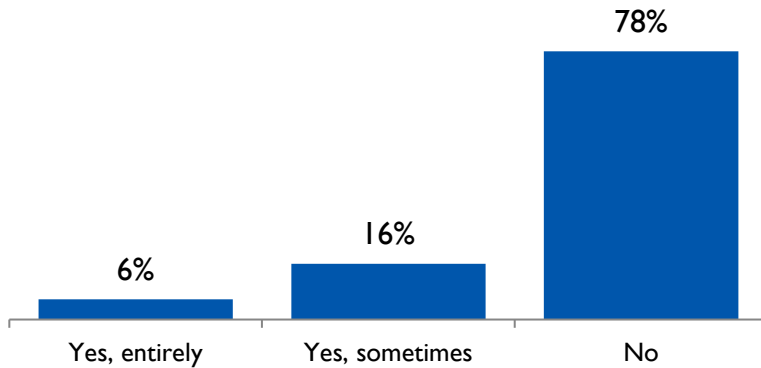




September 2020 Flash Feedback Results: Are you still working from home (or were you ever)?

Did you work from home prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?

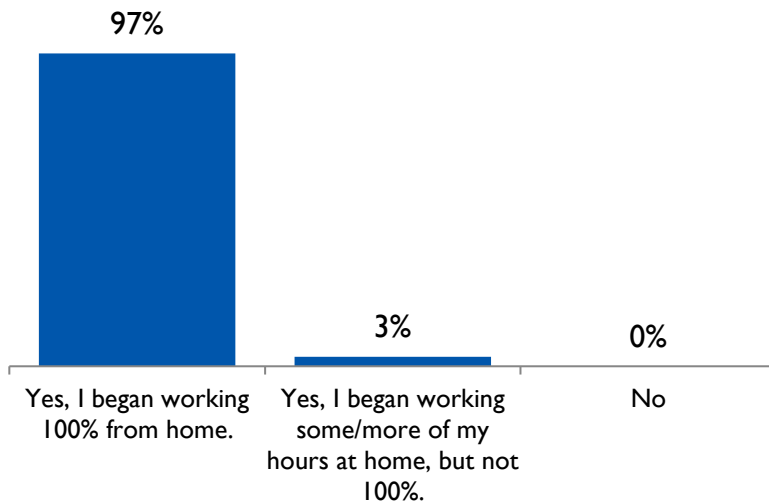
(Please check all that apply)



n=70

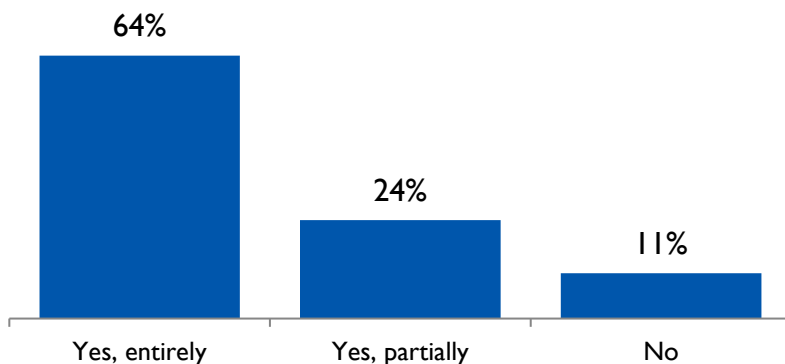
Did you begin a work from home schedule at any time during the pandemic?

(Please check all that apply)

