



# Student Engagement in Digital Learning Phase 2 Report

October 2021

# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PHASE 2</b>	<b>4</b>
Areas of good practice identified in Phase 2	4
The Objectives of Phase 2	4
The composition of the respondents	5
The key indicators	5
<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>6</b>
Do Regent Students display similar levels of online engagement compared to Other students?	6
<b>Other students</b>	
Do Regent students have similar views to Other students on synchronous (in- session) and asynchronous (between session) support for online learning?	7
<b>Other students</b>	
Comparing Phase 1 and Phase 2 Levels of Engagement	15
In their own words: Regent Students' views on what practices should be carried forward to 'teaching as normal'	16
Negative views of digital learning	17
Distinctively Digital Practices that Students would like to see applied to Campus Delivery	17
General Practices increased during digital delivery Students would like to see applied to Campus Delivery	17
What predicts Regent Students' thoughts of dropping out of their course?	18
What is the relationship between levels and types of engagement with digital learning and withdrawal?	19
What predicts digital engagement in Regent students?	20
What is the impact of different tutor interventions on overall course satisfaction?	20
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>21</b>
Key Findings	21
'Our Approach'	22
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	<b>24</b>
Progress Report on Action from Phase 1	24

# AUTHOR



**Professor Patrick McGhee**  
FRSA, C PSYCHOL, BABCP, UK NATIONAL TEACHING FELLOW

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers Phase 2 of the Student Engagement in Digital Learning Project at Regent College London. As such it covers the experiences of students at the end of the first full year of online digital learning. The Phase 1 Report covered the views and expectations of staff and students at the outset of the 2020-21 academic year. Building on existing infrastructure and teaching strategies, Regent College significantly enhanced its systems for student learning and support online over a short period of time in the context of the onset of Covid-19 in March 2020.

In line with the institution's vision for flexible provision and increasing global reach, it subsequently committed strategically to making 'digital' a core element of its delivery model, principally through 'Regent Digital' - a branded ecosystem. The difficulties both in moving initially to digital delivery at short notice and at scale, and the longer-term commitment to blended online models inevitably involved several key challenges which were documented in the Phase 1 report as part of a broader action plan. That report made 10 recommendations based on staff and student views that could improve student engagement immediately, with a further 13 recommendations based on where the College stood in relation to the JISC 2020 Horizon framework and best practice internationally.

This follow-up study took place in May 2021 to monitor implementation of recommendations and to track student success in the context of Regent Digital. Key findings include:

- i. Compared to students elsewhere Regent students report being more satisfied with their course, getting higher grades, being less likely to think of leaving their course, and more likely to have a clear idea of what they are planning to do after graduation;
- ii. Regent students were more likely to indicate that they had received helpful support from tutors over the academic year than were students at other institutions;
- iii. Regent students also indicate that they found quizzes at the start of sessions and summaries at the end as being particularly helpful for their digital learning; and
- iv. Overall students at Regent found online learning to be well managed and helpful for them both in terms of interactivity and convenience – though several students reported sometimes missing meeting friends and tutors face-to-face.



Suggestions students made about how they could be helped further in 2021-22 included working in groups with students and one-to-one support for feedback. A review is included of the College's progress against the Action Plan and JISC Horizon Framework. Additional recommendations are made to further build on the development of the Regent Digital model and a number of areas of good practice are identified. Overall, the College has managed the second phase of digital learning well in terms of staff engagement, student support, synchronous and asynchronous teaching and this is reflected in the levels of student satisfaction and engagement.

## PHASE 2

### Areas of good practice identified in Phase 2

As in Phase 1, several areas of good practice were identified in Phase 2:

1

The high levels of academic support provided by tutors during 2020-21 reflected in students' high levels of engagement and course satisfaction in absolute and relative terms.

2

The high levels of implementation of key requests made by students in Phase 1 to improve engagement

3

The high levels of employment focus displayed by Regent students both in absolute terms and in relation to Other students in partnership network.

