Online Teaching, International Students & Specialist Programmes

The COVID-19 Experience at the Oslo Law Faculty

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Executive Summary

The physical closure of universities and university colleges in Norway on 12th March 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown prompted the digitalisation of teaching at record speed. The Faculty of Law (University of Oslo) transitioned quickly.[1] By Monday 16th March, students were offered online teaching in most subjects. CELL's survey of Master of Laws students' experience with the first week of the lockdown reported both positive adaption and a range of challenges.

However, certain groups of students at the Faculty of Law have received less attention. These are international and Norwegian students in the broad array of specialist programmes on criminology, sociology of law, human rights, maritime law, public international law, eGovt and ICT law. They account for 37% of the faculty's 4000 students. International students have been a particular focus of concern in both University and general media due to the specific challenges they face, especially migration, participation in teaching, and economic support. This report examines general research on their experiences and analyses feedback from 54 students in specialist programmes.

The **main findings** from the report can be presented as follows:

1) Online teaching. A majority reported that they had received online teaching that included recordings, real-time teaching, group work and/or individual guidance – with a very high proportion receiving live teaching. Nonetheless, students raised questions regarding the prioritization of the Master of Laws programme, and the lack of focus on the quality of teaching in the international programmes.

2) Interactivity. A slight minority experienced between two and seven interactive forms of digital teaching while the slight majority received only one or none. This was lower than Master of Laws programmes. Students report that they want more interactive digital teaching, in particular the opportunity to ask questions to both the lecturers and fellow students, work together in groups, discuss with the lecturer and students, and have real-time discussions. Many commented that social interaction can benefit the understanding of the course material and improve engaged activity.

3) Learning outcomes. Students in specialist programmes reported worse learning outcomes than Master of Laws students. Only 40 per cent reported that online teaching during the lockdown was the same or better than ordinary teaching. The students are deeply divided about whether education needs have changed in relation to the new forms of assessment.

4) Access to literature. A vast majority of the students report using the University of Oslo's online library, course material on Canvas, and general internet. A minority have accessed databases through personal subscription or obtained materials via their lecturers and other students. Many reported that access was insufficient.

5) Flow of information. A majority feel they have received enough information, but critique the disorderly manner and the multitude of channels used to convey essential information. Some point out that most of the information by the Oslo Law Faculty is directed at Norwegian Master of Laws students and question the quality of information given to other students at the faculty.

6) Challenges. A higher proportion of students in specialist programmes reported a lack of technical equipment (20%). This included lack of a personal laptop/computer, headphones and microphones. Many students in the specialist programmes experienced systematic challenges with online teaching due

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[1] See K. Kolsrud, 'Digital juss-undervisning ble stablet på beina i helgen', *Rett24*, 16 March 2020.

to the COVID-19 lockdowns, including care for children, illness, and adequate working conditions at home and lack of adequate internet. Other specific challenges included freedom of movement restrictions (36%), migration back to home country (14%), maintaining residence in Norway (9%) and maintaining sufficient income (30%).

7) Participation. Students in the specialist programmes express frustration over their lack of participation in decision-making. Their student representatives are not formally included in formal decision processes at the Oslo Law Faculty, and most of the discussions were conducted in Norwegian.

8) Discrimination. Our survey did not address the issue of discrimination based on nationality and ethnicity. However, other reports have indicated particular risk for international students during COVID-19. In a new survey, a quarter of students with minority background at the three law faculties in Norway report experiencing discrimination.

Recommendations (*abbreviated version*)

Based on existing research and student experiences, the report contains several recommendations which are aimed at responsible institutions, teachers, and students. The following is a summary:

To faculties, study administration and authorities
1. Make sure that all students are offered adequate online education, and work to ensure that it is sufficiently varied and interactive.
2. Ensure that the voices of international students and other students in specialist programmes are heard in formal decision-making processes.
3. Ensure a detailed and good flow of information but in a limited number of channels.
4. Ensure – as far as possible – that students can participate in digital learning with the necessary equipment, and that teaching and assessment take into account students who lack a designated workplace.
5. Provide guidance to teachers and students in the use of online study and teaching tools so they can make the most of their functionality.
6. Make sure teachers have enough time to prepare good digital tutoring that can involve lessening the strain on other fronts, access to educational resources and teaching assistants, or extra hours in the hourly accounts during the start-up phase. Provide teachers with the latitude to plan forms of assessment that correspond to the digital tutoring that is given.
7. Ensure that international students are provided guidance on their plan of studies in Norway. It is of great importance to provide these students with the tools and support to complete their education, including focus on their mental, physical and economic wellbeing.

To academic teachers:
1. Offer real-time teaching, as this can reduce social isolation.
2. Structure your digital teaching in a plain and clear manner. Provide clear information which is easy to review.
3. Vary the teaching plan between recordings and interactive parts. The use of flipped classroom is such a form to experiment with.
4. Increase interactivity in teaching and divide sessions into smaller and specific activities.
5. Ask for feedback from the students on how they experience online teaching and what should be adjusted. This should be done as close to the teaching activity as possible so that the students' concerns can be faced head on.

6. Facilitate written questions. Not all students are able or comfortable speaking in front of a larger group of students or speaking in digital arenas.
7. Provide clear information about your teaching plan, the activities that are offered and the expectations you have of the students who participate.
8. Assess your teaching plan against any changes to the form of assessment. Make use of student surveys in your own teaching and keep an open dialogue.
9. Seek help if you do not master the basic functions of the relevant tools.
10. Aim to create a platform and culture for discussion and interaction with the students.

To international students:
1. Structure your daily schedule as far as possible. Treat your studies as a job and create a clear divide between studies and free time.
2. Participate as actively as you can in class. A dialogue with your lecturer about the course material eases the learning activity itself. It also creates important dialogue between students and teachers, and therefore room for your feedback.
3. Use the digital platforms and initiate digital collaboration with fellow students. Contact your faculty/lecturer if you need help to create a platform for collaboration.
4. Visit the institution's homepage (e.g. UiO and the Faculty of Law) to find information and tutorials about technological services and support.
5. If you need to, please contact the faculty for technical assistance.
6. Give feedback to teachers if something is not working.
7. Contact the faculty if in need of assistance related to your study plan. Keep dialogue with both your home and exchange university.

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Online Teaching, International Students & Specialist Programmes:

The COVID-19 Experience at the Oslo Law Faculty

Gidske Dekker-Olsen[2] and Malcolm Langford[3]

1. Introduction

The physical closure of universities and university colleges in Norway on 12th March 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown prompted the digitalisation of teaching at record speed. The Faculty of Law (University of Oslo) transitioned quickly.[4] By Monday 16th March, students were offered online teaching in most subjects. Moreover, in CELL's survey of Master of Laws students' experience with the first week of the lockdown, 60% reported that the learning outcomes were the same or better than ordinary teaching (Langford, Damsa, Larsen, Slåttå, Wulff & Westbye, 2020). However, the same report revealed that not all students received live teaching, the extent of student interaction varied greatly, and many students faced practical changes with the lockdown - from poor internet to increased family responsibilities. Similar results were found in the first evaluation of the first home exams, held at the end of March. Most students reported that a home exam was equally fair as a traditional exam, but a minority described practical difficulties (Langford, Fremstad, Slåttå, Westbye, Larsen & Wulff, 2020).

However, certain groups of students at the Faculty of Law have received less attention. These are international and Norwegian students in the broad array of specialist programmes: a bachelor in criminology and seven masters' programmes: in criminology, sociology of law, human rights, maritime law, public international law, eGovt and ICT law. They account for 37% of the faculty's 4000 students. Newspaper reports and personal communications to CELL indicated that international students faced especially an additional array of obstacles due to the COVID-19 lockdown. This included migration and residence, access to internet and teaching resources, and a decline in income support. Many have been forced to study in Norway from abroad (and in different timezones) making them especially dependent on the quality of online teaching and guidance from the university.

In this report, we examine the situation of students in the specialist programmes. We begin by analysing existing research on introducing quality online teaching together with recent reports on the experience of international students during the COVID-19 transition. This is followed by an examination of the feedback we have received to an open questionnaire, in which 54 international and Norwegian students in the specialist programmes were asked about their experience with the first few weeks of fully online teaching.

The goal of the report is both short-term and long-term. As the Autumn 2020 semester will be largely digital for these programmes, it is important to document the needs of these students in relation to learning activities, resources, guidance and support. The long-term goal is to gather input to make

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[4] See K. Kolsrud, 'Digital juss-undervisning ble stablet på beina i helgen', *Rett24*, 16 March 2020.

necessary adjustments to the current programmes and governance structures at the faculty. At the same time, the situation of international students during COVID-19 permits us to examine the broader questions about the role of online universities – showing the possibilities and limitations of global online education.

