



Dalhousie Faculty Association

**DFA Workload Survey
Summary Report
September 2020**

Updated September 25, 2020

Dalhousie Faculty Association
902 494 3722
dfa@dal.ca
www.dfa.ns.ca

Summary report

Lists all the questions in the survey and displays a summary with chart for each question. Free text responses are not included.

Table of contents

Report info.....	1
Question 1: Since campus shut-down in March: Have you been approved to work on campus in a research.....	2
Question 2: Since campus shut-down in March: Have you been approved to resume face-to-face contact.....	3
Question 3: How would you rate your workload compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as.....	4
Question 4: How would you rate your scholarly productivity compared to the same time last year? Please.....	5
Question 5: How would you rate your perceived stress compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate.....	6
Question 6: How would you rate your opportunity to take vacation time compared to the same time last year.....	7
Question 7: How would you rate your ability to maintain a healthy work/life balance compared to the same time last year.....	8
Question 8: How would you rate your readiness for classes to begin compared to the same time last year.....	9
Question 9: How would you rate the effectiveness of your working environment compared to the same time last year.....	10
Question 10: How would you rate your autonomy with respect to your work (e.g., deciding where to work).....	11
Question 11: How would you rate your enjoyment with your work compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate.....	12
Question 12: If you were given the choice to work in your campus office this term, would you? Please elaborate.....	13
Question 13: If you were given the choice to use your usual research space on campus this term, would you? Please elaborate.....	14
Question 14: To what extent do you feel that your opinions about your working conditions are being represented.....	15
Question 15: What has contributed to an increase in work time or work effort compared to the same time last year.....	16
Question 16: Which of the following are contributing to your feelings of readiness to start the term.....	17

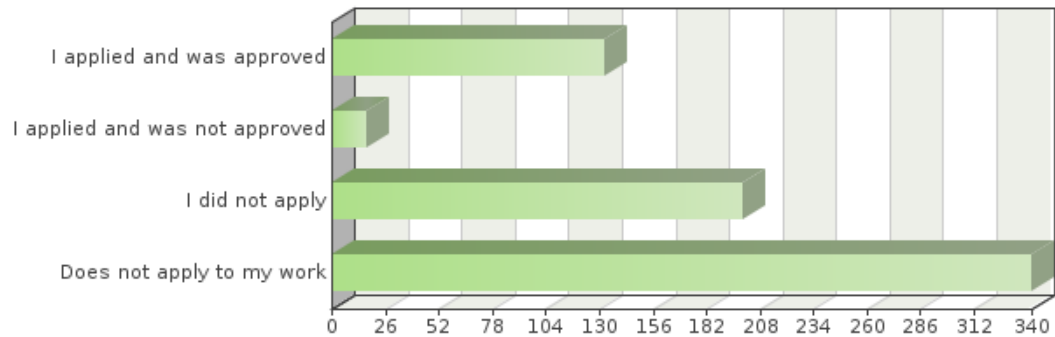
Report info

Report date:	Monday, September 21, 2020 10:54:54 AM ADT
Start date:	Wednesday, September 9, 2020 11:14:00 AM ADT
Stop date:	Thursday, September 17, 2020 5:00:00 PM ADT
Stored responses:	710
Number of completed responses:	648
Number of invitees:	967
Invitees that responded:	710
Invitee response rate:	73.42%

Question 1

Since campus shut-down in March:

Have you been approved to work on campus in a research lab? Please elaborate as you wish.



Frequency table

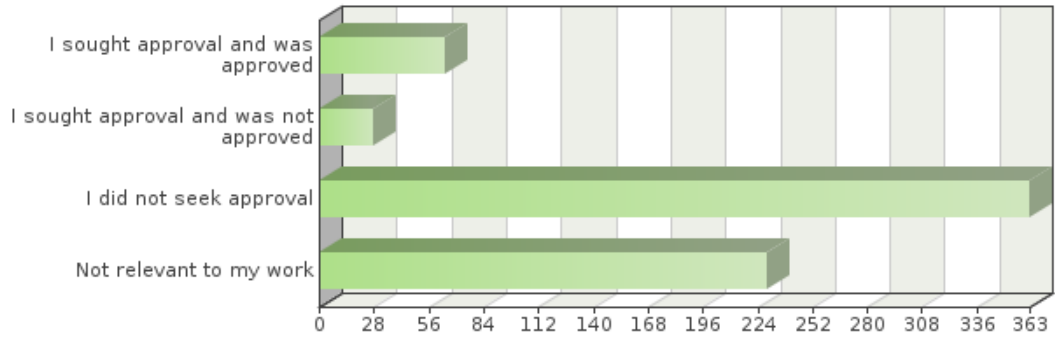
Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
I applied and was approved	133	18.73%	19.28%
I applied and was not approved	17	2.39%	2.46%
I did not apply	200	28.17%	28.99%
Does not apply to my work	340	47.89%	49.28%
Sum:	690	97.18%	100%
Not answered:	20	2.82%	-

Question 2

Since campus shut-down in March:

Have you been approved to resume face-to-face contact with students (e.g., as part of clinical training)?

Please elaborate as you wish.

