

Living through COVID-19

**Reflections by the students
of UOW College Australia**



Foreword

At the beginning of 2020, with very little warning, COVID-19 arrived in Australia. There was really nothing we could have done to prepare for what was to come.

Around the world, the virus affected people profoundly. It affected our friends and families, our towns and cities. It also affected our health – physical, emotional and psychological.

For UOW College students, their study plans and ways of learning were significantly disrupted. For those who had planned to travel to Australia to study, to live independently and make new friends, their hopes were shattered. Instead, they were confined to learning online – a very different experience to what they had envisaged.

Online learning was new and often challenging for students, with no direct contact with their teachers or fellow students. Many felt isolated and became despondent or depressed. Many caught COVID themselves, and some lost friends and loved ones to COVID.

In Wollongong, as in other parts of Australia, we were in lockdown – a situation none of us had ever been in before. The students could not enjoy the beautiful setting of the UOW campus. They could not go to the library or the gym or the cafes on campus and they could not interact with each other in person. They were studying at home – and, for most, such isolation was very difficult.

As a teacher at UOW College, I could see how many of my students were struggling. I suggested to them that they write a brief account of how they were feeling and what it was like for them living through the conditions brought about by the pandemic. They responded in a way that was insightful and moving; and they discovered that writing about their own experiences and reading about the experiences of others was both comforting and reassuring.

On the strength of this, I encouraged other UOW College students to reflect on and write about their experiences of the pandemic.

Here are their stories.

Nina Jaffe
August 2022

The COVID virus swept the globe in 2020. It was a challenge for our daily life, including my home town, studies, friends and family. In my home town, the shops closed up for half of the year.

The empty market was horrible and we could see the trample of garbage everywhere. Now, it is better but my studies have been affected. My studies changed into online. In my leisure time, I can't go outside with my friends.

For my family, my dad only works on odd-numbered days except weekdays. Luckily, the food supply is enough right now.

Chencheng (Carl)

Kunshan, Jangsu, China

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COVID-19 has a negative impact on my town, economically and socially. After the spread of the virus, most shop owners were forced to close their stores, and this has a negative impact on the town's economy.

Socially relatives and friends are prevented from visiting each other. This has a negative impact on social relations and communication. As for my friends, we lost doing some sports activities such as playing soccer and swimming when the playgrounds and sports clubs were closed.

One of the negative effects on my study was that my sister and I were studying at the University of Wollongong campus and because of the pandemic my sister was forced to go back to my country where she got COVID.

I stayed in Wollongong and because of the closure of the borders we have not met for more than a year and a half.

Abdullah

Saudi Arabia

In 2019 with the outbreak of the covid-19, great changes have taken place in our lives. Every day there is fear. We are afraid to go out. We could not return to school and the outbreak continued for a long time, especially in our Wuhan, so we had almost a whole year of study at home which has a certain influence on the efficiency of learning, Up to now, we have delayed going abroad for a year. Fortunately, none of my relatives or classmates I know have contracted COVID-19, which is lucky。 However, due to the epidemic, China's diplomatic relations are becoming increasingly tense and I hope COVID-19 can end soon。

Zhizhuo (Addison)

Wuhan, China



Covid-19 affected my life in a way that I am unable to develop my social skills, since I cannot go out. When I am in high school online learning is not effective at all. I cannot seem to understand a thing when I am usually quite quick at catching them. It also affected my family, especially every year my families would go out to relax our body and mind and now it is not possible.

Husein

Indonesia

COVID-19 has made many changes to our lives. I have dreamt of travelling to Australia to study on campus but all has been shattered due to the pandemic situation. In addition, my family suffered a loss in business during lockdowns, not only mine but also many families went through the hardship. My friends and I found it really stressful to be inside the house for months because our areas have been restricted to travel to any other places. As a result, we stayed in contact through social media and video calls. In addition, one of my friends is living in London. She could not travel to Sri Lanka to see her family. COVID has been the longest disaster around the world and hopefully we should come out of it through the help of vaccines.

