

# Learn!Bio Study 3: Questionnaire

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## Participant Information Sheet

### Principal researcher

*[X] - modified for publication*

### Background

We're living in unprecedented times, with every aspect of society being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Education is no exception. In May 2020, UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) (2020) reported that over 91% of the world's student population – a total of 1,576,021,818 learners across 188 countries and in all sectors – were affected in spring 2020 by the closure of educational institutions as part of a broader 'lockdown' strategy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many institutions had to rush their teaching online, at an unprecedented scale. Student assessment has also been affected, with many exams cancelled, and others moved online, creating uncertainty for all involved. As we move through the pandemic, teaching and learning continues to adapt to this changing environment.

### Invitation

I am inviting you to a time-limited longitudinal study, conducted online & anonymously, which will evaluate the effects of the changing teaching and learning on undergraduate students at Edge Hill University's Biology department.

The return to on-campus face-to-face sessions is welcome to some, but a time of heightened anxiety and concern for others. The last 2 years have been very different from what you might have expected or dreamed of as an undergraduate student.

This study will evaluate students' perceptions of the changing learning approaches: What method works? Is it most suitable for biology education? Does it prepare for a biology career? How do you perceive your peer-to-peer community feeling? Is there a place for remote access to learning going forward? We have so many questions.

- Time-limited means this study will run only this academic year 2021/22
- Longitudinal means it observes several events in a participant's life i.e., this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> study since the start of the pandemic.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

Purpose of this study is to evaluate Biology undergraduate students' perception on the changing teaching and learning approaches. We want to provide you with the best and most enjoyable education possible. To do this we need your help with feedback.

### **Why have I been invited?**

This invite has been sent to all students currently enrolled on a biology undergraduate programme (levels 4-6) at Edge Hill University.

### **Consent**

#### ***This is an anonymised study***

This study will be conducted online using the Edge Hill University approved survey software "onlinesurveys.ac.uk". Onlinesurveys is an UK-based company and adheres to the UK national data protection regulations, both the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

#### **This study will be conducted in an entirely anonymised fashion – *what does this mean for you?***

- You will be sent an email to your Edge Hill University email address with a link to enter the survey.
- You can then commence the survey in your own time - your name or email address will NEVER be traced, tracked, or collected.

- If you have doubts or if you do not wish to participate, you can click “no” and you will leave the study. No harm done.

The first page of the survey summarises this Participant Information Sheet. If you agree with the study by clicking “yes” on the first survey page; you will then enter the main survey.

**Please note:** This is an anonymised study. No names will be asked, no names or email addresses will be recorded. No paper-based consent forms will be provided or collected. The study team will not know if you have participated or not.

### **Can I withdraw consent?**

This is an anonymised study. Once you have submitted your survey, it cannot be identified as yours anymore. You can then not withdraw your consent. This is a longitudinal study. There will be 3-4 individual surveys, they are not linked or associated to each other. Each survey needs your new consent. If you are unhappy with how this study is conducted, you can decide not to participate in the following surveys.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

***This is an anonymised study.***

This study will ask about your study experiences, module and programme specific questions, your feedback on teaching styles and access to learning and learning content. I am also interested to understand how the peer-to-peer community might change with the changing learning environment.

Questions will be general and will NEVER interfere with your privacy rights or your right to confidentiality.

In rare cases some questions required for statistical analysis might interfere with your privacy rights, this is related to the small size of our department. For example, you might be the only student on a specific course that has childcare\*.

### **Why should this be a problem?**

We are a close-knit department, and it might be that from these facts alone the research

team will know who this student is. Just imagine this is you. The survey asks some very critical questions about the department's teaching (we want you to be critical). If you feel you could be identified, you might not be as straightforward with your answers as you could. This would be sad for us. We don't want you to feel intimidated.

The survey is built in a fashion that it will alert you if you are at risk to self-identify yourself\*. It will give you then the chance to modify your answer:

- you can change some or all to N/A, so you cannot be identified
- You can choose to leave all answers as they are, and you might then be identified; Although, this is not our aim.

Only the study team will have access to the so-called "raw data" of this study. "Raw-data" is the unprocessed data in a study, which is still to be analysed. This raw data will NEVER be shared with anyone from outside the department and will NEVER be published. The study team only includes personnel from the biology department.