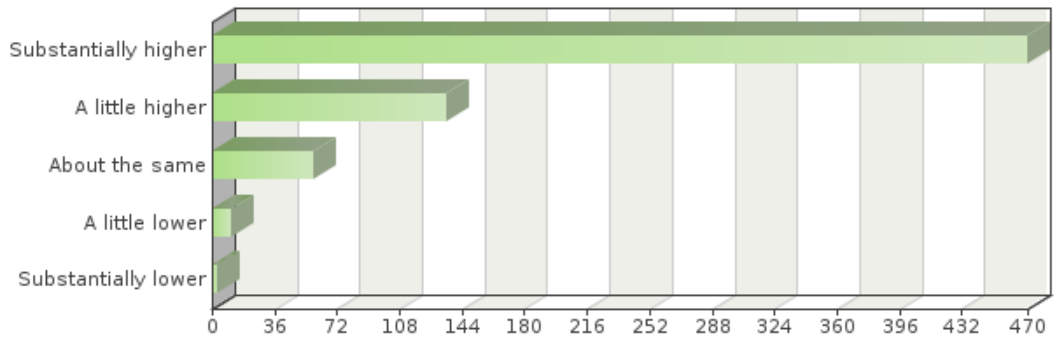


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
I sought approval and was approved	64	9.01%	9.36%
I sought approval and was not approved	28	3.94%	4.09%
I did not seek approval	363	51.13%	53.07%
Not relevant to my work	229	32.25%	33.48%
Sum:	684	96.34%	100%
Not answered:	26	3.66%	-

Question 3

How would you rate your workload compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as you wish.

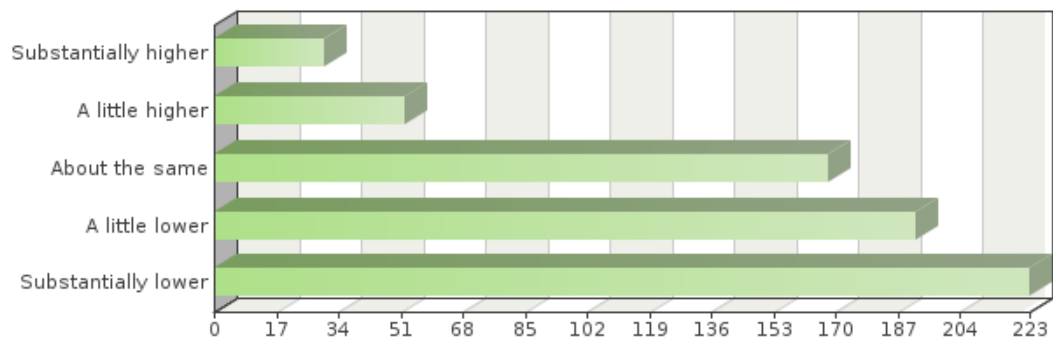


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	470	66.2%	69.32%
A little higher	135	19.01%	19.91%
About the same	59	8.31%	8.7%
A little lower	11	1.55%	1.62%
Substantially lower	3	0.42%	0.44%
Sum:	678	95.49%	100%
Not answered:	32	4.51%	-

Question 4

How would you rate your scholarly productivity compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as you wish.

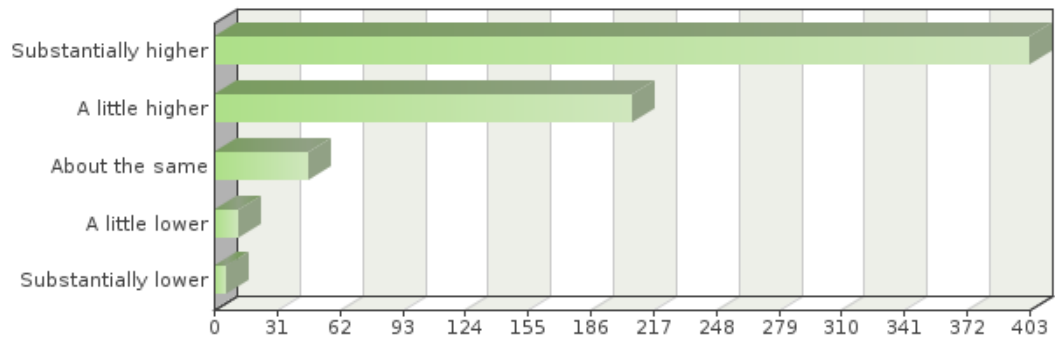


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	30	4.23%	4.51%
A little higher	52	7.32%	7.82%
About the same	168	23.66%	25.26%
A little lower	192	27.04%	28.87%
Substantially lower	223	31.41%	33.53%
Sum:	665	93.66%	100%
Not answered:	45	6.34%	-

Question 5

How would you rate your perceived stress compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as you wish.

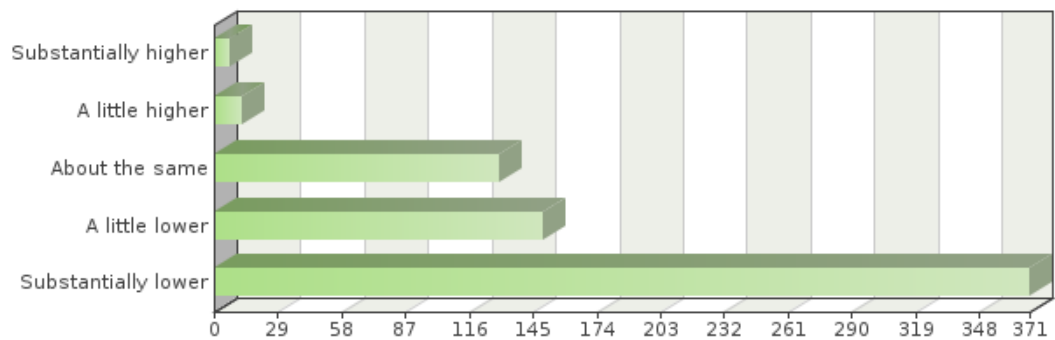


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	403	56.76%	59.7%
A little higher	207	29.15%	30.67%
About the same	47	6.62%	6.96%
A little lower	12	1.69%	1.78%
Substantially lower	6	0.85%	0.89%
Sum:	675	95.07%	100%
Not answered:	35	4.93%	-

Question 6

How would you rate your opportunity to take vacation time compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as you wish.