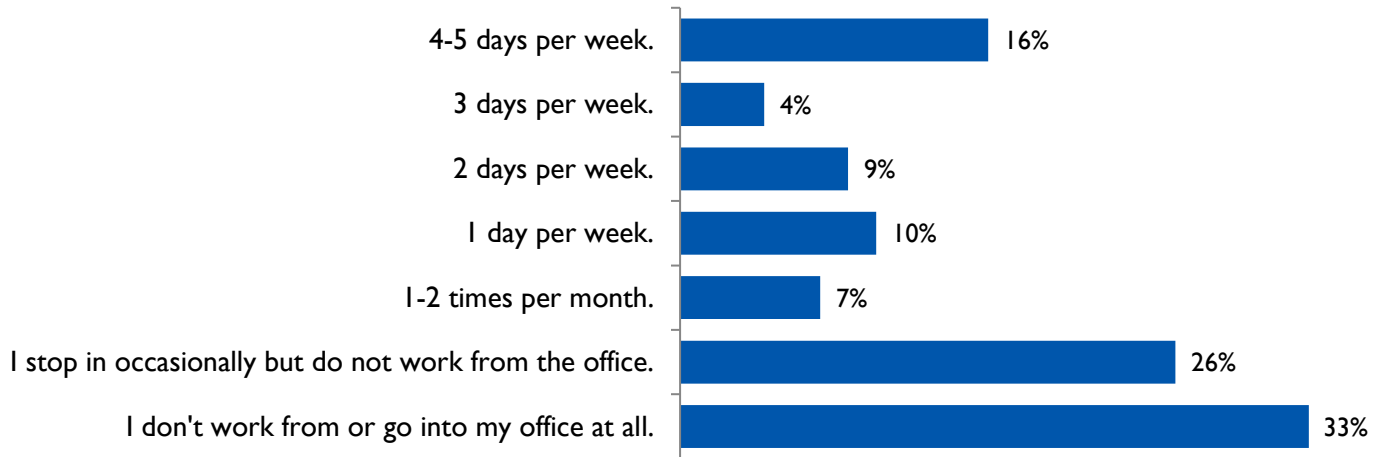


Are you currently working from home?

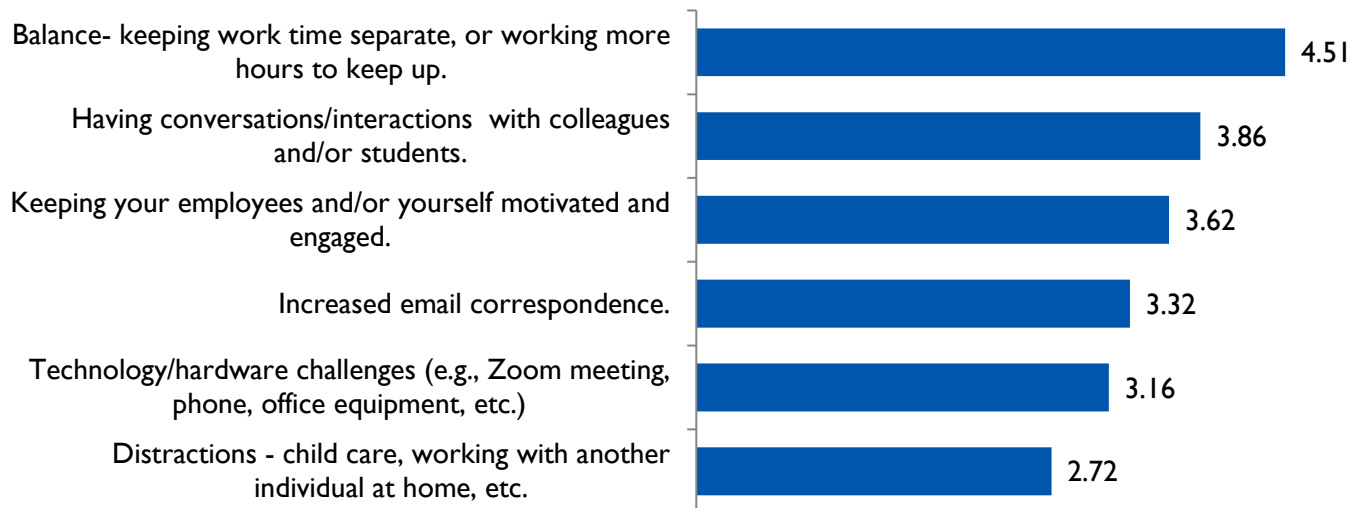
(survey results from September 2-14, 2020)