Sharmila

Western Province, Sri Lanka

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The effect of Covid-19 is widespread across the world, personally however the effect on me is mixed (moderate). Lockdown had barely any effect personally, the reason for this is due to me being A-Social with other people. However, it most affected me with study, completing Year 12 and this course at the College has been difficult. Covid-19 spread around our area but never hit us directly. The media changed as well, instead of reporting a variety of newsworthy topics it was replaced with Covid-19 coverage, this made media repetitive and uninteresting. Covid-19 had moderate effects in the end for me personally, I wish I could say the same for others, but that would be untrue.

Abbas

Wollongong

I was on stage in Canberra in David Williams' last new play that had played its season in Sydney. This gig was to be followed by a national tour with Bell Shakespeare - this would be the last chance to do it before my son started school. As an actor, it was a strong year of work. I'd also just bought my first house the same week the world stopped. For the acting industry it hasn't truly started again. There is a deep grief in knowing the profession that you trained for and have worked for over 20 years has flatlined. So, what to do?

UOW had an information evening and some very patient, very generous people answered my meandering questions and signed me up for the UOW College course that, thankfully, was free of charge and I have spent 2021/ 2022 covid waking up my brain. It has been incredibly challenging with my son's fractured first year of school and the overwhelming feeling of isolation and uncertainty, but my re-entry to study with the structure and sense of achievement has been the reward. Covid has been hard and demanding, however, UOW has been a lifeline.

Dani
Wollongong



Covid-19 has not affected me significantly until recently. Apart from making all studies for me and my siblings being moved to online, my family and I had been relatively unaffected until recently when my father contracted Covid-19. Since then, we have all had to isolate at home and on the 7th day of his week of isolation I tested positive, meaning we must all isolate for another 7 days. The most impacted part of life has been taking time off work, I do not remember the last time I have taken a whole week off, let alone 2.

Luke
Grasmere NSW

COVID 19 has affected my life badly. I suffered a lot. I think not only me but the whole world has suffered a lot due to COVID19. I was planning to study Master in Nursing in Australia in 2020 but I could not come to Australia due to this COVID 19. It has made my life very difficult that I have to take in my online class from my country Nepal. If there was no COVID I would have finished my course. My 2 years was lost due to COVID19. Not only has it affected my career but also my health.

Mathura (Priscilla)

Kathmandu, Nepal

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During the pandemic, I cannot do what I want to. First, I cannot go to dance and yoga lessons. I used to enjoy both, and after the lesson, I also liked eating out with friends. Second, I cannot go abroad. One of my hobbies is traveling, and I used to do it twice or three times a year. I often visited Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and so on. I really liked to eat Asian foods and drinks and walk around the town. I enjoyed going to get massages as well, like Thai massage and foot massage.

Hiromi

Tokyo, Japan

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COVID-19 has delayed my plan of coming to study in Australia for nearly a year. In my home town, everybody needs to put a mask on when going out. Luckily there is no one infected around. However, my life has been totally changed because of COVID-19. Now I am studying overseas online, which makes me feel boring and so lonely. Also, COVID-19 has killed my plan to travel with my friends. So, in a word, COVID-19 affected my life in a bad way and I hope everybody will be better soon.

Linchuan

Ningbo, Zhejiang, China

The arrival of COVID-19 seems like a nightmare. People are destroyed because of it. In study and life, we can't communicate face to face and can only learn through online courses, which makes it very inconvenient.

In our noisy city, Wuhan, Hubei, all of this started at the end of 2019, It invaded my hometown. COVID-19 started in our hometown. People agree that Wuhan is the original virus. Although there are many people who have been helping to inspire us, there are still malevolent voices out there that denigrate us and say that we are viruses, that bring our own malevolence and bad ideas to our home country.

Chuji

Wuhan, China

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These days, many people finished double vaccination in Japan, so former life is coming back. However, COVID had a big impact all over the world.