The report is structured as follows. Section 2 briefly describes current research on online teaching and what is necessary for good online learning. Section 3 conducts an analysis of other comprehensive studies of international students during this period. Section 4 analyses the answers from our survey using descriptive statistics and analysis of free text responses. Section 5 concludes, and section 6 contains recommendations.

2. Research on online learning - before and during COVID-19

While online teaching takes place in highly varying forms and under different names,[5] existing research shows that the achievement of good online learning is premised on a range of factors (King & Boyett, 2014). Several can be named as outlined in Langford and Damsa (2020). First, a clear and accessible *infrastructure* must be in place that facilitates development, organisation and coordination of teaching and learning activities (Graham & Wendy, 2013; Rusell, 2009; Veletianos & Roe, 2017). This can include the hard infrastructure of technical equipment/guidance for both staff and students and the soft infrastructure of programmatic planning, human resources and administrative routines, and information flows with students.

Second, the *digital literacy* (or competence) of educators and others involved in the process of implementing online education is paramount. This "involves the confident and critical use" of IT technologies" (EU, 2006: 16) and includes the ability to use digital technologies in a meaningful way, evaluate them critically, and participate in a digital culture (Ilomaki et al., 2016; Janssen et al., 2017). Teachers' digital competence may be underdeveloped due to the rapid evolution of technology, and academics diversified attitudes towards it impacts both the frequency and quality of use (Buchanan, Sainter & Saunders, 2013; Littlejohn et al., 2011).

Third, good online teaching is often focused on *interactivity* and *student-driven learning (*Boelens, De Wever & Voet, 2017; Jonassen & Land, 2012). Interaction has both a cognitive and social function in its various forms. These can include joint tasks, dialogue, sharing resources, collaborative learning processes (e.g., joint writing), and finding and building groups and communities (Jeong and Hmelo-Silver, 2015). Such interactivity is particularly important when students do not have physical contact and (Borge & Mercier, 2019; Damsa, 2014), and requires often a clear and concrete structuring of learning activities – often in smaller packages. Furthermore, the possibility for students to *choose* activities, resources, and ways of participating increases the likelihood of students understanding abstract material and developing new competence (Kearn, 2017; Damsa, Nerland & Andreadakis, 2019). At the same time, learning activities and learning activities must be sufficiently related to summative forms of assessment (Damsa, Nerland & Andreadakis, ibid.).

Finally, teachers must be aware of the necessity of *differentiating* among learning needs and abilities, especially in online environments. Therefore, the following principles of universal design are of major importance (Holingshead & Chellman, 2019). This includes an awareness of the technical challenges (which may include students with visual or hearing impairment or poor access to the internet) and the social challenges of participation (which might include social angst, social marginalization, or the mere

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[5] E.g., e-learning, digital learning, online learning, technology-based learning, distance learning. It can be defined as seeking to digitalise different activities to achieve a meaningful and effective learning process (Haythornthwaite et al., 2016).

awkwardness of some digital formats). The learning space is different for each student. It contains surroundings and technical infrastructure (equipment, access to the internet and digital support, physical space, study options), educational support (teaching plan, information about offerings, guidance, follow-up), social and institutional arenas that support participation (groups for discussion, contact with teachers and other students, contact with administration), social and emotional support (support groups, supervisors), and not least, some overview and predictability of what the studies mean in the new context regarding the programme description, assessment, etc.

Thus, good digital design of teaching commonly requires an adequate institutional infrastructure, competent and motivated academic employees, interactive and student-driven learning, and an accommodation of student's different situations and contexts. These four elements were confirmed in CELL's first two studies on online teaching during COVID-19 (Oslo law student's experience and academic teachers).

1) *Infrastructure.* A total of 94 percent reported access to online learning and many were grateful for the education offered. However, both surveys indicated that the law faculty and most institutions nationally were not ready for online learning, whether with soft or hard infrastructure.

   The varying quality of the hastily-established architecture for online learning in March 2020, however, affected student's evaluation of online learning. There was a positive statistical correlation between good information and the number of practical challenges and the two measured outcomes - learning and overall study situation. Many thought the information was somewhat disorderly and arrived in too many channels. A minority had fundamental practical problems with online teaching due to COVID-19 lockdowns. Furthermore, students reacted to differential treatment within the same subjects –with some seminar groups receiving live tuition and others only pre-recordings.

2) *Academic competences and motivation.* Academic teachers in Norway were largely unprepared for the lockdown. Only 30% reported having any previous experience with online teaching. Yet, the response to the need for a digital transition was enormous and 80% reported using, for example, the video-based software Zoom. Many turned to self-help to manage the transition (online resources, trying things) while others obtained support from colleagues, Facebook groups, live tutorials, IT-staff, and to much a lesser degree an academic digital coordinator and pedagogical centre. While competences improved considerably throughout the lockdown period, many staff indicated a need for further competence building while others indicated a desire to move back quickly to full physical teaching.

3) *Interactivity.* The slight majority of students received 2 or more interactive forms of online learning and there was a strong correlation between real-time courses/lectures and assessment of own learning outcome. Lectures were considered less engaging and student respondents asked for tutoring to be divided into smaller groups and dialogue be incorporated within lectures. The students were deeply divided about whether learning needs have changed in relation to the new forms of assessment. A minority commented that greater considerations should be taken in connection with the transition to home exams.

4) *Accommodating difference.* Students were thrown into a new study situation, and many are concerned and have challenges with being able to complete their studies. The review of practical challenges in the first report showed that students varied dramatically in their ability to access online teaching – with many struggling with poor internet access/equipment, lack of childcare, illness and social exclusion. Other challenges such as disability or nationality were not covered in these surveys, however.

These results have been corroborated in a range of subsequent studies in other educational institutions in Norway. However, the number of students that report that full online teaching in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown is the same or better than physical teaching tends to be proportionally lower (often 40% rather than 60% in our first report). See for example HiØ (2020).

3. Research on the experiences of international students during the COVID-19 transition

Making this digital transition, whether under normal circumstances or a lockdown, is challenging enough. The COVID-19 transition for international students involved additional challenges. As citizens of various countries around the world, they have faced severe difficulties regarding visas, online teaching and cancellation of courses, lack of guidance and economic troubles as well as other issues (Aftenposten, 2020). Many have reported issues regarding mental health, physical wellbeing and isolation in accommodation in both the mainstream media (Doherty, 2020) and when asked in various surveys (Dimmen, 2020). Some students have also had to face the decision of whether to return home or finish their degree without the option to return to their home countries for the foreseeable future due to travel bans (Bamford, 2020).

The economic situation of international students compounded the problem. Many could no longer afford rent or food (Ambjør, 2020) after losing part-time employment or access to other financial sources. International master students at the University of Oslo have now been offered a stipend to aid their personal economy (University of Oslo, 2020). Some universities in Norway, such as the University of Bergen and NTNU, have also established crisis funds for international students to aid those who are left without essential funding (Tønnessen, 2020) (Strand, 2020).

The Erasmus Student Network ('ESN') (2020) provided the first comprehensive report of many students in this group. ESN, an international student organisation that promotes the exchange of knowledge and culture between educational institutions in higher education, garnered responses from 21,930 exchange students across Europe between 19th and 30th March. The ensuing report, *Student Exchanges in Times of Crisis,* focuses on exchange students currently abroad or who were about to exchange.

The situation for surveyed exchange students varied dramatically. A quarter reported that their mobility periods were cancelled due to COVID-19 (ESN, 2020: 8). Moreover, while 3.6 % were not able to return home from their exchange destination, 40 % returned home, whilst 42 % remained (ESN, 2020: 8). Students reported a variety of challenges and issues concerning information, support, and racism and discrimination.

- As many as 18% indicated that there was insufficient information in English or another language available to them (ESN, 2020: 12). While this is a high proportion given the choices facing these students, it is not especially surprising. This concern has long been articulated by international students in Norway.
- A staggering 42% reported that they did not feel supported by the host university. This lack of support also included financial aspects. Almost two thirds of the students were unsure about financial coverage and grant coverage at the time of the survey. (ESN, 2020: 16).
- 6 % of the respondents reported discrimination, with the largest groups being Italian (24%) and Asian (19 %) (ESN, 2020: 20).

Overall, the ESN report shows the stresses imposed on international students and the difficulties they face, with many falling between the stools of the systems of their host countries/ universities and home countries/universities. The dilemmas are summed up in one quote by a Dutch student on mobility in Norway (ESN, 2020: 18).

When you go home, you just feel like a loser because others are staying. My family obligated me to come home, even though I did not wanted to go. I felt like I was giving up and especially now in the Netherlands, I am likes was this it, was this my study abroad... I wish I could do it all over again or at least given the chance.