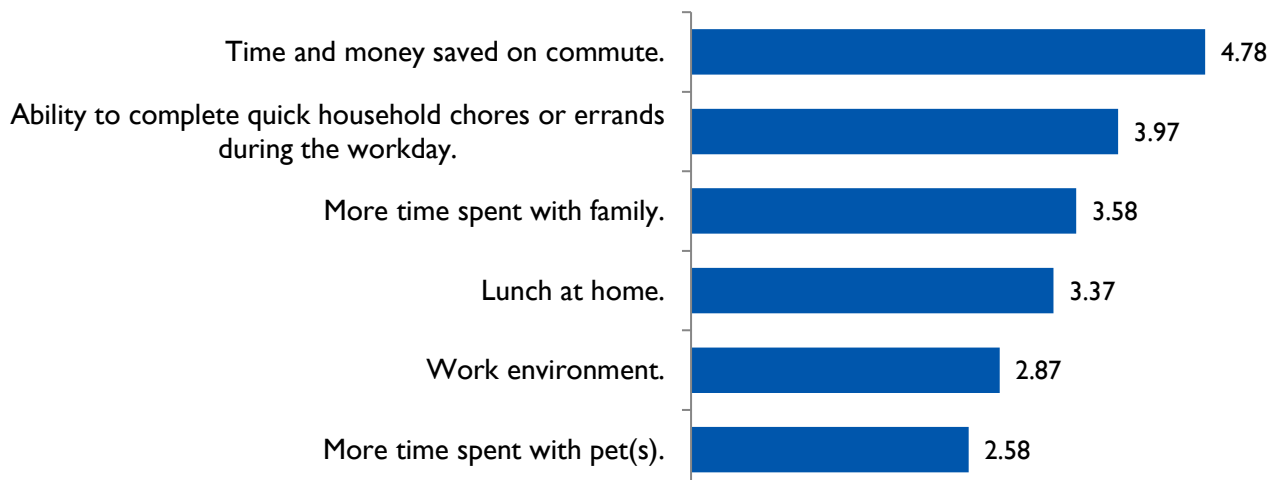
How much of your work is currently completed at the office? (select the answer that matches most closely)



What are the biggest challenges you face working from home? (Please rank-order, with most significant at the top)



What do you like best about working from home? (Please rank order, with most significant at the top.)



What other challenges do you face that are not listed above?

- An overwhelming feeling that I am failing at EVERYTHING. Because I am being pulled in so many different directions at the same time (because there are no boundaries anymore), I feel like I am doing a mediocre job at best. My kids want to spend time with me but I can't because I'm working but I can't focus on work because of my kids.
- As a commuter cyclist, working from home diminished the amount of exercise that going to campus naturally provided, and I missed it while I was at home.
- Cabin fever - finding it to be mentally difficult to stay in my apartment so much (I live in a one bedroom in a large city).
- Concentration being down due to worries about family who are sick.
- Difficulties receiving mail (transcripts).
- Expectation that cameras must be on, which is inconsiderate.
- Having functional space to work from home - What I thought would be a temporary setup has become semi-permanent. I never really had a designated office space in my home and don't have much space to work with! Making do with a smaller desk, atypical desk chair, etc. has worked out so far but not the most ideal.
- Helped keep my teenager on task while he was taking an online summer math course. That while doing my own recruiting calls and emails from home was incredibly challenging.
- I do not have a designated office space at home. I do not have office furniture and what I have is subpar. I miss the two additional monitors I have in the office.
- I live alone which presents unique challenges compared to people with family. I do feel lonely and miss my colleagues and the in-person interaction going in to the office provided.
- I love working from home, I feel as if I am doing as well or better work now.
- It takes longer to accomplish some things. I can't spontaneously gather a group of colleagues to work through a problem.
- Isolation.
- Letting my dog and two cats get so spoiled by me being at home all the time that it will break her heart when I have to start going back to the office.
- Miss having in person conversations with co-workers; miss happy hours with co-workers.
- Misunderstandings due to computer-mediated communication limitations and tempers flaring due to everyone's increased stress.
- My internet is not as stable at home compared to my office which can make zoom meetings challenging.
- My University is at a moment of significant discontent with upper leadership. I worry that the response has been less effective because faculty and staff aren't on campus interacting in person.
- Not having a designated home office is a challenge as my "office" is in my kitchen which has less than ideal seating for long periods of time.
- Not having access to hard copy files or documents, or not having things digitized before we shut down in-person work arrangements.
- Not having readily accessible office supplies (pens, notebooks, post-it notes, etc.).
- online events and personalizing the virtual visit experience, flexing my schedule
- Recruiting students virtually.
- Remote desktop connection isn't always reliable.
- Since I did not have a desk and desk chair, I had continuous neck and back pain.
- Started the job 8 days before the work from home started, so getting to know my colleagues has been tough when the only interaction I have is over zoom.
- Student Support for international students and trying to come to Canada with the borders closed, or the desire of students to maintain eligibility for post-graduation work permit upon completion of our short-term programs when it seemed immigration rules were changing on a minute by minute basis.
- Takes longer to get some things done. Some offices across campus are not very responsive to emails and no one is there to answer their phone.
- Tech challenges I don't have a printer at home.
- Too easy access to food :-)
- Two challenges are not meeting enrollment goals for the next 1-2 years, and an underlying feeling like my job is insecure.
- Utility bills have gone up significantly.
- Work spaces at home not comfortable. Internet spotty at times, with others family members also working from home. Concern about my background and appearance during zoom meetings.
- Zoom fatigue - Need new/creative ways to engage prospective students besides Zoom events