\*this algorithm is not based on your name or email address but will use exclusion logic based on student data available for our department. This will be done automatically by the software (researchers will not be informed about this - keeping your privacy secure).

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The survey(s) will result in so-called raw data, just long lists of responses (no names or any other personal information) in Excel files, produced by the online survey software. These Excel files will be exported from the online survey software's webpage and stored, unprocessed ("raw") in a password protected folder on my OneDrive for Business at Edge Hill University. Only I and other study team members will have access to this raw data and this folder.

The raw data will then be analysed, using various methods, including the tools provided on the online survey platform, but also Microsoft Excel, R Studio, Graphpad and similar. This is then the analysed or processed data. This data will also be stored (password protected) on my OneDrive at Edge Hill University.

Only processed, analysed data will be shared with the department, the university, or stakeholders outside the University. I will NEVER share raw data with others, thus protecting your privacy.

Processed / analysed data may also be published. If required, data will be 'adjusted' to remove all identifiable bias so none of our students can be indirectly identified from the

data we present in any form of publication.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty for Arts and Sciences via Haplo Ethics Monitor at Edge Hill University.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

You will receive an email with a link to an online survey. The email will originate either from myself (andrewka@edgehil.ac.uk) from the Biology Admin Team (biology@edgehill.ac.uk) or directly from the survey provider "*JISC Online Survey*".

Click on the link provided in the email and follow the prompts. You will be asked to agree to the consent (= first page of survey), do so only if you can fully agree with this Participant Information Sheet you are just reading. Otherwise, click no, this will terminate the survey.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no disadvantages of taking part in this study. For a certain student group there is the small risk of being identifiable, but only in the "raw data", and only by the study team (see above). This risk can be mitigated by the participant and will be eliminated by the research team once data is being analysed and processed.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

This study will collect students' feedback on their perception on the changing learning environment during the pandemic in academic year 2021-2022. Student feedback, comments and suggestions will feed into changes and improvements at a Department and wider educational level. The more students that participate, the more powerful the study and the more significant the impact of this study will be.

### **Is there someone independent I can talk to about the research?**

Yes, you can. Please contact Phil Bentley. Phil is a Research Support Officer for Edge Hill University and an expert for ethical questions & research conduct. Phil is not involved in this study nor in undergraduate teaching, planning and delivery:

01695 650925

✉ [research@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:research@edgehill.ac.uk)

Please confirm you have read the participant information provided and that you consent to taking part in this anonymous online survey? \* *Required*

☐ Yes

☐ No

## Consent required for participation

To participate in any research, including this study, you are required to provide your consent. This ensures that you understand exactly what's involved in being a respondent, along with why, and how your data will be used. \* *Required*

- ☐ I consent to participate in this survey
- ☐ I do NOT wish to participate

Please select the programme you are currently enrolled in \* *Required*

- ☐ BSc (Hons) Human Biology
- ☐ BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science
- ☐ BSc (Hons) Biotechnology
- ☐ BSc (Hons) Biology
- ☐ BSc (Hons) Plant Science
- ☐ BSc (Hons) Food Science
- ☐ BSc (Hons) Ecology & Conservation
- ☐ BSc (Hons) Genetics
- ☐ Prefer not to say



Please select your study year \* *Required*

- ☐ Year 1 (Level 4)
- ☐ Year 2 (Level 5)
- ☐ Year 3 (Level 6)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Have you participated in any Learn!Bio surveys before? \* *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No - I'm level 4
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Over the last 2 years teaching has been delivered fully or partly online. Do you feel that you are now more technologically advanced in the use of online software? \* *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I was already a computer wiz!
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Looking back over the last 2 years. Do you prefer online learning, blended learning, or face to face learning best? \* *Required*

- ☐ Online learning (Off-campus)
- ☐ Blended learning (A mix of remote and on-campus learning)
- ☐ Face-to-face (On-campus)
- ☐ No preference

If you do not like or attend on campus lectures. Can you tell us why?