4. Evaluation by Students in the Specialist Programmes

Between 3 and 13 April 2020, we surveyed the experiences of our international and Norwegian students in our specialist programmes. The questionnaire was based on the design of our earlier evaluation of students in the Norwegian Master of Laws,[6] supplemented with questions and categories to capture the specific experiences of international students. The form contained ten multiple-choice questions with the possibility of free text answers, so that the students could elaborate or supplement. See Appendix 1. The focus is on students' learning outcomes, the use of different digital tools, practical challenges, comparative alignment with assessment, and the overall study situation.

Fifty-four students enrolled in specialist programmes responded to the survey.[7] There was a relatively even spread across the programmes and types of students: see Figure 1. However, the proportion that responded within each category varied strongly: From human rights (16%), international law (16%) to Exchange students (21%), eGovt (26%), Maritime law (30%) and ICT (36%). The percentage for the criminology programmes is much lower (at around 3%) but they were also part of another evaluation.

*Figure 1. Spread of respondents – according to programme (per cent)*

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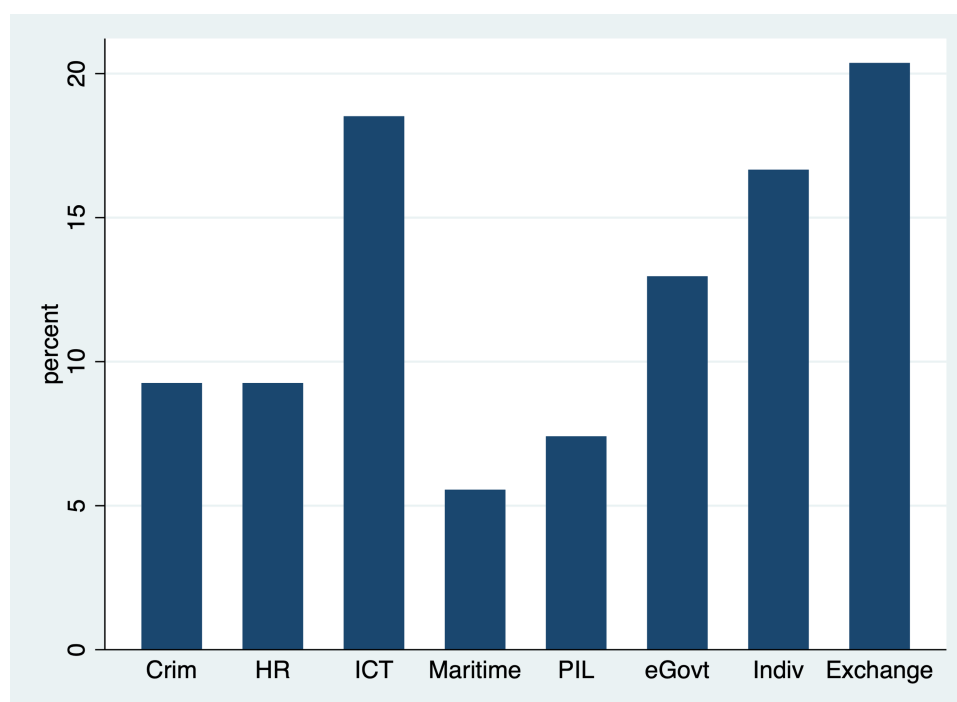
[6] The earlier evaluation design was based on both existing literature on digital learning and emerging experiences in the first week of the COVID-19 lockdown.
[7] There are approximately 2,200 active students enrolled in the Master's Programme in Law, giving a response rate of upwards of 8 %.

4.1 Forms of online teaching

In the questionnaire, we asked the students to select the different types of online teaching they had participated in since the university closed, see Figure 2. Almost all students received some form of online education, with only 8% reporting no online teaching. A large proportion has been provided with a video recording. This included 56% that received a video from an earlier semester and 74% a new recording. More importantly, 90% had received live streaming. This is a significant increase from the law students that were surveyed in the first week of the COVID-19 lockdown. However, other forms of live and interactive forms of teaching are very low.

Figure 2. Use of different forms of online teaching (per cent)
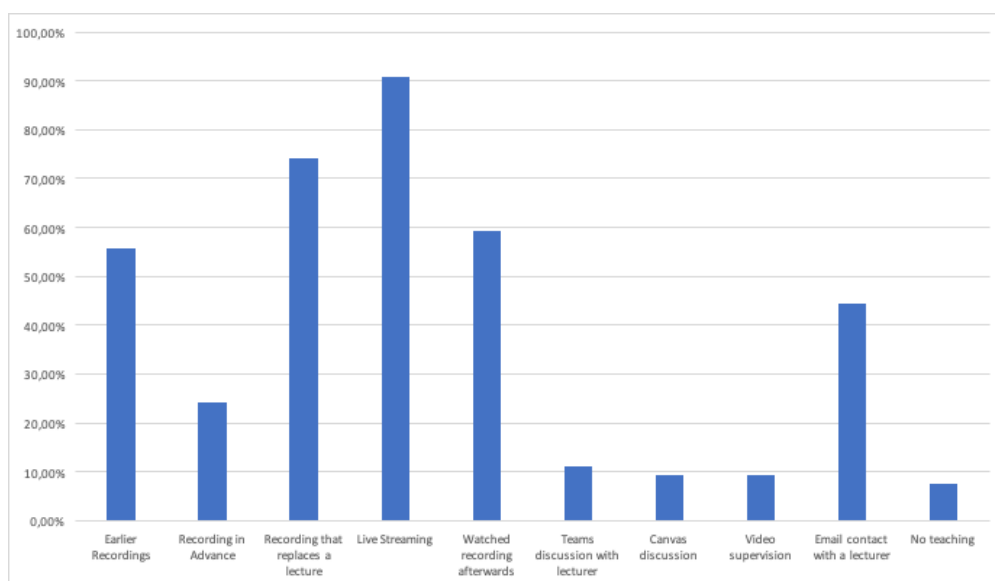
We asked the surveyed students if there were other online teaching methods the faculty should try. The clearest suggestions mirror those of law students in the Norwegian Master of Laws. The answers include suggestions and comments on how teaching can be improved, by increasing the ability to ask questions and to adopt other interactive methods of teaching (see also section 4.2). Some comment that it would be best to receive a recording in advance – so that the time during real-time lectures and courses can be spent on more interactive forms of teaching (flipped classroom).

Excerpt 1. Suggestions for tools or forms of teaching

- "It is better when slides for the lecture are published in advance (at least one day before). Then students can read them before the lecture and the outcome is better. Because it's very difficult during the digital lecture to follow the lecturer, look at slides and make notes simultaneously."
- "These are good options, but the combination of a recorded lecture that we can watch and a Zoom-meeting the next day where we get to ask questions to the lecturer about the recorded lecture and have a discussion = even better. Combinations can be good."
- "Lectures that are held live, so that students can ask questions right away. Or a way for students to ask questions and get answers, have a real discussion."
- "Padlet" – online interactive system for written questions and answers

4.2 Interactive and engaging online learning

We asked about the degree of student interaction in online learning. Figure 3 shows the percentages for the respondents' responses. The majority report different forms of interactive teaching from live lecture and group discussion while a smaller but significant group were involved in various forms of group exercises and student colloquia. However, a third of the respondents report no interactive forms of learning, which is much higher than that reported in the survey on the Norwegian Master of Law (a quarter).

Figure 3. Interactive forms in online teaching (per cent)
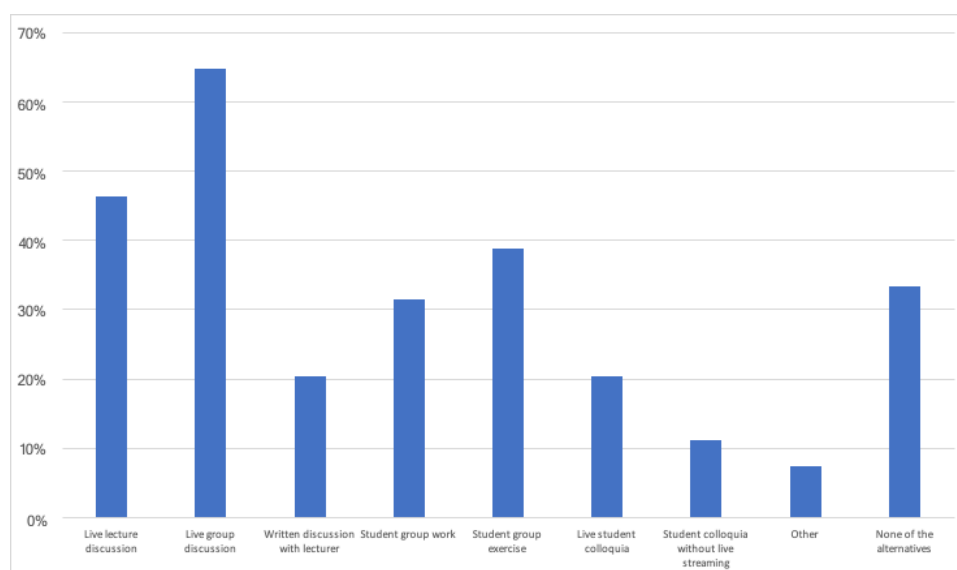
The surveyed students were asked, *"What do you think could improve interactive learning in digital teaching?"* Clear preferences are expressed for both live teaching and *division of the class* into smaller groups to facilitate dialogue. For example, a course teacher can give assignments that can be solved in smaller student groups, or introduce elements such as quizzes, Kahoot or likewise. Although one respondent noted that pre- and post recordings allows them to "handle my schedule better".