First is the negative side. I could not travel and study abroad. I had a plan to go to a foreign country as a graduation trip with my friends in university, but it was cancelled. Moreover, my studying abroad is now an online class. It was very unfortunate and I was very sad.

Second is a positive feeling. After COVID we often spend time at home and I found a new hobby. It is watching anime that is from Japan and exercise at home. It is exciting and I can relieve stress about COVID. COVID gives me both negative and positive feelings, but I hope the situation will settle down.

Mayumi

Kobi, Japan

The emergence of COVID 19 made people of all countries work together to resist the virus. The outbreak has made 2020 and 2021 very long. The epidemic is everywhere, plaguing many people's journeys. In fact, the outbreak made me realize that humans are very small animals, human beings are very fragile, and trying to live and be happy is the most important thing.

Fei (Langer)

Suzhou, China



Covid-19 has affected my hometown very bad. Many people lost their job because their employers didn't have enough money to pay them because of quarantine. Some people had to close their shops and they will not be able to open them because they cannot pay the rent. Many people lost their loved ones, my mother lost her aunt and she also contracted covid-19 which was the worst days for our family because there were not any oxygen capsules or any medicine. We were losing thousands of people every day but fortunately, everything is becoming normal again in our country.

Maryam

Mashhad, Iran

In November 2019, after 2 years in family court, I bought a small unit. I enjoy outdoor activities. Covid-19 forced my job into a work-from-home nightmare. Day after day of lockdown, in my unit, working from 8:30am to 5:00pm with my only enjoyment being lunchtime sunlight on my balcony. We returned to work sporadically.

In February 2021, whilst working from home, I contacted UOW College. In June 2020, I moved to Mum's, left my job and three days post hernia surgery (life just happens) I had my first lecture and tutorial.

My life is now listening to my nurse daughter with her hospital stories, including the Covid ICU ward, my eldest son keeping Covid-free despite being on worksites across Sydney and helping my high school child with his homework for English and Maths. This course is responsible for maintaining my mental health through this past lockdown. The challenges of this course have been vastly exceeded by the rewards. Stay happy,

Katrina

Sutherland, Sydney

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The influence on my life is mainly reflected in the following three aspects: First, since the outbreak of COVID-19, the spread of the virus has made it necessary for me to wear masks when travelling. If I don't wear masks, it feels like I am missing something. Second, is learning, before the outbreak of COVID-19, offline courses were offered, but since the outbreak of COVID-19, students and schools have adopted online courses, and online courses account for a large proportion. Third, I am no longer keen on travelling and playing, I put my health in the first place, and not going out is the main point of view of people. Because travelling increases our risk.

Shilong

Jinan, Shandong, China

Coronavirus emerged on the world in the end of 2019. Many people struggled during this pandemic in every sector of life. As I'm a student I also suffered from this pandemic in my studies. I applied for my higher education in Australia in 2020. I got admission and then suddenly Australia closed their borders for all the International Students. Due to this my education suffered a lot during this duration. I'm also unable to attain any skills in my homeland because all the world was shut down. From this pandemic I also suffered emotionally. My father's cousin got exposure with this virus which took him into the grave.

Hassan

Pakistan

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Because of covid-19 my life changed a lot. Since it happened, people are required not to go outside in order to avoiding get covid-19. The way we study changed first. We used ZOOM App to have online class and we sent homework to teachers by taking photos. Not only that, but we also had to change our way to relax. We could not play basketball, soccer and so on. We cannot leave home. So, we read books and played video games to exchange our normal lifestyle. During this time, I made a wish: "I hope the covid-19 can stop as soon as possible."

Kaiyi (Tim)

China

COVID-19 has changed our lives. We must stay at home. We could not even go to school and work and see our friends. Some people got a mental issue due to this kind of unusual situation. However, I consider that this pandemic has not only bad effects but also good effects. For example, I could spend more time with my family. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, my parents went to work, and my brother and I went to school. Therefore, we could meet only at dinner. In contrast, all my family was in home during the pandemic, so we have had more conversation. In addition, the technology has been developed so we could take classes without going to school.

