress in Fall 2021 compared to previous semesters. Please see the table below for the percentage of instructors who reported helping students with the activities listed.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive Coursework experience | Fall 2021 | Fall 2020 | Spring 2020 |
| Extended deadlines for an assignment | 79% | 72% | 80% |
| Helped students with stress/ anxiety/ mental health | 71% | 55% | 64% |
| Had a sick family member/ who passed away | 56% | 44% | % |
| Helped students with accessibility and disability services | 53% | 37% | 17% |
| Helped students with study skills/ time management | 44% | 34% | 34% |
| Helped students with technology-related issues | 37% | 45% | 53% |
| Housing support | 10% | 8% | 15% |
| Food access | 2% | 1% | 3% |

"This semester, I tried to include the teaching innovations that I developed during the period of online teaching. I feel like I have had to let go of some great teaching techniques. I made an enormous effort to transform my course to online. The return from online to in-person was difficult. I could not just go back to the way I used to do things in 2019”

     -Instructor (representative of 170 comments)

## While many aspects of the semester were easier than Fall 2020, instructors during the Fall 2021 semester continued to find it difficult to manage childcare, balance family, household, and work responsibilities, and manage care for other relatives.

This was especially true for women instructors.

Fewer instructors found it difficult to maintain teaching productivity or motivation for coursework in Fall 2021 than in Fall 2020, but many still struggled to manage care of family members. The table below presents the percentage of instructors who reported that the following activites were very or somewhat difficult in Fall 2020 and Fall 2021.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fall 2020 | Fall 2021 |
| Maintaining teaching proficiency | 43% | 29% |
| Maintaining work motivation | 43% | 33% |
| Managing care for other relatives | 57% | 52% |
| Managing childcare | 66% | 60% |
| Balancing family and household | 60% | 52% |

Women instructors reported more difficulty with managing many aspects of their work this semester. The table below presents the percentage of self-reported women and men instructors who reported each activity to be very or somewhat difficult in Fall 2021.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Men instructors | Women instructors |
| Managing unexpected Covid related childcare | 55% | 63% |
| Balancing family, household and instructional responsibilities | 46% | 61% |
| Managing care of other relatives | 48% | 60% |
| Transitioning back to teaching in person | 24% | 50% |
| Receiving mentorship | 34% | 44% |
| Maintaining motivation for work | 28% | 43% |
| Transitioning work to take place in person | 26% | 41% |
| Managing in person classes | 24% | 37% |
| Transitioning work they oversee to take place in person | 25% | 37% |
| Maintaining teaching productivity | 24% | 34% |
| Transitioning some or all their office hours to take place in person | 20% | 30% |

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Survey administration and reporting conducted by teams within the Division of IT (Academic Technology Experience), Division of Student Affairs, Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment, and the Teaching Learning Transformation Center

Want to learn more? See the full report at: https://provost.umd.edu/covid-survey-results