- ☐ Lectures are recorded so there is no point in attending
- ☐ Attendance is a low priority for me
- ☐ I attend all my lectures
- ☐ Covid related problems prevent me attending campus
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please tell us any other reason you do NOT attend your on-campus lectures

What, if any online learning technologies would you like to keep as part of your continued learning? \* *Required*

- ☐ Socrative
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Vevox
- ☐ BoB
- ☐ LinkedIn Learning
- ☐ Padlet
- ☐ Clinical Key Medicine/Student
- ☐ Doodle polls
- ☐ No preference

Feel free to suggest software you have used in the past. It may be something we can incorporate into our sessions

Are you aware that the Biology department offers sandwich years, summer internships, and module related internships in a work placement? \* *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Which, if any, are you interested in? \* *Required*

- ☐ Sandwich Year Abroad
- ☐ Sandwich Year in the UK
- ☐ Summer Internship
- ☐ Module Related Internship
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ None - Financial/personal commitment reasons
- ☐ None - Im just not interested

Which, if any, have you taken part in previously? \* *Required*

- ☐ Sandwich Year Abroad
- ☐ Sandwich Year in the UK
- ☐ Summer Internship
- ☐ Module Related Internship
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ None - Financial/personal commitment reasons
- ☐ None - I'm just not interested
- ☐ None - I'm Year 1 (Level 4)



We are now back to on-campus face-to-face teaching and learning. Whilst some of us are new to EHU, we are all new to teaching and learning during a pandemic. OVERALL, rate the learning experience you have had this academic year, taking into account all modules and all sessions. \* *Required*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very Poor
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Any comments you might like to add on your OVERALL experience this semester?

Following the national Lockdown in March 2020, teaching was delivered online or with some small group blended delivery. Do you think that not being able to attend face-to-face sessions in the past is now affecting your learning progression this academic year?

\* *Required*

- ☐ Absolutely
- ☐ Partly
- ☐ Depends on session content
- ☐ Depends on module
- ☐ Not at all

In what way has your learning been affected this academic year? Tick all that apply \*  
*Required*

- ☐ I'm excited to be getting back to pre-pandemic learning
- ☐ I'm anxious about being in contact with large number of people during a pandemic
- ☐ I'm I excited to meet my class/roommates in person
- ☐ I'm anxious about the lack of social distancing/mask wearing on campus/my commute
- ☐ I watched videos during remote learning to gain practical knowledge, now I feel I'm prepared to learn and develop those lab skills.
- ☐ I'm anxious about my lack of practical knowledge from missed in person teaching
- ☐ The lockdowns gave me a nice break from the everyday social situations
- ☐ The lockdowns have made me more self-conscious in everyday social situations
- ☐ N/A There has been no impact on my learning

Any comments you might like to add on your OVERALL experience this academic year?

Are you aware of the Biology Departments mask wearing policy? \* *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Thank you for wearing your face covering while attending on-campus sessions, it helps protect both you and others from covid-19. Staff members also wear a face covering while they teach. In your opinion, do you believe the face covering affects how well you can understand your tutors? \* *Required*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Tutors are back on campus and available for in-person meetings. Tutors can always be contacted by email and are happy to chat to you remotely using online technology. How do you prefer to contact staff? \* *Required*

- ☐ Online (Email, MS Teams etc)
- ☐ In person

How do you prefer to meet with staff? \* *Required*

- ☐ Online video call (MS Teams, Skype etc)
- ☐ Online messaging (Email, MS Teams etc)
- ☐ In person (lone session)
- ☐ In person (Group session)
- ☐ No preference

Please rate the OVERALL accessibility, availability, and response time of your MODULE tutors \* *Required*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ I have never tried to contact a module tutor
- ☐ Prefer not to say



Please rate the OVERALL accessibility, availability, and response time for your PERSONAL TUTOR. \* *Required*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Have never tried to contact a module tutor
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please rate the OVERALL support you have received from OTHER EHU departments (careers, catalyst, FM, student support, etc) since the start of this semester. If you have not required any of the below listed offers, please tick not applicable. \* *Required*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please indicate where you live \* *Required*

- ☐ On campus
- ☐ Private student accommodation
- ☐ At home (parents)
- ☐ At home (own/ with partner/children)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please share how you usually travel to campus AND how long a single (one direction) journey takes? \* *Required*

