




supporting  
students

to access  
remote support.

 randstad

human forward.

# introduction.



## the pressure of studying remotely.

University is a huge milestone for many. Combining this with a global pandemic has meant that 2020 has been a trying time, especially for students. Back in September 2019, students settled into another academic year looking forward to new experiences and expanding their knowledge - however this excitement soon transitioned into a great upheaval with all teaching moving online in light of a national lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Whilst online teaching has offered a more flexible approach to study for some students, the sudden change was no doubt daunting for many - and possibly even more so for those with disabilities whose additional support also had to be delivered virtually.

At Randstad Student Support, our priority throughout the pandemic was to ensure that students were not missing out on their support at such a crucial time. Since March, the Randstad team has successfully transitioned [over 8000 students](#) to remote support sessions across all support types, including Specialist Mentoring & Study Skills Support, British Sign Language Interpreting and Specialist Notetaking support along with remote Counselling provision.

Many students adjusted to online learning and teaching much more smoothly and we envisage this method of delivery to continue into the new academic year for most. To ensure that this transition has been a success and that where needed it can be continued in the new year, we invited all our students to complete a short survey about their support. The surveys included the students who have accessed support remotely, and also those who have not accessed since the pandemic in order for us to get a full and measured view from the students' perspective.



# what we found.

Over 1000 students responded to the survey with **96% confirming** that they were happy with the support received from Randstad during this time. Overall, the survey revealed that of those who accessed support remotely, **79% of students** were either just as satisfied or more satisfied with remote support as they were with face to face.

**82% of the students** we surveyed fed back that since the pandemic they felt they needed the same amount of support or more and this feedback correlates with the increased uptake in support that we have seen for specialist one-to-one roles, such as Specialist Mentoring and Study Skills Support roles and Counselling for those students accessing remotely. Our specialist support workers supported **7% more students** overall since last year in the period of time following the lockdown conditions at the end of March to the end of the academic year, and the hours of support **increased by 19%** versus the previous academic year.

Our survey revealed that students who were accessing remotely found the flexibility of receiving their support through Skype, Whatsapp calls, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams and Facetime was positive as it enabled support to be set up much more quickly than usual. Many of these students also found that receiving support this way felt much more convenient and comfortable than via the usual process on campus. We also found that **65% of students** would like to continue to receive a blend of remote and face to face support as we move into the new academic year..

Of course, whilst many students have embraced virtual support sessions, there are still those students who did not engage with this type of support, with **18% of the 302 students** who took part in the survey who had not taken up their support, confirming that they were only comfortable with having face-to-face sessions.

65% of students would like to receive a blend of remote and face to face support.



# why students did not access remote support.

Of course, whilst many students have embraced virtual support sessions, there are still those students who did not engage with this type of support,



18% of the 302 students that took part in the survey who had not taken up their support, confirmed that they were only comfortable with having face-to-face sessions.

Of the remaining students that did not engage with remote support, the key reasons for not accessing their support were:

10% said they didn't need support anymore now that their teaching was online

9% of students' courses finished early due to the pandemic so they no longer require support

8% were more comfortable studying from home so didn't need support

8% felt that their home environment wasn't suitable for a remote session

7% felt they couldn't speak openly with their support worker in a remote session

Some anecdotal feedback also included:

- feeling unable to organise sessions because of increased anxiety levels
- deferring studies due to illness
- volunteering to support others during lockdown so not having time for support sessions
- not having the appropriate technology

With this information to support us, we are able to ensure that additional training and support can be provided to those students if support can not take place on campus in the new year.

Following on from the launch of [our student mental health report](#) earlier this year, we also asked students if they felt that the pandemic had impacted their mental health. Of the 69% of respondents who said that the pandemic had impacted their mental health negatively, 41% felt they would benefit from counselling or additional mental health support during this time. At Randstad Student Support we saw an increase of 32% in hours of Mental Health support delivered during lockdown, showing that students are clearly needing this vital support during these increasingly uncertain and challenging times.

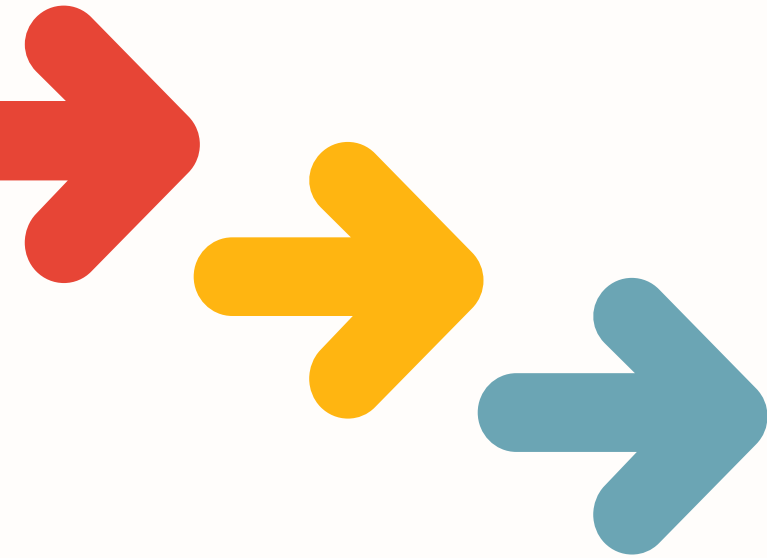
Now more than ever, it is essential that students have access to their non-medical helper support and are accessing this regularly. Combining this with their counselling and wellbeing support we can ensure that students feel supported every step of the way.





supporting  
students with

our blended  
support offering.



88%

of students were more than satisfied with their remote support.

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65%

of students would like a blended approach to support in the future.

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69%

felt there were advantages of remote support, including flexibility and cost saving.

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90%

would recommend remote support to other students.

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# support to succeed hear from our students.

I received great support throughout, thank you.

The support is excellent I wouldn't be able to do my studies without it.

I have really appreciated the support from my wellbeing mentor.

I appreciate your support. It is vital to me.

Thank you for all the support you have provided to me during these difficult times. I am truly grateful.

I have reached the end of my degree now, and I believe I couldn't have achieved this with the support I had in place.



## what the future holds.

Whilst we foresee that the vast majority of additional support such as mentoring, study skills support and counselling will take place remotely this academic year, we are aware that some students will require face to face support.

Using feedback from the survey and our recent roundtable events, we have developed a blended support offering for our students and partner institutions for the 2020/21 academic year. We will be ensuring both the non-medical helper and Randstad office teams are undertaking Covid awareness training and that our processes are in line with Government and specific university guidance, so that we are ready to go with both remote and face to face delivery.

This way, we can ensure that those students who are unable to access or uncomfortable with virtual sessions are not left behind.



# get in touch.

We continue to provide remote support to all students who need it. We are also planning ahead to ensure that we can provide a blended support offering for the 2020/21 academic year. If you would like to discuss how we can support your students, please contact us using the below details or by [clicking here](#).

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