Student

Japan



The covid-19 pandemic has affected my life in a variety of ways. It directly affected my study abroad plan. Because of Covid 19, the Australian Government had to shut down its border from January 2020 to December 2021. I could not attend my foundation course at UOW College in Spring Semester 2020 so I had to defer to Autumn Semester in 2022. Meanwhile, I was continuing my university course in Viet Nam. Everything I had planned for almost two years went off track which makes me stressed out for a long time. Quarantine was a difficult time for my family. We have to cope with unexpected changes in our everyday life. Positively, I have learned plenty of lessons through the pandemic. I am becoming more grateful and appreciative of everything I have.

Thi Le Na (Lena)

Vietnam

I am from Nepal. Covid-19 has affected people all over the world. As speaking personally, I was planning to come to Australia after my high school but COVID-19 arrived. It spread all over the world and people around the world had to suffer badly.

Soon my hometown was a highly affected area and the whole country got lockdown for long. I was working and studying far from my home and got really scared due to the COVID threats and its symptoms. As I am working in a hospital, I got COVID-19 symptoms and it badly affected my health as well. I did not inform my family that I got COVID symptom because they will get worried about me and I was far from them which was impossible for me to come to them during lockdown. I got worse day by day and I was under doctor observation. I was worried about my health. After a week I slowly recovered and was able to come out. Luckily my family was able to be safe. That memory I won't forget my entire life.

Sujan
Nepal



Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, I was confined to my home and could not travel. I could have chosen to travel to various places and eat delicious food with my friends. I could also have gone to Australia to continue my offline study instead of just taking classes online at home like I do now.

As a fan of live performances, I was often stopped by the epidemic situation in various places, and performances were even forcibly cancelled in many cases. Even if everything went well, I still needed to wear a mask when watching performances, which would make people feel breathless when I was very high.

Yuxin
Ningbo, China

The Covid-19 has had a very heavy impact on the entire world in 2020 and 2021, and it also has affected my country as well as my family. In 2020, my parents worked in the South of my country, my elder sister was studying in America, so when the Covid-19 happens, I couldn't meet my family for over a year (from earlier 2020 to May 2021). In that time, I decided to enroll in Diploma of IT course at the UOW college, and I started my course from February 2021. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19, I had to study online for a year. In this time, I felt bad because I must stay at home almost all of the time but being able to call my family is a big comfort to me. And I got good results in almost all my subjects even though I had to study online. These two things have helped me through the difficult period of covid-19, and now I'm in Australia, making some new friends and having new journeys!!

Dang

Hanoi, Vietnam

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Since the covid epidemic happened, it has seriously affected my life. The first is learning, it has a huge impact on my academic performance because I can't go to school in person with the teacher, but instead I have to study online, so my results are not to be as desired.

Second, the covid pandemic affected my and my family's financial situation because my parents' business could not continue to operate due to the economic shutdown due to government restrictions. I hope the epidemic will end soon so that everything will return to normal so that I can fully focus on my studies.

Ngoc Anh (Jimmy)

Vietnam

There are too many ups and downs in everybody's life. They solve one and another is come and stand in the front of them. Just like COVID-19. It affects many people in my hometown even on my studies, friends, and my family. As I belong from a middle-class family and my father is the only person who earns money.

COVID-19 disturbs every single person life. I am distracted from studies because I cannot understand the physical work over there. It was like we are in prison. It puts too much burden on peoples. Nobody can go out for play. It makes them lazier. So, the new generation of that time can't grow up mentally. By the end that was the worst time I ever had passed through and I wish it cannot come again

Student

India

Well, put it this way – it's not much fun.

Learning online is hard.

We don't get to make friends.

We don't get to meet for coffee or study together in the library.

We don't get to go to the Uni Bar.

We're just at home with the laptop.

It's not what we signed up for.

Damn COVID19.

Student

Wollongong

We all have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, counting on our status as individuals and as members of society, the pandemic's impact and repercussions are felt differently. The pandemic severely affected my family and me.