What else do you enjoy about working from home that was not listed above?

- Almost none of those are relevant to me at all. (I didn't commute, don't live with family, or do chores during the workday, and lunch at home - really?) What I like best is fewer distractions from coworkers/walk-ins/phone calls.
- Being able to "work" virtually anywhere...not just at home.
- Being outside of a toxic team and work environment.
- Can dress for my day, and have flexibility in my attire.
- Casual attire.
- Change of scenery. I can work in different rooms or sometimes outside. I take more short breaks to walk the dog or get fresh air.
- Comfort - Ability to wear casual clothes! Somehow makes me feel less restricted and more focused with work.
- Comfy clothing!
- FINALLY having a window that is next to my desk so I can have a connection to the outside world while I work.
- Flexibility with work hours.
- Flexible work hours - my work days start earlier at home than when I commute to office.
- Getting outside for a quick walk or task during the day helps me mentally and physically.
- Giving people insight into my "personal" space. Sometimes I'm not as giving about my home life, so this forced me to be a bit more human!
- I accomplish more of my tasks because I have few, if any, interruptions.
- I have better wi-fi at home!
- I am a more introverted person, so I can focus a lot more on my work when I am at home. Though I have never worked from home before now, and honestly was very skeptical about how focused I would be, I feel like I am more productive than ever, and actually am able to feel more work/life balance than I have for over 20 years.
- I could get more sleep!
- I could wear my yoga pants and cozy socks.
- I enjoy my dog sleeping in the room where I work. My cats visit occasionally, too. My dog is a 14 year old Bulldog with health issues, so it is nice to be home with her where I can be sure she is okay. My kids are adults and don't live at home, so I don't have to worry about them.
- I enjoyed connecting with colleagues at other colleges through NYGAP virtual lunches once a month. Meeting helped me get an idea of what was going on elsewhere, and get a larger sense of community. A web lunch would not have been feasible in my college office which I share with two other people.
- I enjoyed staying in comfortable clothing all day.
- I enjoyed the flexibility, and not having to dress up every day - loved wearing comfortable clothes to "work."
- I have a condition that causes occasional chronic pain, and it was so nice not feeling any pressure to be in the office on days I wasn't feeling well.
- I really enjoy not having to dress up every day, though I do look nice for meetings or other Zoom interactions.
- If you're a commuter cyclist, rainy days cost you time-wise, especially if you get caught in a downpour. Working from home dispenses with that problem entirely.
- Just the flexibility - I don't necessarily have to be sitting in front of my computer for 8 straight hours. I can flex time and if I need to check in super early in the morning or late in the evening I can, and don't mind because the day is a bit more fluid.
- Less laundry and dry cleaning!
- Less time/money spent on: makeup, professional clothes.
- Lunch naps if needed.
- More flexibility with work hours (earlier or later shifts), ability to schedule multiple info sessions without the challenge of finding space and dealing with the physical drain.
- No commute.
- No need to spend money or time on work clothes and make-up.
- No pressure to look a certain way (make-up free, comfortable clothes, etc.) was great for my mental health!
- Not having constant interruptions.
- Not fighting for parking spots, not walking across parking lots during rainstorms.
- Not having to plan what to bring for lunch, remembering to bring it, taking empty containers home.
- Pajama dress code!
- Saved a ton of \$\$ (not going out for lunches, happy hours, etc.).
- Saving an hour of commuting each day was also a huge advantage! I will miss working from home!
- Shorten commute time. I can sleep until 7:00 am and still make all my zoom meetings on time.
- We have been able to increase our use of technology that otherwise we wouldn't have considered prior to the pandemic.
- Wearing casual clothes and no makeup!