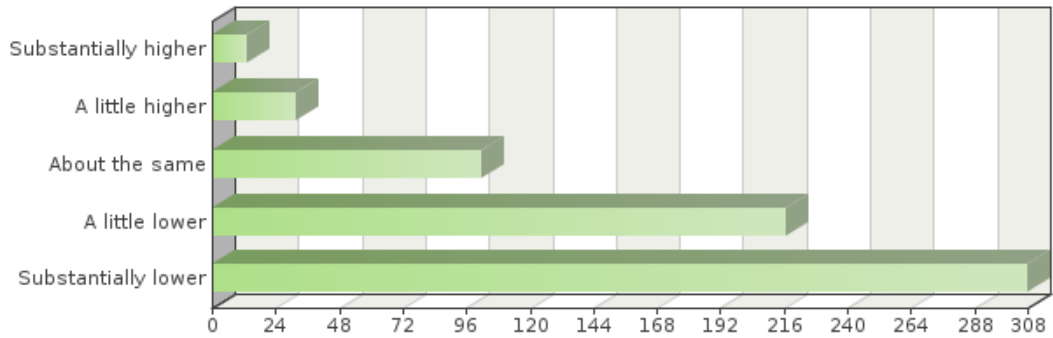
Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	7	0.99%	1.04%
A little higher	13	1.83%	1.94%
About the same	130	18.31%	19.37%
A little lower	150	21.13%	22.35%
Substantially lower	371	52.25%	55.29%
Sum:	671	94.51%	100%
Not answered:	39	5.49%	-

Question 7

How would you rate your ability to maintain a healthy work/life balance compared to the same time last year?

Please elaborate as you wish.

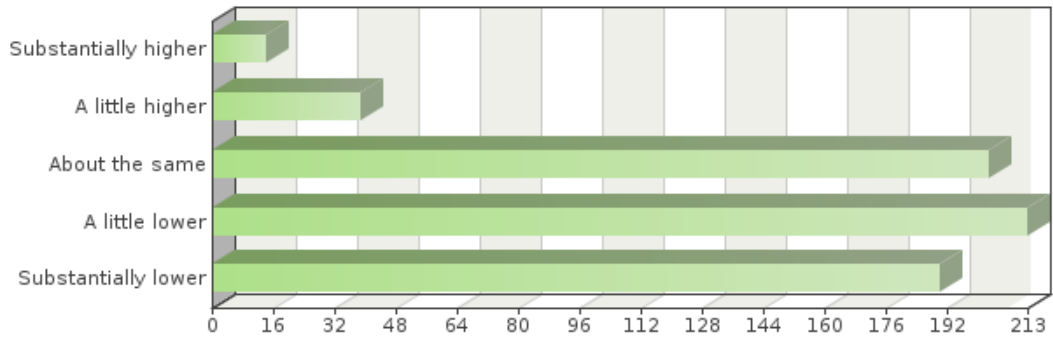


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	13	1.83%	1.93%
A little higher	32	4.51%	4.76%
About the same	102	14.37%	15.18%
A little lower	217	30.56%	32.29%
Substantially lower	308	43.38%	45.83%
Sum:	672	94.65%	100%
Not answered:	38	5.35%	-

Question 8

How would you rate your readiness for classes to begin compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as you wish.



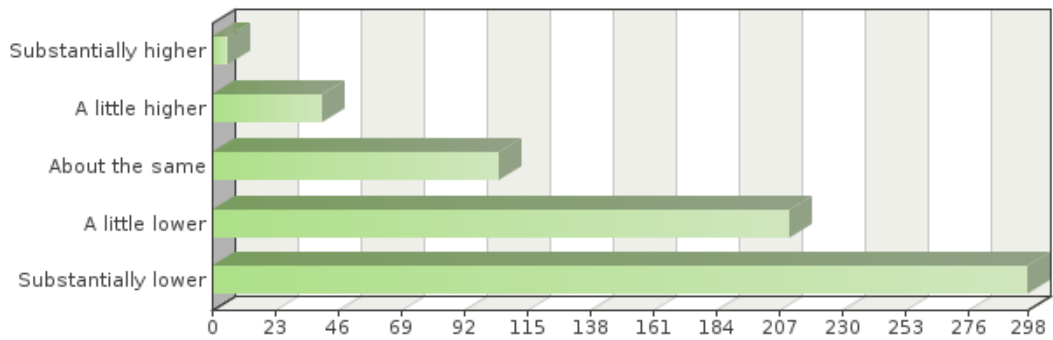
Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	14	1.97%	2.12%
A little higher	39	5.49%	5.92%
About the same	203	28.59%	30.8%
A little lower	213	30%	32.32%
Substantially lower	190	26.76%	28.83%
Sum:	659	92.82%	100%
Not answered:	51	7.18%	-

Question 9

How would you rate the effectiveness of your working environment compared to the same time last year?

Please elaborate as you wish.