As a student, the school provides structure and routine to my life. Following the routine of getting up at a certain time, going to classes at specific times, and coming home at a certain time allows my brain to focus on academic content. When school closed, at first, the greater amount of freedom and choice feels good on me. However, the more I stayed at home, the easier for me to be distracted by my phone and video games. In addition, extracurricular activities were also affected by school closure. I could not have my last shot at a student football championship season.

Huy

Vietnam

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The Covid-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on my life since it came about in 2020. The first initial effects of covid where on my schooling and social life, events such as my formal and graduation had to be altered to account for the new conditions which the pandemic brought. Parties and other social events such as schoolies had to be adjusted and made significantly reduced in numbers or cancelled due to the pandemic's restrictions.

After this, in 2021, I thought the pandemic would come to an end however the struggle continued and we had to make the adaptation into online university. Whilst still being practical and effective for learning, online learning has definitely restricted the social aspect of university life which I hope to experience post pandemic.

Luke

Kirrawee, Sydney

The pandemic has had a deep influence on the whole world, although in this critical situation, some countries spread rumors that this pandemic is from China, China has to pay for it. We don't know the truth. Chinese people have also been abused by the pandemic.

Now the covid-19 is under control in China. It depends on Chinese people to actively cooperate with the pandemic prevention measures.

During the pandemic, students and teachers stayed at home having online classes every weekday. Our materials and books were sent to our home by the school. When we are having holidays, we cooperate with the pandemic prevention measures to reduce exposure. That's what we do during covid-19.

Chuji

Shenzhen City, Guangdong, China

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Covid-19 have affected my life. Covid-19 also affected our lives, our home town and our studies. Due to covid-19 our home town has closed. All the markets have also closed. All the restaurants are closed so we cant do any celebrations. Covid-19 damaged our social life, individual as well as collectively. We cant meet one another freely. Covid-19 affected our studies badly. All the schools in our country were closed for long intervals. All the academic activities were damaged badly by it. So covid-19 has affected thousands of people who are either sick or are being killed due to the spread of this disease.

Muhammad

Lahore, Pakistan/Wollongong

COVID-19 made a huge change in my lifestyle. In my hometown, people started to wear masks, and people started to reduce their activities outside and avoid large gatherings. For me personally, COVID-19 has made me spend more time at home. My way of taking classes has changed from offline to online. In addition, I used to spend weekends with my friends, but now I enjoy more time alone. I can do more things on my own and also protect my health by traveling less.

Qingyang (Layla)

Jinan, Shandong, China

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COVID-19 hasn't affected my life significantly. I generally stay inside my house so I don't often socialise with other people, nor has it affected my direct family or friends either. They may have had to cancel a small trip, however no one I know has lost their job or had to leave where they've lived. I've gone through some very eventful personal moments, however they would have most likely happened regardless of the pandemic. COVID has had the largest impact on my studies, as the social distance learning caught me off guard and has highlighted my problems of poor concentration and lack of control when distracted.

Student

Dapto, NSW

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The Covid-19 pandemic has forced me to wear a mask when I go out, stopped my travel plans, and most importantly, I could have gone to Australia, experienced a different culture, improved myself faster in a language environment and studied on campus, but now I have to stay at home and take online classes. In addition, prices have gone up due to the virus and I can no longer buy the same goods for the same price.

Yun

Shenyang, China

Covid 19 has affected my life in many ways. It's not only me who is affected, rather all countries in the globe have been affected by this pandemic. After 3 years of working continually I needed to upgrade myself by completing my masters so I applied for some of the best Australian universities and I got my offer from UOW (University of Wollongong). It was a great moment for me. Everything was set.

Then suddenly WHO declared a pandemic so we were on a lockdown for more than 3 months. As I had already left my job I had nothing to do. Whole days passed by watching some documentaries, movies and some of the best Japanese anime. It boosted my interest in reading novels and other literature.

