

## What it is like to be in college during a pandemic

The worst part of going to college during a pandemic is coming in as a freshman. During the first semester, I only got to spend a week on-campus classes before we closed down.

It was our introduction week, with meeting up with our potential classmates, but as soon as the college issued a statement requiring only online courses to all students, I found it difficult to focus on my classwork due to my surroundings.

Another thing that made me uncomfortable when we went back was that there was no place to eat lunch on the main campus. My classes always ran through lunchtime, so I would normally end up eating in the halls. Luckily it was opened towards the later half of that semester.

Because of this most of my teachers, there did virtual meetings or just left work for us to complete independently during the week. You really need to be self-motivated in order to do well in these sorts of classes. I know that I can always email my professors, but it is always better to be there in person to actually hear it from them. It is also much easier when you are an auditory learner like I am. One thing that I liked that one of my professors did was recording her lectures. This allowed me to go back and replay her lesson to help me better understand it.

Another challenge that comes from going to school during a pandemic is group assignments. In fact, this hit me the hardest for group assignments. It's hard to work with a person on an assignment and it makes it even more difficult if I don't even know who they are. Once we moved back to in-person learning one thing that I always tried to stay mindful of was other people's personal space. This always made it harder for me to hear my peers during group discussions. One accommodation that my teacher made was letting us bring headphones to school and joining with our groups in zoom breakout rooms during class.

One thing that I honestly like was the addition of face coverings. This allowed me and many other students to express our emotions by having custom face coverings as well as being able to be safe around people. During the cold seasons, it also provides some warmth to my face. I also was concerned about how strict the university was to ensure the safety of the students during the pandemic. Such as enforcing all students to wear face-covering if not they will not be allowed in the classroom and even the campus depending on the location.