Excerpt 2. Students' feedback on interactive online activities

Divide into groups, and facilitate discussion
- "More encouragement for group work. Maybe make it obligatory, because otherwise it is difficult to make it happen."
- "Foster students engagement"
- "In one of my lectures we broke into smaller groups on Zoom to discuss 2-3 times during a 2-hour lecture. This was useful, as a sort of replacement for the discussions we usually have among students during the break between the lecture halves or after the lecture is finished. Encouraging lecturers do to this, have small tasks for us to discuss in smaller groups during lectures can be a good way to learn. I mainly take courses with few participants, so it might be harder to implement for the general law courses which have a lot of students participating."
- "The lecturer should be available for us to ask questions etc. UIO organize a colloquia group for students taking individual courses."

- "If the discussions and seminars would be part of the assessment."
- "Various tools for different purposes. Zoom for lectures better than recordings. A forum for us to discuss."
- "If the students actually participated, and not just passively listen."
- "I think setting students in smaller groups to work on a legal question for a short while, will allow us to get to know each other like we would during lecture-breaks; hereby replacing the social aspect of a real life lecture that is equally important when it comes to education."

Online lectures and adequate preparation
- "Teachers could use more digital tools like Zoom and hold the lecture in live at the scheduled time of the normal lecture."
- "More lectures online"
- "It is better when slides for the lecture are published in advance (at least one day before). Then students can read them before the lecture and the outcome is better. Because it's very difficult during the digital lecture to follow the lecturer, look at slides and make notes simultaneously."
- "More detailed courses linked to the specific course and not English courses in general."
- "Announcing early enough that a Zoom lecture takes place!"

Other supporting aspects of interactive digital activities
- "Maybe it could be helpful to have more supporting material such as videos, blogs, or other tools where explain how to use the digital tools (e.g., Microsoft Teams) and also that explain some topics covered in the lectures. For instance, I took some online courses at Singularity University. They usually provided capsules of videos that are short videos (no more than 3 minutes) explaining one crucial topic of the class. This kind of video would have been handy for JUS5671 course where there were many and repetitive questions regarding some specific topics."
- "I wish the faculty would give out "mønsterbesvarelser" [Standard answers]
- "Not just cancelling a lecture and telling students to just read the powerpoint that was made for that lecture, that's for sure. What I find difficult is not being around fellow students and randomly discussing things in the hallway at Domus Juridica. Having to stay at home all the time and not having the same set hours to "be in a class" as lectures/seminars used to be … messes with one's motivation. Everyone watches recorded lectures whenever they want and are not online at the same time, etc. Perhaps set "group work hours" - for those who feel motivated by being around people and being able to discuss? … Lecturers that have time could pop in if they wish and are invited. I'm quite happy with the use of Zoom (in combination of podcasts). We could learn to use it better to create an atmosphere more similar to what we had at Domus Juridica."
- "I think the two best experiences I have had have been: - Live streamed lecture (in Zoom), with possibilities for questions + students being split into rooms, to discuss a question etc. This has been in FINF4022 and JUS5671 - Pre-made lecture, with a Zoom-meeting afterwards, to discuss questions and hard parts of the lecture. There have been more questions since converting to digital means, so that's been very good. I think it's vital that there is some kind of live video-setting for every lecture (whether it's during the lecture or afterwards)."

4.2.1 Reasons for not wanting to participate with video in real-time courses

Based on the first reports we have received from lecturers, where they reported that the students only participated with a black screen in real-time courses, we asked, ″Some students do not wish to switch on their videos when participating in live lectures/seminars. Does that include you? If yes, why?″¨

Of those who responded that they participated without the web cam turned many noted self-consciousness, distraction, and privacy, including family members, partners and housemates. Clutter

and a separate place of study also have a bearing. Zoom is a new tool for many of the students. However, as some students note, it is also a social norm. If some students refrain from having their camera, others will follow suit. Thus, some students recommend – as we have seen in other studies – that it is positive if the course teacher specifically instruct everyone that they have to use the video function.

Excerpt 3. Students' responses about not using the video function for digital courses

- "Didn't have any problem."
- "I do switch my video on. The visual helps with and pushes me to actually focus on what is going on. However, sometimes I do switch it off when I need a break or simply require some privacy in my behind-the-screen movements."
- "Sometimes. I think most of the time it is not necessary to switch the video on."
- "Sometimes because I don't trust the software and if it's secure or not."
- "Feels irrelevant when questions and comments can be done via chat."
- "Sometimes. When only lecturer making video, I switch off my video and microphone."
- "None of students shared their video during the lecture."
- "Sometimes I have family members around, so I don't not want to switch camera on."
- "I started without using my camera. I think it was just that it felt a little weird knowing I could be watched at home. When my lecturers said they preferred to see faces (even if it was completely optional for the student), I turned my camera on."
- "I do not like my face being on camera. I become very aware of how I look."
- "Yes. I don't live alone. Where I sit in the living room, my background is of the kitchen. It adds limitations to my boyfriend's movements. I had the camera on once, and he didn't feel like being seen by strangers. I can't change my sitting position yet because then people would see all the cardboards and the mess from still not being finished moving in. Hehe."
- "I always have it on, but maybe I should turn it off when I walk away to grab a cup of coffee or get a snack to eat? Hard to gauge what the etiquette should be. My courses have few participants so the actions of the individual are more noticeable, in large courses it doesn't really matter that much in my opinion."
- "Does not include me, when the lecture is not recorded (regarding video)."
- "Yes, mostly because none of the other students had switched on the video camera. But I think it's is not so important to put the video camera on when it comes to learning outcome."
- "Sometimes, mostly because no one else switch it on."
- "Yes. I am better concentrated without seeing myself on the video."
- "I find it decreases the quality of the lecture due to issues with the internet,"
- "No, I have my camera switched on."
- "No, I am ok with it. I have an office space, but would use the screen option behind me for privacy reasons if I did not."
- "Yes, I prefer not to see myself on camera. Very self-conscious then..."
- "Yes, because we are so many and I don't know the other students except 1-2. But I am also not the person who asks question during lectures either."
- "Yes, makes it harder to concentrate."
- "Uncomfortable."
- "Yes, the webcam on my laptop is out of order (the laptop is old). It also makes me feel uncomfortable, self-conscious and unfocused the few times I've tried via the Zoom mobile app. And it can be distracting to watch if there's a lot of movement in the background, e.g. student's child or pet coming up to the camera."
- "Yes. Why should I? Doesn't add anything to the lectures..."

4.3 Learning outcomes

The students were asked to assess their learning outcome from online teaching so far. The students were significantly divided. 60% reported that it was worse or of no benefit than ordinary teaching - although only a fifth said it was clearly worse or of no benefit. These results are more negative than the equivalent than those reported by Master of Law students in the first week (only 40% answered that online education during the lockdown produced inferior learning outcomes).