I was still worrying about the future and time value because most of my friends had already completed their masters and started working as a professional. Sometimes I thought I'm left behind.

After a while Covid-19 taught me to be calm and stay focused on real things rather than materialistic objects. It taught me everything is not permanent. Nothing can stay for long.

Anmol (Chaano)

Kathmandu, Nepal

COVID-19 has greatly affected both my study and my life. I haven't traveled for two years because of the epidemic, which makes my life very boring. I also seldom have the chance to meet my friends and have dinner together, and the festive atmosphere is no longer lively.

In addition, due to COVID-19, I cannot go to Australia to study, which is not good for my study. I often watch electronic screens all day long, which puts a lot of pressure on my eyes. We need to remain vigilant at all times to prevent and treat COVID-19.

Chaofan

Beijing, China

Everyone in the world has had to face a massive change in their daily life after COVID-19. In our hometown, most of the people were affected by COVID-19, and it is rapidly spreading still now. The impoverished people have lots of difficulties because they cannot fight this virus.

I am behind in my studies because all the schools, colleges and universities are closed. All the students have to attend online classes, and there is some practical work that is not possible to do online.

My friends and family are afraid of how long they will be stuck at home and facing a critical life. It has affected people's character and has led many people to be disconnected from society.

Fardinal

Chittagong, Bangladesh



Covid-19 is the virus that has left the world in chaos. After graduating from high school in Korea, I was lucky enough to catch a flight to Australia before the corona outbreak in Australia.

After coming to Australia, I have not been able to travel anywhere, and I've been mostly at home. And even in school, I have not had a face-to-face class yet, and I am still taking classes online. It has been about a year and 10 months since I came to Australia, but honestly, I miss my family.

Next year, I want my family to come to Australia or I want to go to Korea. My home country, Korea, has been hit hard by the coronavirus. Korea is a small country with a population of 51.78 million people. After the outbreak of the corona virus, the government made a law requiring everyone to wear a mask except at home, but the number of confirmed cases has nevertheless increased.

My father is a schoolteacher who taught online classes, my mother is a nurse who is having a harder life in the hospital, and my younger brother is a high school student who studied online. And my friends are University students, and some of them are taking online classes and some of them are studying on campus. I also have many friends who have served in the military. It seems that there are many people who are working hard even in these difficult times. I hope the corona virus will disappear all over the world as soon as possible.

Alex

South Korea

COVID-19 has affected many individuals, including myself. I never thought my life could be this different because of covid, but it is not necessarily a bad thing. Even though covid has made me lost contact with a lot of my friends because we rarely meet up, it has also allowed me to spend more of my time with my family.

During the early stages of covid, my hometown was not as lively as it used to be and a lot of shops, restaurants, cafes are closed. Because of covid, I am unable to experience my study in UOW college as much as I could if there were no covid. I studied online which has worsened my eyesight. Despite all the negativity surrounding covid, the lockdown has positively affected my relationship with family and home.

Machiko
Indonesia

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Covid-19 definitely affects the majority of people, but I would not let it affect my emotions. This is because I cannot change anything. During this special period, I invariably stay at home for studying. I found that the online course is very convenient and it has already changed my life. Actually, I did not like studying online before. Not only me, I believe that every Chinese do not like that. However, I have learned how to use internet courses to improve my studying. It must be an all-important skill for the rest of my life. I think that most Chinese still do not like it now. Therefore, I am very glad that I have mastered the skill others do not know.

Zheng
Hebei, China

When the pandemic started, suddenly everything changed. It was so sudden that I could not grab it. Everything got locked down. I could not even go out. Before covid I was not home, sometimes for weeks on end. I am an extrovert. I love to visit new places but because of the restrictions it was impossible to travel.

However, nothing comes without the opportunity to learn something new. As I could not go outside, I got to know myself. I reflected on the choices that I have made and what I want to do in life. Overall, this pandemic changed me a lot and change is life, like a river flows. That is why the water is always fresh.

Sukhman

Gurdaspur, Punjab, India





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