Please share work-from-home strategies you use, comments about your current working environment, or work-from-home stories (funny or otherwise!).

- A good chair, proper monitor height and decent lighting are essential. Having pets nearby and taking breaks to go outside, if even for 5 minutes, helps as well.
- Be sure your desk/chair/computer are set up ergonomically. When I started working at home I had neck, back, and hip/back leg pains from sitting for long periods with equipment not adjusted for the right height to work well. Schedule social check-ins with co-workers. Keep your personal connection with them. Schedule breaks into your day - even if you just walk around the block. Set a cut-off time and put your work away!
- Daily Zoom meetings with my colleagues. We use Teams chat a lot more for fun and work-related. I can actually reach more places in the US (and Canada) working from home. We sometimes have webinar watch parties - we each watch a webinar and then in a social setting share with the team on Zoom what we learned.
- Daughter teaches special ed pre-k and her fun Fridays are sometimes fun. Lots of dancing, singing and theme Friday's. Best day was winter in the summer on a day with 90 degree temperatures.
- Flexibility is very valuable, from early morning work (out of bed into the "office") to multi-tasking home and work responsibilities.
- Funny Stories: I was in a Zoom departmental staff meeting and my English Bulldog (Gertie) was sleeping next to my desk on the floor. All of the sudden, somebody stopped the meeting and asked if there was somebody sawing down a tree outside of a window. I realized it was my dog snoring! (She is really loud when she gets going!) I laughed and said, Nope, Just Gertie! We all had a really good laugh and our meeting continued on! I made sure to mute myself when I wasn't talking after that! Another time when I was doing a mock interview with a prospective student, I closed the door so Gertie wouldn't be in my office and start snoring in the middle of it. About 10 minutes in, I heard her outside of my door, and she started head butting the door to try to knock the latch open. The latch doesn't work super well on my office door, and after three head butts, she popped my office door open and trotted in, laid down, and within one minute, was snoring loudly. I apologized to the student, she said it was no big deal and laughed about it, and we finished up. I do think I'll be purchasing a kiddie gate to put at the bottom of the stairs on real interview days in the future, so Gertie can't climb the stairs and come into the office on those days!
- Funny story: I was in a Zoom meeting when my dog decided to throw up on the carpet beside me. I was the speaker at that time, so everyone got to watch and hear my panicked ""NoNONO!!"" Nothing spices up a dull meeting like that! At least people got a laugh...
- Having my dog "Zoom-bomb" a staff meeting every now and then certainly brings a smile to everyone's face! On a serious note, making sure to "shut it down" when the business day ends (i.e. separate work and home life).
- Honor your mental sanity and LOG OFF as if you're leaving work. No need to be "on" at all hours (not healthy).
- I am sure others will give the same advice, but having a designated desk/workspace that is NOT in my bedroom is mentally very helpful. Can't people learn how to mute themselves on group calls? Gosh.
- I am the type of person who is most comfortable when I know what to expect and what is expected so these last several months have been especially challenging for me.
- I enjoy moving my desk around every once in a while, so I feel refreshed. I enjoy the limited interruptions but I sure do miss talking books with colleagues when I need a break.
- I feel that I am successful at home because I have a separate room with a door to go to and feel as if I am "at work" away from distractions and others in my home. And, when I want to socialize with family or take a break, I can leave the room.
- I have a small house so to separate work from personal life I try to shut my office door and try to not go back in when I am not "on the clock."
- I hoped to create a standing desk at home (unavailable with my office set up), but my house shoes didn't provide enough support!!
- I make it a point to eat lunch away from my desk/computer - even if it's just for 10-15 minutes. This is something I was not able to do very often when I worked in the office.
- I run up and down my hallway every hour when my Fitbit yells at me to move. It takes a short time. I wouldn't be able to do this in my public office :-)
- I try to dress professionally to put myself in a work mindset and then I work from my kitchen table. It is my designated workspace which helps me set boundaries to not be working all day and night.
- I'm fortunate enough to live close to a major park/forest and UBC here in Vancouver, so have great access to trails for walks and runs. I'm also fortunate that my supervisors have said that our mental health is as important as the work, so to take the time to get out and away from the work computer. That's helped during the previous months with the stressful work. As a grad program team, 3 of us live close enough to now schedule walks in the forest or are looking to have socially distant meetings in person at someone's house so it doesn't feel as terrible as if I was working from home alone.