*Figure 4. Learning outcome: Online vs. ordinary teaching*
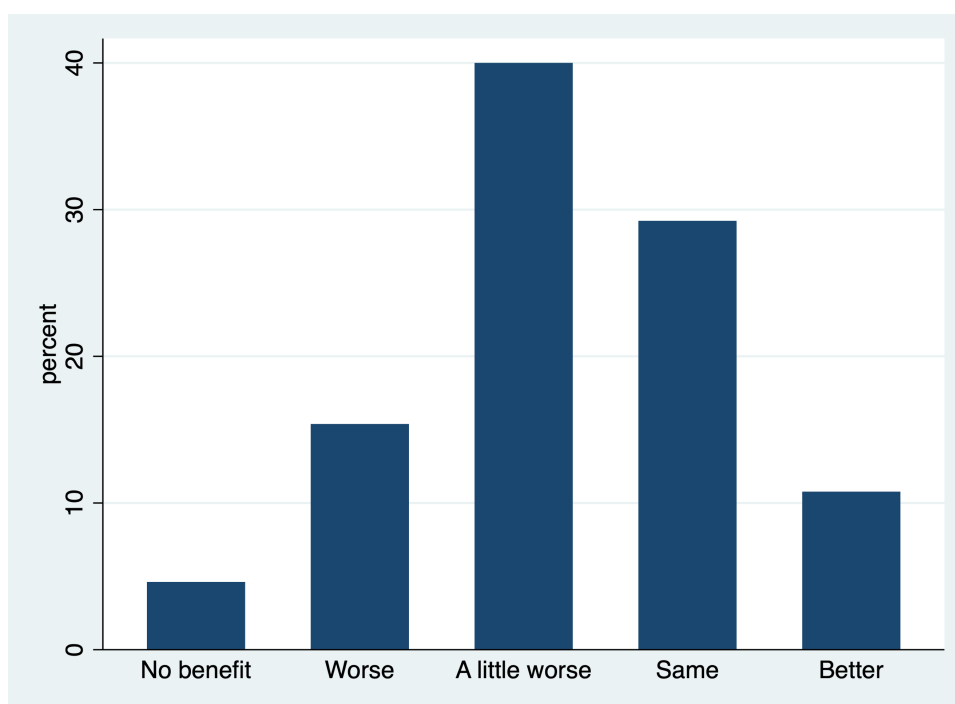
We encouraged the students to *"Feel free to give input on what you think can increase your learning outcome"*. Several responded that they want online teaching to be better structured, for example by using lecture/course outlines, active use of PowerPoint, or text explaining the content of the tuition. During class, the students have several windows open on their screen at the same time (the class itself, their own notes, Lovdata, etc.), which quickly makes for a chaotic situation. The students need more time to follow along and they need the teachers to slow down. Many students write that they want access to recordings that they can review after the actual class, when their home is quieter, and one can hear what might have been missed. The COVID-19 crisis affects different people differently. Some students have less time for study than they normally have, others have more time. Some students do not have good working conditions at home, and consequently cannot participate in classes like they did before.

4.4 Access to literature

A challenge for both students and researchers during the lockdown has been the lack of access to adequate literature and legal sources. Several libraries offer online sources, but most library resources are only accessible in physical form. The University of Oslo offers online access to some books and article series, while publishers such as Juridika and Universitetsforlaget as well as Idunn have given access to Norwegian sources online free of charge.

## Figure 5. Access to Literature and Legal Sources
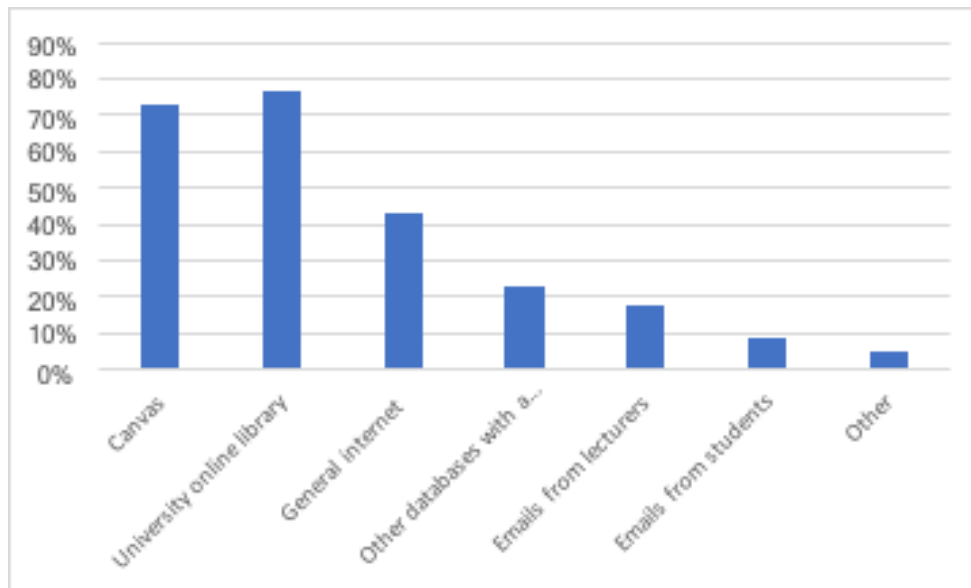
As set out in Figure 5, students reported a varying degree of access to literature, either through academic teachers posting in Canvas or the University of Oslo's online service. Others gained access through their home universities or the general internet (42%), other databases (21%), emails from lecturers (18%) and emails from students (9%). However, despite this, almost 40% reported that access to literature was a challenge: See Figure 8 below.

4.5 Equipment

Students were asked if they had sufficient technical equipment to participate in online teaching. The vast majority report that they have equipment ready, 23% reported that they lacked something and 2% said that they did not have technical equipment. The number of students who reported lacking equipment was slightly higher than Master in Laws students. See also Section 4.7 below.

Figure 6. Do you have the equipment to participate in online teaching?
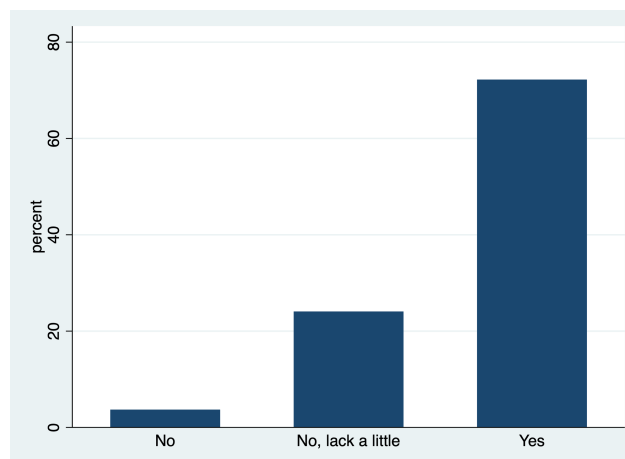
The students' answers to what they need from technical equipment can be divided into three categories. The first is *quiet surroundings suitable for learning*. The students said they need "peace and quiet", and that it is difficult to participate in Zoom courses that require both listening and talking unless it is quiet around them. The students need a space without disturbances. It is for example difficult to study and be a parent at the same time.

The second is a *good internet connection*. Many people experience an unstable internet. Some fall out of Zoom courses due to connection issues. Another challenge is broadband width – a home network can become overloaded when several people in the household need to use the internet at the same time.

The third concerns *microphones, cameras and printers*. Some students lack a microphone to actively participate in the teaching of the course. Some earbuds only have sound, with no microphone. Some students report that they do not have proper earphones. Some students experience problems with the sound on their pc. Many reported a wish for a printer.

4.6 Flow of information

Earlier research on online teaching shows that a good flow of information to students is essential for succeeding. Figure 6 shows that most students in specialist courses find that the information has been good or very good. Some students comment that there is too much information, in too many different channels and split into too many pieces. A quarter of students responded that the information is somewhat inadequate, and nearly 15% responded that the information is very inadequate or that they have not received information. The proportion of negative responses on information flow was much higher in the specialist courses than in our Master of Laws survey.
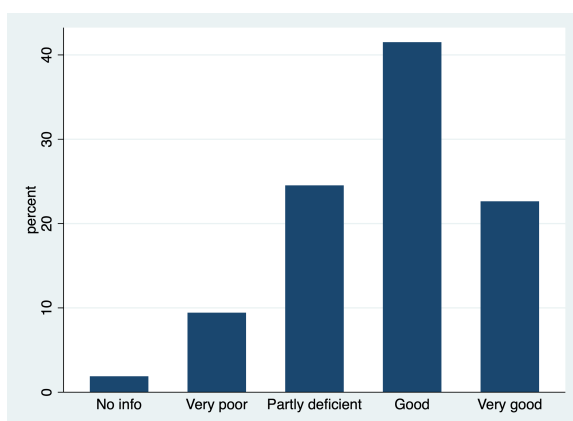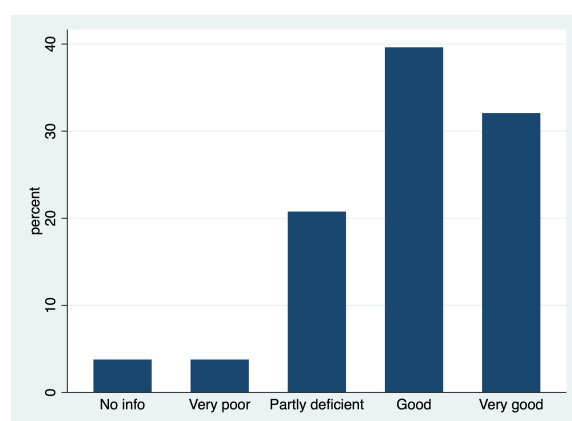
Figure 7A. Flow of information – Exams

Figure 7B. Flow of information – Teaching

Most of the answers to the question *"How do you think we can improve the information about online teaching?"* relates to the students receiving information in different channels, which is perceived as unnecessarily complex and difficult to "keep track of". Some write that the information was given too late and that they have not received the information they need to plan their daily schedule. The type of information the different course groups and courses receive varies, which is perceived by some as differential treatment, especially if this happens within the same subjects or courses. Some people want more information about exactly how the online teaching will be carried out in their subject/course. The students repeating courses/exams do not have access to Canvas and express concern about missing out on information due to this.