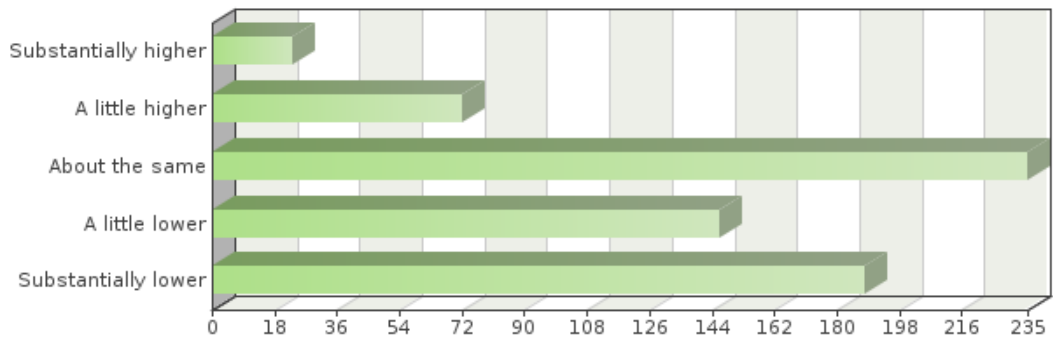


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	6	0.85%	0.91%
A little higher	40	5.63%	6.06%
About the same	105	14.79%	15.91%
A little lower	211	29.72%	31.97%
Substantially lower	298	41.97%	45.15%
Sum:	660	92.96%	100%
Not answered:	50	7.04%	-

Question 10

How would you rate your autonomy with respect to your work (e.g., deciding where to work, deciding what to work on) compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as you wish.

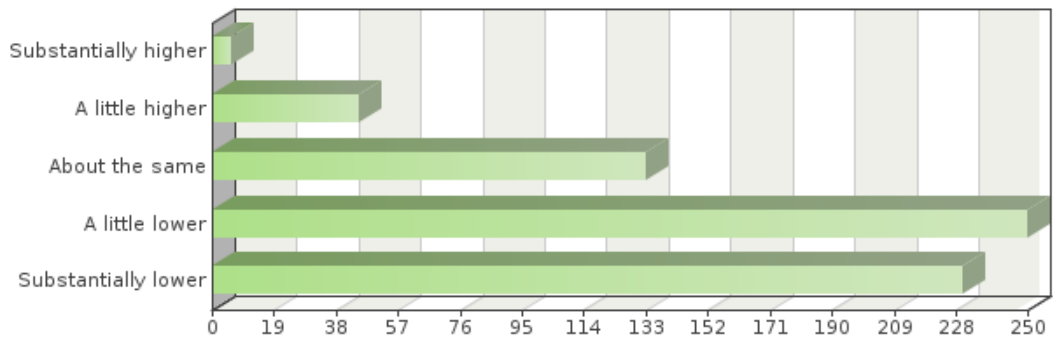


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	23	3.24%	3.46%
A little higher	72	10.14%	10.84%
About the same	235	33.1%	35.39%
A little lower	146	20.56%	21.99%
Substantially lower	188	26.48%	28.31%
Sum:	664	93.52%	100%
Not answered:	46	6.48%	-

Question 11

How would you rate your enjoyment with your work compared to the same time last year? Please elaborate as you wish.

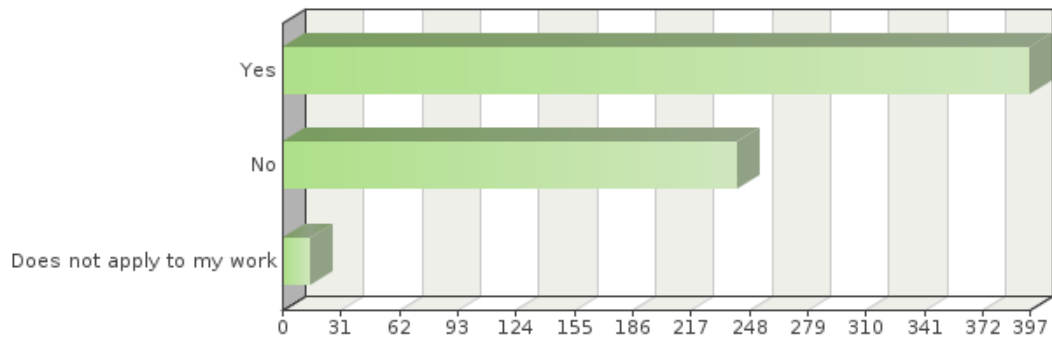


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Substantially higher	6	0.85%	0.9%
A little higher	45	6.34%	6.78%
About the same	133	18.73%	20.03%
A little lower	250	35.21%	37.65%
Substantially lower	230	32.39%	34.64%
Sum:	664	93.52%	100%
Not answered:	46	6.48%	-

Question 12

If you were given the choice to work in your campus office this term, would you? Please elaborate as you wish.