Please share work-from-home strategies you use, comments about your current working environment, or work-from-home stories (funny or otherwise!) (continued)

- It's easy to work more hours at home because you may not have someone at home to pace your work. Take period breaks. Get dressed each day as if you were going into the office. Walk at lunch time. Keep in touch with coworkers and colleagues at other colleges - phone or Zoom.
- I've been able to incorporate exercise in a really great way. Instead of having to get up way too early, I schedule time for it later in the morning after I've started work.
- Made a list and kept to the list of things to accomplish that day.
- My cat is officially spoiled and lets you know when you are not paying enough attention! Besides that, it is important to have a designated space to work. With another family member also working from home, we need separate spaces and will soon need a separate space once school age children start. In the beginning it was hard to put a start and stop time to the work day. It is important to do so and we now are in the swing of things! I do like my short commute :)"
- My staff and I use Google chat first thing in the morning to greet each other, so we all know each other is up and working. We also chat all the time throughout the day. We didn't use to use the chat feature much, but we do all the time now. We have met a few times in a park for a picnic (Bring your own) lunch or an afternoon ice cream break, where we all sit at a different picnic tables and social distance. I am finding the I absolutely do love working from home, but I do love seeing my staff in person when we get the opportunity!
- One Zoom meeting the person pictured to my right had a black and white cat sit on him. You could see most of the cat as he pet her during the lunch meeting. My black cat jumped onto my desk and was almost completely out of the camera view - but my cat's tail was swishing on the right side of my screen. It looked like I had the other person's cat's tail in my view. It made us all laugh when I discovered that the same view was enjoyed by other Zoom callers who were amused at the two-screen cat.
- Scheduling breaks has become essential for me otherwise I'll roll through the whole work day without any serious breaks for lunch, exercise, etc.
- The animals are definitely happy! They are now my emotional support babies. The cat is especially perceptive about showing up when it's time for Zoom.
- The top half of my wardrobe is business casual...the bottom half -> casual...very casual. :-)
- Unanimously, my staff felt happier while working from home. We had great results: less leave-time used, increases in productivity, more enjoyable staff meetings, and more! Two people have since signed telecommuting agreements to continue working remotely indefinitely. Only student-facing employees returned to my department.
- We have a weekly game with our immediate team on Fridays during lunch, it is a moment to get everyone together for something fun, and team building in a remote environment.
- Working from home is nerve-wracking. Like the day I was on a Zoom meeting with my faculty leadership team and had to get up and run through the house to find that my youngest son was teaching his little sister how to light matches next to all of our flammables in the garage. SMH...at least they were bonding!
- Working from home with children has been the hardest time in my career! It's hard to keep it all together. I do try to have a positive outlook though, knowing that this isn't permanent and I get to see my kids more than normal. Thank you for hosting this survey!
- Zoom chat has been an amazing tool. 1 on 1 Zoom meeting have worked well for the team, too. Challenging business as usual and not trying to replicate the office at home has been a good strategy to reduce stress.