- ☐ I walk to campus
- ☐ I cycle to campus
- ☐ I use public transport train/bus/tram
- ☐ I drive by car/motorcycle or car-share
- ☐ prefer not to say
- ☐ ≤15 minutes
- ☐ ≤30 minutes
- ☐ ≤45 minutes
- ☐ ≤60 minutes
- ☐ >60 minutes

Many students have a care role for children, siblings, parents, elderly or disabled relatives. During the Covid-19 pandemic care responsibilities increased with access to other support being limited/restricted. Please let us know if you are a carer and select from the list below: \* *Required*

- ☐ I am not a carer
- ☐ I have a child/children (below the age of 12 years)
- ☐ I have a child/children (older than 12 years of age)
- ☐ I am a carer for my sibling(s) (below the age of 12 years)
- ☐ I am a carer for my sibling(s) (older than 12 years of age)
- ☐ I care for a parent(s)/elderly/disabled relative
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Working from home was challenging for us all, especially when you share your accommodation and/or have caring responsibilities. Following the return to face-to-face teaching, is your learning being impacted by any residual restrictions as we navigate our way through the pandemic? Please tick all which have affected your learning since the start of this academic year. \* *Required*

- ☐ Childcare not back to pre-pandemic levels
- ☐ Isolation (due to awaiting test)
- ☐ Isolation (due to positive test)
- ☐ Adult care duties support/assistance not back to pre-pandemic levels
- ☐ Loss/reduced of employment
- ☐ There are no residual restrictions impacting my learning
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Public transport disruptions

Has there been anything else that effects your learning this academic year?

Overall, how would you rate your mental wellbeing THIS SEMESTER? \* *Required*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you believe the Covid-19 pandemic has had (or still has) a negative impact on your overall mental wellbeing? \* *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Don't know / not so sure myself



Have you ever/ever considered contacting someone in relation to your Wellbeing? Tick all which apply. \* *Required*

- ☐ Biology Admin team
- ☐ My personal tutor
- ☐ Year coordinator at the department
- ☐ One tutor at the department I feel comfortable with
- ☐ A class tutor (MRes, PhD/GTA) I feel comfortable with
- ☐ EHU Services
- ☐ Non-EHU (External) service e.g. NHS
- ☐ I did not know whom to contact
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ N/A

Your Personal Tutor can always provide you first-line assistance whenever needed. Furthermore, Edge Hill University can offer you a range of tailored support options. Please indicate which you have ever accessed or know of: \* *Required*

- ☐ Catalyst Helpdesk
- ☐ Campus Support
- ☐ Wellbeing Team
- ☐ Inclusion Team – support for those with disabilities
- ☐ Learning services – support for those with SpLD

Is there somewhere/someone specific you go to for assistance?

Thinking ahead to your graduation, do you think the pandemic has changed your perception of your dream job and what you will do next? \* *Required*

- ☐ My post-graduation plans have not changed
- ☐ I never had any post-graduation plans
- ☐ I am now unsure about my future
- ☐ My plans have now changed
- ☐ There aren't any jobs for what I want to do
- ☐ With the pandemic there are now more jobs in my dream role than ever
- ☐ I prefer not to say

These are extraordinary times. Teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for us all. We would love to hear from you how we can improve teaching. Any ideas, suggestions, or comments you have, please provide them below. *May I ask you provide constructive feedback. Both, positive and negative feedback should be voiced in a respectful and polite manner. Do not discuss other students here.*

Looking back to semester 1 (before Christmas) and comparing your mental wellbeing now and then: How has your overall mental wellbeing changed? \* *Required*

- ☐ Overall, my mental health is now improved
- ☐ Overall, my mental health is now worse
- ☐ No Changes
- ☐ There have been so many ups and downs, I can hardly say

# Thank you for your consideration

Thank you for your consideration. May I ask why did you chose not to participate?

- ☐ No incentive to participate
- ☐ I can't be bothered reading the consent form
- ☐ We have too many surveys to answer
- ☐ I'd rather not say
- ☐ I didn't understand why/how my data will be used

# Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is invaluable and very much appreciated.

# Final page

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is invaluable and very much appreciated.

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