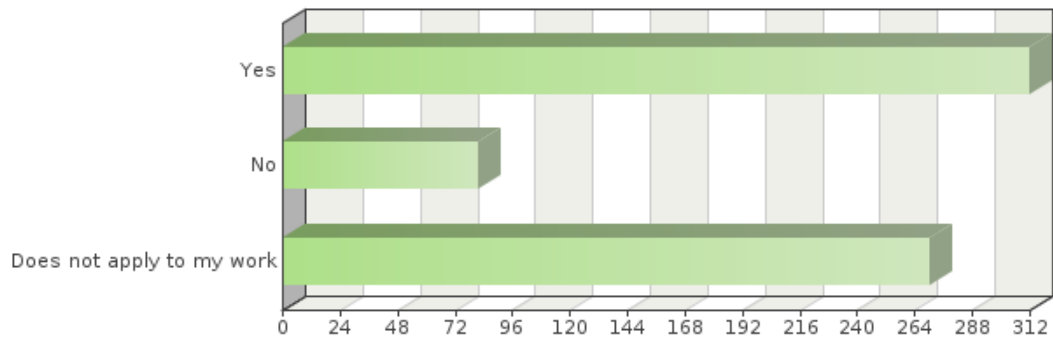


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Yes	397	55.92%	60.7%
No	242	34.08%	37%
Does not apply to my work	15	2.11%	2.29%
Sum:	654	92.11%	100%
Not answered:	56	7.89%	-

Question 13

If you were given the choice to use your usual research space on campus this term, would you? Please elaborate as you wish.

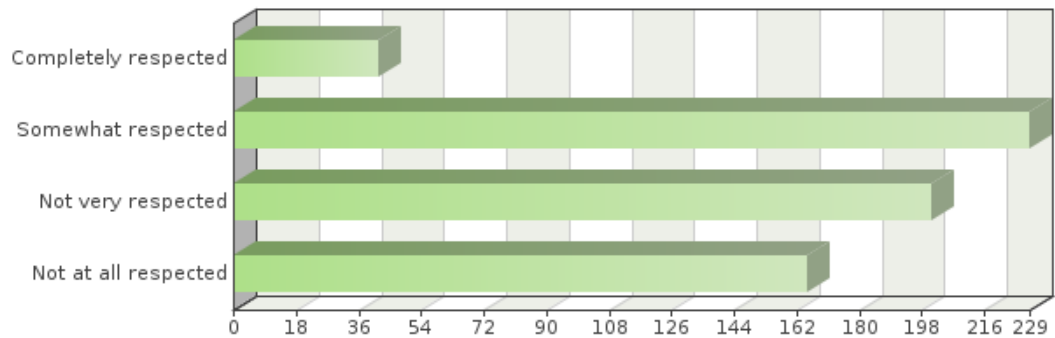


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Yes	312	43.94%	46.99%
No	82	11.55%	12.35%
Does not apply to my work	270	38.03%	40.66%
Sum:	664	93.52%	100%
Not answered:	46	6.48%	-

Question 14

To what extent do you feel that your opinions about your working conditions are being respected by Dalhousie administration? Please elaborate as you wish.

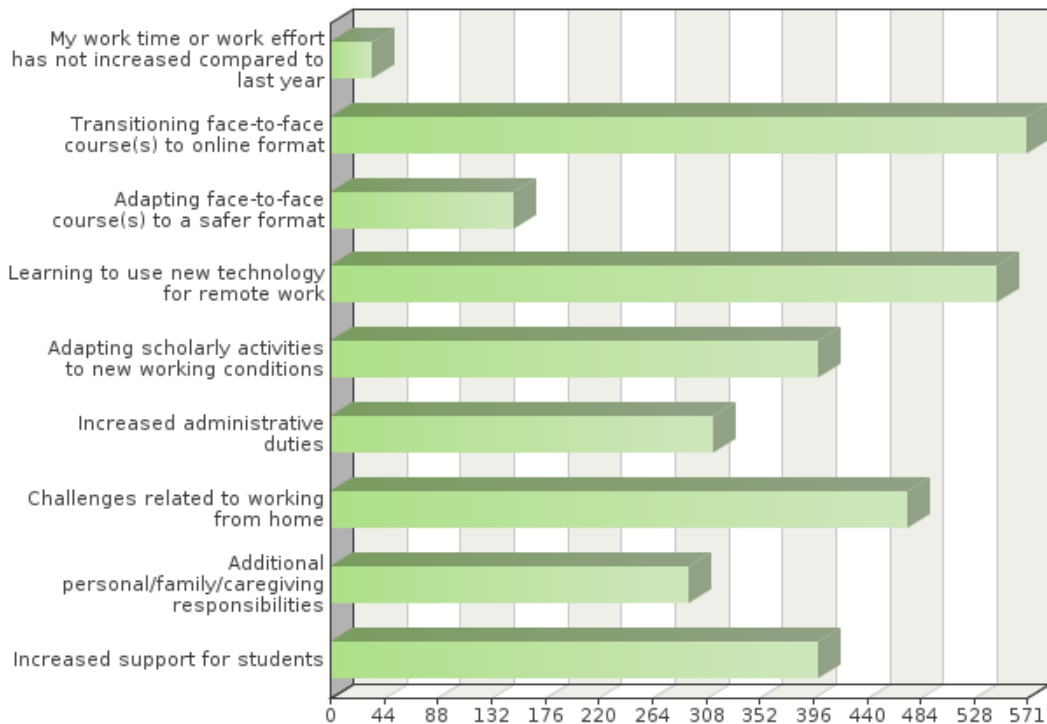


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
Completely respected	42	5.92%	6.59%
Somewhat respected	229	32.25%	35.95%
Not very respected	201	28.31%	31.55%
Not at all respected	165	23.24%	25.9%
Sum:	637	89.72%	100%
Not answered:	73	10.28%	-

Question 15

What has contributed to an increase in work time or work effort compared to the same time last year (tick all that apply)? Please elaborate as you wish.