Excerpt 5. Students' feedback on information

- "It´s maybe even too many emails. Information is repetitive."
- "The lecturer should make clear when a recorded lecture is available and then stick to it."
- "I speak here as a student of AFIN (eGovt), and I don't know if the information to the general law students have been better. I have received few e-mails with information on what is happening. I had to look up the information myself on jus.uio.no [Faculty of Law website], example how we can access our lockers after they suddenly closed the building. For my courses, some have had few and slow messages, but with good information. Others have had many and rapid messages, but with little information. Both approaches are lacking in my opinion. The only improvement I can think of is a way to separate the messages into categories, maybe based on importance or on topic. Canvas isn't the best for announcements, it gets cluttered very fast and it's hard to find again a specific announcement if there have been made many."
- "Get the information out faster, and more directly. A lot of information has only been available by looking at websites; it could have been sent by email. Some information has been sent late. Also, some information has only been given in courses (live-streamed, so not recorded), and not per email. In one of my courses I didn't receive information because I was not in the lecture where this info was given. This has mostly been the case for info about examinations."
- "Students from other faculties taking courses at the Faculty of Law should also get emails from the law faculty when the information applies to their courses."
- "After receiving a crazy amount of e-mails from different lecturers/UiO [University of Oslo] regarding many different things and new/updated information, I wish our faculty/lecturers would have taken their time to prepare information properly before sending it out to students. I've even heard there were supposed to be sent out e-mails about this and that that I can't remember if I've received. There were just too many e-mails within a short amount of time. The department of informatics delayed their courses/assignments by 1 week and gave out proper information on each course's semester page. My boyfriend is very happy about this as he's a student there. Everything seems clear to him about his courses, exams, etc. For me, not so much. Or rather, it wasn't for a while. We asked for a Zoom-meeting with one of our lecturers/advisors to get proper information about the exam, etc. (we're being graded A-F in two courses). Apparently FINF (eGovt) is special and some of the new guidelines at the faculty's website doesn't apply to us. That's when it gets confusing with collected information on the faculty's page (and not under semester page for each course). Keep calm and update the semester page with information designed for that course."
- "Give the students direct and concrete information about the examination and the gradings. I heard about the grading become pass/fail through students taking other courses. It would have been Nice to Get an Email or a notice on Canvas about it."
- "There have been numerous changes in the system of assessment, and information about this has been lacking and delayed. There has been very little student participation in the discussions on how our courses should be assessed."
- "To be honest, I think that communication and efficiency in adaptation in Norwegian institutions are the best I have ever witnessed, in comparison to my home country and other European countries. However, everything can be improved, and yes indeed the communication and choice concerning the grading system was unclear and confusing. It would have maybe been a better to option to only send one mail / provide with one clear information once the decision is taken."

4.7 Challenges of online teaching

Students in specialist courses were asked if they faced any specific challenges in following classes online. For almost every category, the proportion who faced challenges exceeds that of Norwegian Master of Law students. Over a fifth report that equipment is a challenge – twice as high as for Norwegian law students.

Several of the major challenges are beyond the Faculty's direct control, such as poor network connectivity (36%), own illness (16%) and caring for children (5%). At the same time, the faculty (and other higher education institutions) can take this into account in the development of digital teaching and assessment. What emerges as the greatest challenges – structuring the workday (51%) and lack of contact with and feedback from teachers (13%) and fellow students (61%) – are things the faculty and other higher education institutions can make a direct contribution to improving.

In addition, we asked respondents in this survey about challenges connected specifically to residence including freedom of movement restrictions (36%), migration back to home country (14%), maintaining residence in Norway (9%) and maintaining sufficient income (30%). These proportions increase significantly when we remove the Norwegian students from the sample.

Figure 8. Challenges
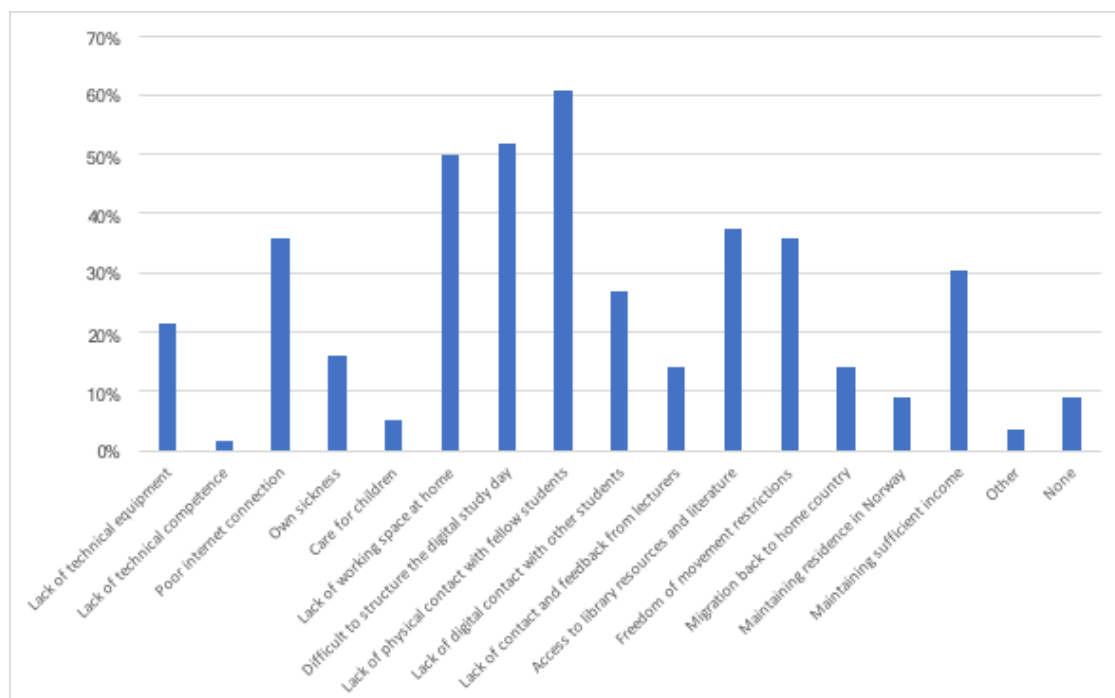
The students were also encouraged to *"Please describe other challenges you face with digital teaching"*. The overall response of the students here was that the totality of the situation that they now face is perceived as stressful and anxiety-inducing. Dealing with employment layoffs and caring for close family in the risk group is described as draining. Students write that they are uncertain about the future. The home situation creates challenges for many: it is difficult to concentrate, find peace and quiet, relax.

Some students have physical practical limitations at home and very little space, they might not have their own desk, but must study and work from a sofa or bed.

***Excerpt 6. Students' feedback on challenges***

- "My activities have come to a halt since March 29 when i contracted Covid-19 and have been in the ICU for a week."
- "The main challenge is the lack of physical contact with the lecturers. Digital equipment will not change it in full."
- "Difficulties to structure the day with the people whom I live together. I get interrupted again and again."
- "Constant noise in my family."
- "It is really difficult to stay focused on classes and be motivated to study every day without going to the University, without seeing the other students and the lecturers and having to stay home. This exceptional situation was also hard to face as an international student, since I had to go back to my home country, which was very stressful (buy a plane ticket, travelling with care to not be subject to virus etc.). The digital teaching is well organized at the UiO I think, but this situation is hard for everyone. I have problems finding a good place to study since my family is also at home."
- "Some of the literature needed for my courses are only available physical in the library, and I was not able to read before the lock-down, and therefor lack 1 part of the course."
- "I don't have a colloquia group in this course and the lecturer is not available for us to ask questions."
- "My family in Chile has had economic and health issues, so I have had to work a bit more than I was expected, and being focused on their situation. (I know these issues are not necessarily a challenge related to digital education, but since you added the "Maintaining Sufficient Income" option, I thought that those problems could be fit in the answer)."
- "Lack of motivation because I am not in study drive. Too many distractions during the day, I do not have continuity with my reading of syllabus, and I fear that I going to score badly in this semester."
- "Motivation to study, eat, sleep and chill in one room."
- "I would describe my internet connection as unstable rather than poor, which would be a constant problem rather than occasional. As I moved into a SiO flat, the amount of students using the internet at the same time can lead to varying internet speed. The biggest problem for me is with education rather than digital education, and as a person who has been present physically at the university every day since 6th of January I struggle with working from home in general. Balancing my day, getting the motivation, lack of social interaction with my fellow students etc. are making it harder for me to study."
- "Lack of possibility to print certain documents, that would have been a lot easier to read/work on if printed."
- "I don't have a place to be that has stable internet and gives me freedom to think. I have one place that i stay all day."
- "It's not easy being home with another student (boyfriend) and have Zoom-meetings. If I use the mic and talk, I'm afraid I bother my boyfriend while he's studying. We currently only have one table at home and this is the most comfortable place to sit and work on the computer. We both sit here. Also, he's cute and that distracts me."