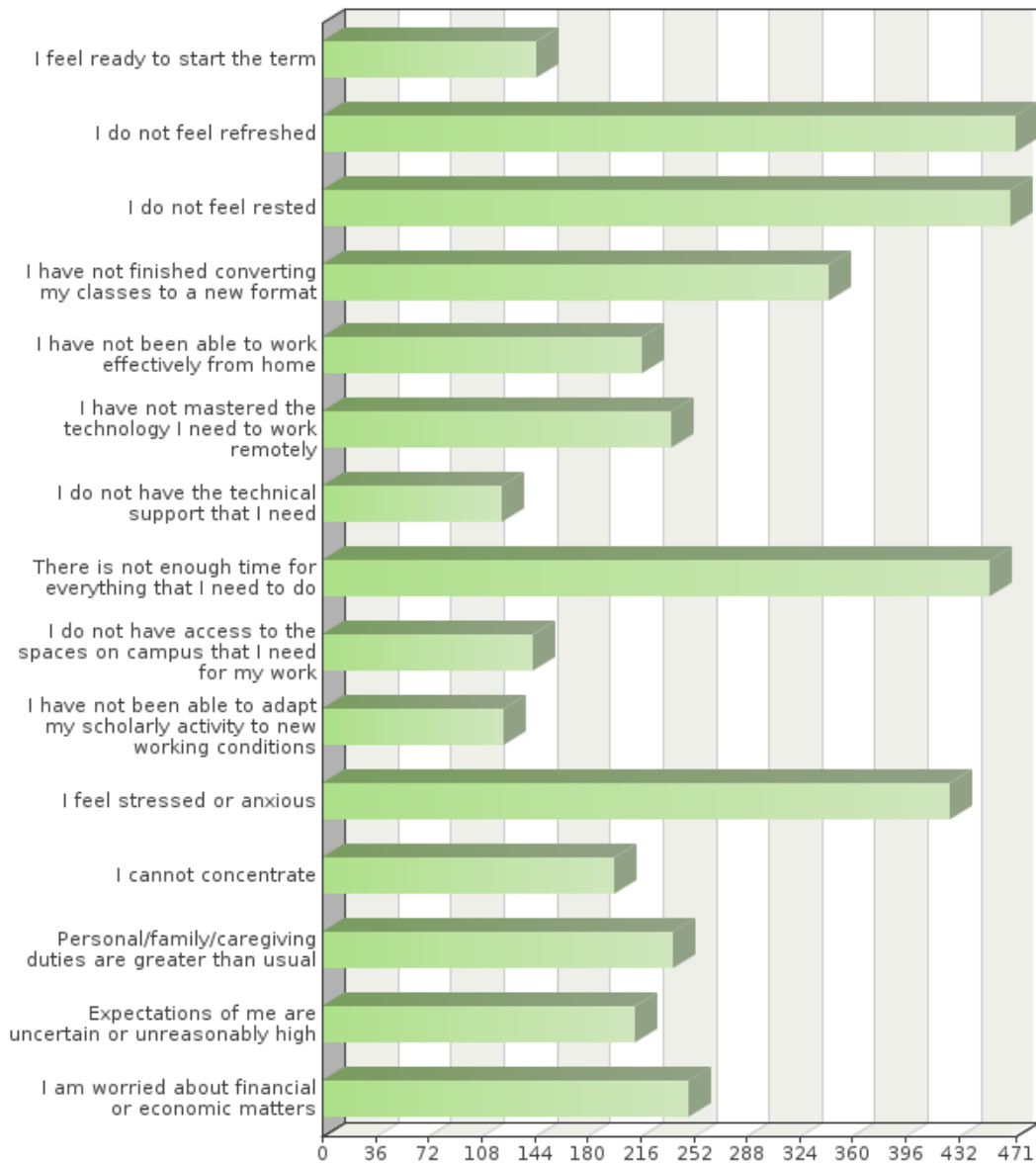


Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency by choice	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
My work time or work effort has not increased compared to last year	35	1.1%	4.93%	5.33%
Transitioning face-to-face course(s) to online format	571	17.93%	80.42%	86.91%
Adapting face-to-face course(s) to a safer format	151	4.74%	21.27%	22.98%
Learning to use new technology for remote work	546	17.15%	76.9%	83.11%
Adapting scholarly activities to new working conditions	400	12.56%	56.34%	60.88%
Increased administrative duties	314	9.86%	44.23%	47.79%
Challenges related to working from home	473	14.86%	66.62%	71.99%
Additional personal/family/caregiving responsibilities	294	9.23%	41.41%	44.75%
Increased support for students	400	12.56%	56.34%	60.88%
Sum:	3184	100%	-	-
Not answered:	53	-	7.46%	-

Question 16

Which of the following are contributing to your feelings of readiness to start the term (please check all that apply)? Please elaborate as you wish.



Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency by choice	Relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency
I feel ready to start the term	146	3.61%	20.56%	22.32%
I do not feel refreshed	471	11.63%	66.34%	72.02%
I do not feel rested	468	11.56%	65.92%	71.56%
I have not finished converting my classes to a new format	344	8.5%	48.45%	52.6%
I have not been able to work effectively from home	217	5.36%	30.56%	33.18%
I have not mastered the technology I need to work remotely	237	5.85%	33.38%	36.24%
I do not have the technical support that I need	122	3.01%	17.18%	18.65%
There is not enough time for everything that I need to do	453	11.19%	63.8%	69.27%
I do not have access to the spaces on campus that I need for my work	143	3.53%	20.14%	21.87%
I have not been able to adapt my scholarly activity to new working conditions	123	3.04%	17.32%	18.81%
I feel stressed or anxious	426	10.52%	60%	65.14%
I cannot concentrate	198	4.89%	27.89%	30.28%
Personal/family/caregiving duties are greater than usual	239	5.9%	33.66%	36.54%
Expectations of me are uncertain or unreasonably high	213	5.26%	30%	32.57%
I am worried about financial or economic matters	249	6.15%	35.07%	38.07%
Sum:	4049	100%	-	-
Not answered:	56	-	7.89%	-

Summary of DFA Workload Survey – Report#1

Prepared by Tara Perrot

September 17, 2020

The survey ran from September 9 to September 17, 2020. A total of 967 members were invited to respond, and 630 completed their responses (690 provided partial responses) for an invitee response rate of over 71%. All percentages provided below are adjusted relative frequency (adjusted for those that did not respond to that particular question). Note that this particular report is a summary of a subset of questions (#'s 3, 5, 6, 7, and 15) that addressed members' workload (including potential sources of increases), perceived stress, work/life balance, and vacation time, in an effort to provide insight into the mental and physical wellness of our members as we begin the fall term. Other reports will be produced that summarize other questions that were included in the survey.

Just under 70% of respondents rated their workload as 'substantially higher' than the same time a year earlier, and another 20% rated it as 'a little higher'. In other words, 90% of respondents are experiencing higher workloads relative to last year. When provided with a list of potential reasons why their workload was increased, if it was, the most frequently cited option, chosen by 87% of respondents was 'transitioning face-to-face course(s) to on-line formats'. This was followed very closely (83% of respondents) by 'learning to use new technology for remote work' and 'challenges to working from home' (72% of respondents). Many of these respondents left comments, with *representative quotes in italics* below:

"Since March I have been working 10-12 hour days, every day but last Friday, helping my graduate students stay motivated; writing grant applications; writing/managing research manuscripts and tackling the monumental task of providing online learning experiences within a catastrophe of LMS systems and support provisions. Meanwhile, our President sends us jolly messages suggesting we might want to listen to his Podcast. It's belittling, and shows that senior admin is so, so far away from the ground floor of what is happening at Dalhousie."

"This is not 'moving my courses online.' This is 'developing totally new online courses to replace the offline ones.' "

"The workload situation has been exceptionally demanding. Essentially all faculty have been expected to re-prep every course offering in online form, with administrative preference given to asynchronous delivery, a process that is often more demanding than developing a course from scratch given the need to learn, integrate, and deploy new technology, often across different types of course offerings (seminars, lectures, etc.) As faculty members we have been unable to access our office spaces since the spring, which has hampered all aspects of our work, from teaching, course preparation, as well as research. Not having a home office and/or family-care responsibilities only increases the challenges one faces."

The increased workload for most members has resulted in more perceived stress, with 60% of respondents reporting 'substantially higher' and 30% reporting 'a little higher' levels. Again, many shared comments and most were quite alarming, with reference to seeking medical help occurring repeatedly. A few *representative quotes in italics* are shared below:

"Constant levels of stress with pandemic but also with workload and especially feeling under appreciated by the Dalhousie administration (a 5% pay cut - really at this time?)"

"Domino effect. Stress of teaching prep. Stress of uncertainty in online design and delivery. Stress of horrifying and demoralizing position of Board in collective bargaining. Fallout for home and family situation, where lack of relief from being home creates new complex stresses. Sleeping poorly. Doing best to mitigate and be resilient. Just coping. May very well seek medical support if this continues."

"Extremely stressful environment, so much going on in the research world. So much uncertainty in the future of research and not much support from senior administration."

"I wish there was a button above "substantially higher." Through March and April, things seemed manageable, but as summer approached and continued, my concern for others and for my unit has increased dramatically, causing even physical symptoms of extended stress (see "migraines" above). The Board's damned unconscionable proposals re. bargaining, the new president's outrageously out-of-touch performance during town halls, and Ian Nasson's nearly fetishistic attachment to attacking our pensions added to that. I know of one colleague taking early retirement because of this, and others talking about taking stress or unpaid leave, or resigning from necessary committee roles (program coordinators, etc.). The university's appalling abandonment of my colleagues with children during this was also a major stressor for them and for those of us with basic human feelings. I'm no longer sure that category applies to our senior admin and board."

"This is the MOST stress I have been under my entire Dalhousie career."

"I am suffering from stress to the point where I may have to take a leave"

"Way higher. To the point that I am considering seeking help."

"The workload has just skyrocketed. On top of transitioning everything to online using all of the best practices, another huge part is also dealing with academic dishonesty cases since students are trying to take advantage of the situation. There is no way I can keep this going if I'm going to have to go back to teaching the normal course load."

The higher perceived stress was no doubt partly influenced by the fact that many members were unable to take vacation and have found it challenging to maintain a healthy balance of work and other responsibilities. Of respondents, 55% reported 'a substantially lower' and 23%

reported 'a little lower' opportunity for vacation this year relative to last year. Similarly, 46% of respondents reported 'a substantially lower' and 32% reported 'a little lower' ability to maintain a healthy work life balance.

"Everything takes longer in the virtual environment and everyone is working modified hours (time zones, life circumstances etc) so I've had to adapt and expand my availability. I recently had a virtual meeting with a student at 8pm. I routinely receive "urgent" emails over the weekend. M-F, 9-5 no longer exist in my world."