4.8 Study situation

In the final question of the questionnaire, we asked the students to give an assessment of their overall study situation. While the answers are distributed across all categories, a little over a third of respondents rate their own study situation as poor while half reported a good or very good situation. This was more positive than the earlier Master in Laws survey and the results are somewhat surprising given that students in specialist programmes report more negatively on challenges. These results hold even when we remove students in Norwegian-speaking programmes.

Figure 8. Study situation
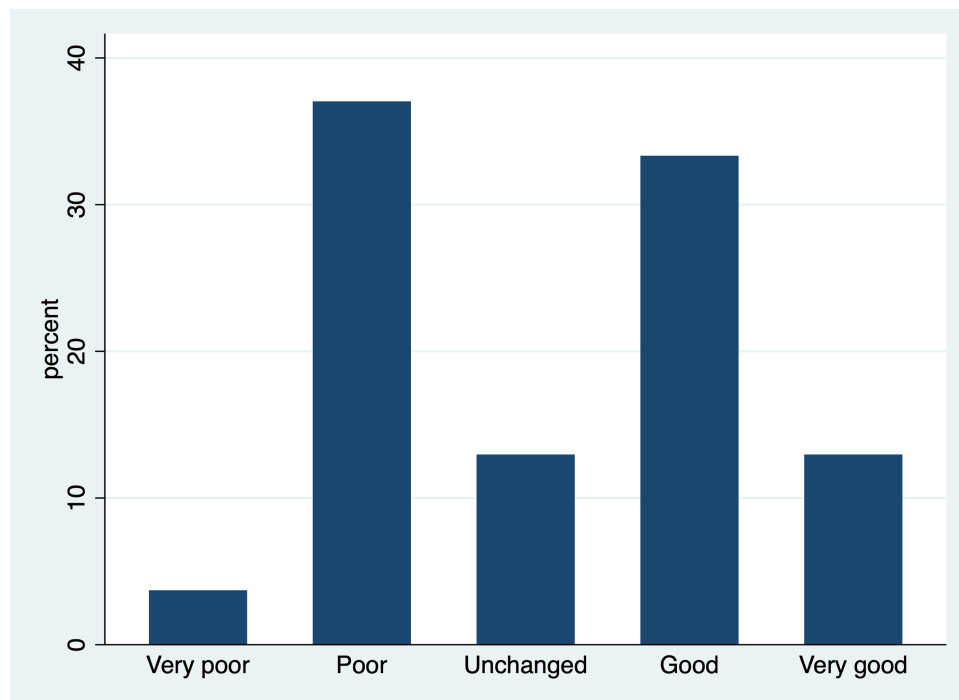
4.9 Learning Needs and Assessment

We asked the students to explain why their learning needs had changed considering online teaching, if they answered positively. The qualitative answers suggest that students adjusted their learning needs to the new form of assessment, which was changed to home exams with a pass/fail criterion. The awarding of grades (A-F) was dropped after considerable negative feedback from the majority of students, which concerned the impact of study conditions, lack of quality in teaching, and the fear of extensive cheating on exams. International students were encouraged to apply for graded exams if needed.

Some students surveyed disagreed with the decision as they wanted a graded exam to show competence, while others regarded it as neither positive nor negative. Some students pointed out that the change in social life and the transition to online teaching took a toll on their mental health. The lack of motivation was mentioned throughout the survey, as well as physical isolation. The lack of feedback from lecturers

and the lack of teacher student contact was also a worry, ultimately resulting in low motivation to study. The exam form was a particular worry for many students. Particularly oral exams and exams containing multiple elements were portrayed as difficult to take this spring.

Excerpt 7. Students' feedback on learning needs

- "I prepared myself for being graded throughout the semester and the fact that one exam is only pass/ fail changes my learning aspirations."
- "We still have A-F grading in two of my subjects, regardless of the circumstances. Seeing how learning outcome has not been the same this year, I feel that this is irresponsible. The students in my class won't have the same circumstances at home, some of them have to take care of their kids, yet we have to deliver the same 4-hour home exam."
- "Only to a small degree, because we now have a pass/fail grading system."
- "The new grading scale affects my desire to improve my grades since I am retaking subjects. But I will apply to keep the old system."
- "The new grading criteria affects retaking subjects, because I need the new one to improve a previous grade."
- "I am not sure if I understood the learning goals with this changes. Because one of my courses have only one book on syllabus list, and the form of exam question will be changed because of home exam format (where I have book)."
- "With having to stay in one place by myself, it is hard to have the motivation to keep on having the strive alone."
- "Unclear question. For my mandatory courses we have kept the normal A-F grading. We did a recent poll and found that 52 % of the students in my year is against this, but unsure what to do about it as of yet. Only one of my exams are directly affected, from doing an exam in Silurveien to digitally at home with books. I'm worried about what this means for the tasks we will be given, and how it will affect my grade."
- "What troubles me is not the new system of grading (passing or not passing), nor the examination formats as such. However, I experience incredibly little feedback from lecturers or evaluators in terms of the evaluation of our mid-term papers and term papers etc. Without a traditional grading scale, it is difficult to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the work you have delivered. With a mere "passed" and no feedback at all, one is left in utter ignorance about one's own efforts, how to strengthen and learn from your work, and how to prepare and focus individually for the final examination. In short, it is rather disappointing to be left without any or very little feedback on any of your work this semester, and it takes its toll on the learning outcome and motivation for putting in that extra work. I believe the learning outcome of the courses could have been largely enhanced by simply providing students with some sort of feedback on their work, as the grading scale has been abandoned."
- "One of my biggest worries is how we're going to have a proper (oral) group presentation online as part of the exam. Practicing will be difficult. When two or more people are talking there can be overlap (during discussions), you can't hear what's being said. It's definitely not the same as when talking in person. Also, I've never done this before. I need to learn to be comfortable about this. Another thing is we draw figures on FINF exams. Now we're supposed to draw and take pictures with our phones and upload from there. Never done before + in the middle of the exam hours. I'm stressing about this already. I need to be able to test this new way beforehand. This is not something we've had to deal with before (we used to just hand our drawings to people on the way out after the exam and they'd upload them for us)."
- "Our courses were largely digital and remotely accessible before the Covid-19-outbreak, and the examination format is largely the same. There was no need for a change in system of grading, and this could at the very least be made optional. Many of us now feel that we are forced into a sub-par system, which was unnecessary. The Dean has not considered our pleas, or our teachers have not submitted them well enough."

5. Conclusion

In this report, CELL sought to examine the experiences of international students and specialist programmes with the first month of online teaching. This would enable both short-term and long-term adjustments and contribute to the research front on online teaching. While the overall number of responses was not high, we need to be cautious about making exhaustive conclusions based on the answers. However, the answers provide valuable and relevant insights which can form the basis for new policies and routines.

The principal conclusion in the report is that the experience of students with the COVID-19 lockdown and the Faculty's response varied greatly – some encountering few challenges, others many. There is also evidence that students in these programmes have experienced greater challenges than students in the dominant Master of Laws – even if they are slightly more positive about their study situation. Moreover, the majority answered that their learning outcome was a little worse or worse compared with ordinary teaching. This is a greater proportion than CELL found for Master of Laws students.

To be sure, there are many positive findings in the survey. The vast majority of students have the equipment to follow online teaching, and a substantial majority were mostly satisfied with the flow of information around online teaching. Although, a high proportion – 21% – reported lack of technical equipment as a challenge. Almost all were offered and engaged in online forms of tuition. Many were grateful for the teaching made available. Most students indicate that they have been given the opportunity to be active in the tutoring; to ask questions, discuss with the lecturer and have a discussion with fellow students during real-time courses. Some of the students have participated in written discussions and collaboration, and/or collaborated on an assignment with fellow students.

Nonetheless, findings from this study also show potential for improvement, and several of the findings point to aspects supported by the research in this field.

A minority experienced only one or no interactive forms of online teaching. Lectures are considered less engaging and there was less contact with teachers and fellow students. Many expressed a preference for the division of the tutoring into smaller groups and an increase in possibilities to have an opportunity to ask the course teacher questions and obtain feedback on submitted work. Social interaction can benefit the understanding of the course material and improve engaged activity. Personal contact between the student and the teacher cannot be underestimated in online teaching, where both parties at times can find it difficult to interact on a screen.