"There is no balance anymore. And I am bawling the admin for this. The lock down of the lab and school was excessive for the covid caseload in NS. All out of proportion, actually, to the risk we have experienced. And now they want to cut our pay and benefits. The admin, led by our new president (not an auspicious start). seems intent at increasing mental health issue in our academic community. The way they dictate major academic/research operations decisions is beyond the pale—at odds with the "all inclusive/Dal One" image they project online."

"I never thought I was someone who could risk having their work coming ahead of their family. And yet, here we are. I hate who I have become. And I needed to do some soul searching to decide where my true priorities lie. If I fail at my job, who cares. If I fail as a father and a husband, then we have a problem."

"How? I have to kick people out of the room for meetings that should have been emails. My work computer and accessories have taken over the living room. My dresser is a filing cabinet."

"You're kidding, right?! Well, I balance time working vs time with the rest of life, but at the cost of stress, knowing I am further and further behind on everything at work."

Summary of DFA Workload Survey – Report#2

Prepared by Tara Perrot

September 24, 2020

The survey ran from September 9 to September 17, 2020. A total of 967 members were invited to respond, and 630 completed their responses (690 provided partial responses) for an invitee response rate of over 71%. All percentages provided below are adjusted relative frequency (adjusted for those that did not respond to that particular question). Note that this particular report is a summary of a subset of questions (#'s 8 and 16) that addressed members' feelings about being ready to begin the fall term.

Relative to the same time last year, almost 29% of respondents rated their readiness to start the term as 'substantially lower' and another 33% as 'a little lower' while 30% felt they were at the same level of readiness. While almost a third of our membership felt they were at the same level of readiness, this has come at a price, as indicated by the increased levels of workload and stress (see Survey Summary Report #1 of Sept. 17). Respondent comments as *representative quotes in italics* are below. They provide further evidence of the sacrifices that were made in order for a third of members to feel ready. They speak to the challenges incurred by over 60% of members who started the term less than ready relative to last year and also to the additional stress of worrying about preparing for winter term.

"It's about the same only because of the enormous amount of time I spent this summer getting ready for September."

"I feel fairly ready because I worked throughout the summer with no vacation to prepare."

"Same only due to an inordinate amount of work."

"About the same" because I worked non-stop for weeks..."

"I'm only as ready as I was last year because I put in SUBSTANTIALLY more preparation work in the previous couple of months."

"I had to use the Scholar Strike as an excuse to postpone my second lecture. Truth is, I'm three days into the Fall semester, and already drowning. I am so lost and overwhelmed."

"So many unknown factors this term: I put a lot of work in the summer to being ready for this. My worry is next term: I won't have the summer to prep for it, but will be doing that work while running my courses in the Fall term."

"I am particularly worried that I will be ill prepared if teaching in winter goes online."

"Have not had a chance to work on Winter term in the summer which will be a significant stress when this teaching needs to be developed."

When asked about the reasons that respondents do not feel ready to start the term (of those that do not), the most common responses were that respondents did not feel refreshed (72%) or did not feel rested (72%). Both of these responses were echoed by the higher perceived stress levels reported (Question #5) and the comments that were expressed in response to that question. In fact, over 65% of respondents attributed their lack of readiness to start the term to 'I feel stress and anxious'. Another 69% of respondents reported that 'there is not enough time to do everything that I need to do', leaving members feeling helpless. *Representative quotes in italics, below, elaborate on the factors contributing to a lack of readiness of members to begin the term. Although not a response option provided in Question #16, there were an incredible number of members that left comments referring directly and unequivocally to feeling a complete lack of respect by the administration during this time:*

"Dalhousie's negotiating tactics do not inspire much confidence in the administration. The blatant disrespect is killing my morale and loyalty to the institution. When recruited, I thought I would go through my entire academic career at Dalhousie, now I'm not so sure."

"I can't emphasize enough that it is extremely discouraging to have cuts in compensation when we are working harder. I could understand if the economic situation was dire, but as far as I can tell (with a near doubling in my course enrollments) it is definitely not."

It's a pandemic. Everyone's finding it harder to concentrate and cope, and none of our normal resources are there. Add this to the above: the Board trying to take advantage of the pandemic to undermine our pensions and cut our wages is simply despicable. I loathe them and everything they stand for. Why am I doing any work for people like that? The answer is I'm thinking about my students and my colleagues. I've had zero interest in or loyalty to the upper admin and the Board since about May, and I'm not interested in doing anything to help them."

"On top of the extreme workload, the idea of a pay cut is extremely stressful. I am very concerned about bills."

"Other universities supported their faculty with small grants (Concordia U gave \$500 to offset equipment and Internet expenses). Dal's senior admin only pressures its faculty, treating us as a cheap labour and spreading false rumours (about lower enrolments). This is really the lowest point in my 17-year career at this university and I am a Full Professor."

"I cannot emphasize this enough – there is not enough time for everything that I need to do."

"The act of demanding pay cuts itself has significantly contributed to my stress, anxiety and demotivation."

“Having increased workload, stress and anxiety while at the same time the Dal Admin want to cut salaries and gain more control of our pension so they can cut costs there too is a kick in the gut.”

“Anxious about collective bargaining and potential job action! Anxious about a 5% salary cut, as sole earner.”

“I have to say that facing such salary/pension offers from Dal at this time, when I am working so hard for the university and sacrificing so much (even within my family), makes me feel betrayed. To be trying to force us to choose a strike causes me to feel very worried for my students and stressed about my financial situation now that my family is down to one salary. Shame on you, Board. We're doing our bit, over and above.”