While a large majority believe that they have received enough information, some thought it was too little and many thought the information was somewhat disorderly and arrived in too many channels. Several students noted that most of the information was directed mostly to students in the Master of Laws and that the problems of communication with students has been a challenge across Europe. Almost a fifth in the ESN (2020) Erasmus survey report them.[8]

A minority of students in the specialist programmes experienced systematic challenges with online teaching due to the COVID-19 lockdowns, which requires more active measures to improve their study situation; those who care for children, lack equipment, have challenges related to illness, have a poor internet connection and do not have an adequate workplace at home. Moreover, not all students could access relevant literature.

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[8] Such a tendency has also been witnessed with foreigners in the broader community as a whole. For example, various migrant groups in Oslo Norway did not have information available in their own language and had to create their own channels of information regarding COVID-19 (Fransson, 2020).

The students are deeply divided about whether education needs have changed in relation to the new forms of assessment. A minority commented that greater considerations should be taken in connection with the transition to home exams. However, the responses indicate that the Faculty has a real opportunity to contribute to improvements, for example by structuring the academic day, better contact with lecturers and fellow students.

An additional theme is the expression of frustration by students in the specialist programmes over their lack of participation in decision-making. Their student representatives are not formally included in formal decision processes at the Oslo Law Faculty, and most of the discussions were conducted in Norwegian. Many students comment that they found out about decisions made by the institution – for example on grading – long after they were made. Views were divided with some students wanting the option to obtain grades while some in courses with grades noted the difficulty of doing exams under current conditions at home.

Our survey did not address the issue of discrimination based on nationality and ethnicity. However, other reports have done so and the risk of discrimination for both international students and students with a minority background needs to be addressed. As cited in the Erasmus Survey, discussed in section 3, up to a quarter of students from some states/regions reported discrimination in the COVID-19 lockdown period (ESN, 2020:20). In addition, in a new survey, a quarter of students with minority background at the three law faculties in Norway report that they are experiencing discrimination – by both other students and to a lesser extent faculty members (Juristforbundet, 2020). Greater awareness of discrimination and appropriate institutional responses are therefore required, which should be taken into account when seeking to accommodate international students.

6. Recommendations

In the time to come, international and Norwegian students in specialist programmes will continue to face diverse difficulties. It is of vast importance that both faculties and academic teachers provide sufficient support to these students, with the challenges in this report in mind. Moreover, many higher educational institutions have cancelled exchange and mobility opportunities for their international and Norwegian students for the coming fall (Ulvin, 2020) although some internal European mobility is now possible.

<u>To faculties and study administration</u>

1. Make sure that all students can be offered online education in an adequate manner. International and other students who can only participate in online teaching should be secured education that is sufficiently varied and interactive.

2. Ensure that the voices of international students and other students in specialist programmes are heard in decision-making processes. The Faculty should commence a dialogue with the JSU (Law Student's Society) on how student representation from specialist programmes can be secured in all formal decision-making organs. Provide secure and anonymous platforms for students to give feedback, and aim to provide clear information while doing so.

3. Ensure a detailed and adequate flow of information in a limited number of channels and as far as possible in both Norwegian and English. Coordinate institutionally so that students do not receive conflicting or different messages across and between programmes. Within the limits of the above, provide information as soon as it is available and create an open dialogue with the students. Ensure that students enrolled in individual courses also receive information.

4. Ensure – as far as possible – that students can participate in everyday online learning with the necessary equipment, and that teaching and assessment take into account students whose home offices or situation is not suitable, especially during limited access to study desks and any future lockdown. Special consideration should be given to international students who are hindered by a lack of technology or domestic legal restrictions in accessing the University's communication forums.

5. Provide guidance to teachers and students in the use of online study and teaching tools so they can make the most of their functionality. This guidance should be concise and clear and given in the main platforms used for communication.

6. Make sure teachers have enough time to prepare good online tutoring that can involve lessening the strain on other fronts, access to educational resources and teaching assistants, or extra hours in the hourly accounts during the start-up phase. Provide teachers with the latitude to plan forms of assessment that correspond with the online tutoring that is given. There should be a clear alignment between the course material and the form of assessment if there is no continuous feedback on work.

7. Ensure – as far as possible - that the institution provides specifically tailored guidance to international students. This should include migration challenges and study completion. Provide social measures to increase the mental wellbeing of the students and provide information about the students' rights. International students who face finishing their degree online, or have to return to Norway, should be accommodated and supported in a manner that takes account of their specific needs. Continual financial reimbursements and grants should be considered.

To academic teachers:

1. Offer real-time/synchronous teaching as part of the teaching. Students report greater learning outcomes and it reduces social isolation, which especially is a challenge for international students – whether in Norway or now overseas.

2. Structure your digital teaching in a plain and clear manner, which is important when text becomes a dominant form of communication and many students in international programmes are not native English speakers. Others may have disabilities. When planning a lecture or course you should also consider dividing the sessions into less comprehensive and more specific activities. Communicate where you are in your presentation, and when you move on to a new topic.

3. Vary the teaching plan between recordings, real-time lectures and interactive parts to improve interactivity. If classes are given in a smaller group, the group can be divided and given different learning activities which aid the students to engage in discussion. You can for example:
   a. Split into smaller discussion groups.
   b. Provide feedback on submitted text.
   c. Prepare quizzes and use tools like Mentimeter, Kahoot and Polling in Zoom.
   d. Create space for interactivity during the teaching session by recording short videos or delivering other teaching materials that the students can use to prepare themselves in advance. This is often referred to as the methodology of flipped classroom.
   e. Set aside time to discuss questions from the students in plenum.
   f. Facilitate study group work, divide into smaller groups during lectures/courses where you encourage continuing the dialogue after class.

5. Ask for feedback from the students on how they experience online teaching and what should be adjusted. For example, Zoom has built-in functionality for this (polling). As the lack of personal contact can inhibit feedback, it is important to create a culture for interaction.

6. Facilitate questions in writing. Many students find it difficult to verbally ask questions in a digital space and feel far more secure if they can do it in written form. This continues from the importance of understanding the position of the student, who more than often have questions they feel insecure to ask in a larger crowd.
   a. If you cannot answer questions in the chat feature in real time, answers can be posted in Canvas afterwards.
   b. Offer a "question time" either at the end of a tutorial series or at the start of a tutorial.

7. Assess your teaching plan compared to any changes to the form of assessment.
   a. Home exams are not the same as normal exams; the form requires both training and preparation.
   b. Create assignments that allow students to practise the same skills and work with the same type of knowledge required for the exam.
   c. Explain – as far as possible – what the new form of examination will look like and how the tutoring is designed to prepare for the exam.

8. Seek help if you do not master the basic functions of the relevant tools. Most institutions offer colleague guidance, a technical helpdesk, and have a specialist responsible for digital teaching and courses. There are also many open resources and Facebook groups where you can ask questions of others in the higher education sector and participate in real-time courses/tutorials.[9]

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[9] H. Strand, 'Her finner du hjelp og gode tips for digital undervisning', *Khrono*, 15 March 2020.

9. Aim to create a platform for discussion and high-quality learning and interaction. Focus on improving the bond between teachers and students, based on an understanding of the students social, economic and mental and physical wellbeing. Create a line of open communication and transparency to improve understanding between both parties.

To students:

1. Structure your daily schedule as far as possible. Life in lockdown, isolation or overseas can lead to mental and physical challenges. Create a designated plan for the day, where you assign separate times dedicated for studies, scheduled digital classes and collaborations, and when to rest. Create a clear separation between work and free time and aim to create a physical space where no work is done.

2. Participate as actively as you can in class. Online teaching can lead to passive learning, but should be perceived as ordinary course work in the sense that normal preparations are required and expected. Both fellow students and teachers benefit from active discussions and debates, both regarding learning outcome and a pleasant social experience.

3. Use the digital platforms and initiate digital collaboration with fellow students. You should contact a counsellor or the teacher if this is difficult due to the enrolment in a new course or lecture series. You can for example:
   a. Use Zoom for a real-time study group
   b. Collaborative writing of assignments in Teams
   c. Discuss together on chat in Canvas and Teams.
   d. If the teacher facilitates digital study group exercises, participate in these.

4. Visit the homepage of your own institution (e.g. UiO and the Faculty of Law) to find information and tutorials on technological services and support. The institutions have IT support for students. Moreover, several institutions have local resources for technical guidance and assistance.

5. Participate in student organisations and evaluations in order to have your voice heard. If you need to, please contact the faculty for technical assistance.

6. Give feedback to teachers if something is not working. Online teaching is a new way of teaching: we rely on your constructive feedback. Understanding that both teachers and students face new difficulties due to the transformation to digital education, will lead to a more constructive base for change.

7. Contact your institution for assistance regarding your study plan. This is of importance if you are an international student studying in an international programme in Norway. The respective universities have resources available to aid you with your questions regarding everything from exams to if you will be able to return to finish your programme. They have dedicated staff who are ready to assist. They can aid with everything from economic grants or imbursements to mental health, or even where to find your online classes.

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