4

The high levels of mental wellbeing reported by Regent students both in absolute and relative terms.

5

The improvements against a high baseline of Regent students in the areas of satisfaction and engagement.

6

The support for students reflected in the low levels of consideration of dropping out of the course.

7

The progress made on the Action Plan from Phase 1.

8

The clear messages to students regarding how teaching and learning will be delivered in 2021-22 in the Our Approach statement.

9

The work of the Student Engagement team and the HubX initiative.

## The Objectives of Phase 2

The objectives of Phase 2 were:

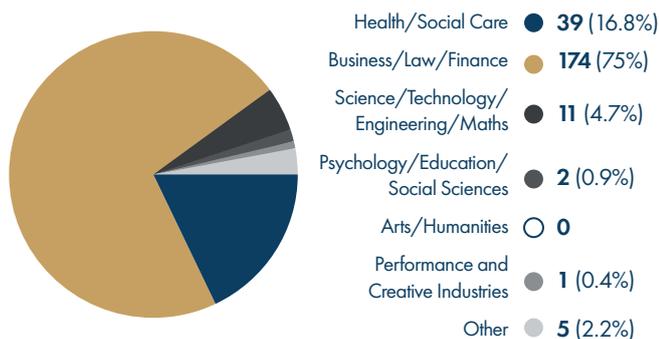
1. To examine students' views of digital learning having experienced a full academic cycle of teaching.
2. To identify which aspects of their experience predicted key issues such as course satisfaction, withdrawal, employment plans and academic success.
3. To identify any significant changes in students' engagement with online learning compared to the start of their academic programme.



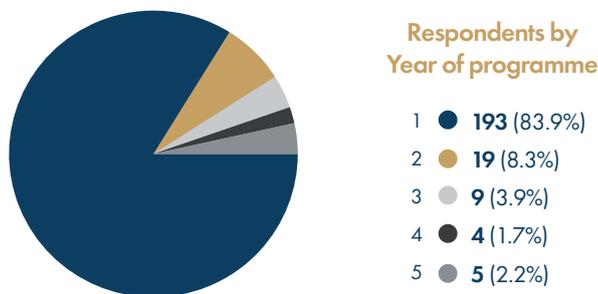
## The composition of the respondents

Overall, 232 Regent students completed the survey as part of a larger population of 803 students from across the University of Bolton Partnership network and including the University itself. In combination with the Phase 1 respondents this amounts to over 1,200 responses.

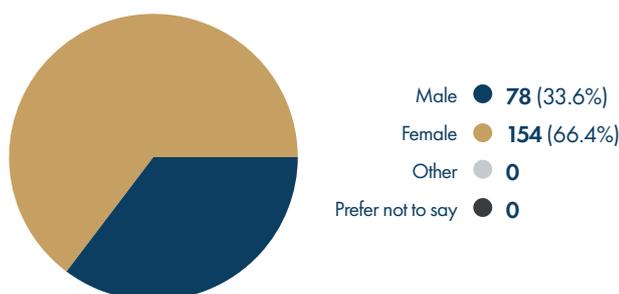
Across subjects, the majority of Regent students were in the Business area (75%).



Additionally, the majority of Regent students were in their first year of the programme.



The majority of Regent students responding to the study were female.



## The key indicators

In order to identify not just the profile of Regent students' engagement with digital learning, it was an aim of Phase 2 to identify the *impact* of students' experiences of digital learning on some key indicators of their academic experience. The four key areas were:

- 1. Employability focus** (measured by levels of agreement with the statement 'I have a clear idea about what I would like to do after I graduate.')
- 2. Academic performance** ('So far this academic year, my grades have been good.')
- 3. Course Satisfaction** ('Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course.')
- 4. At Risk of Withdrawing** ('I have seriously thought about dropping out of my course in the last month.')

These four areas are particularly crucial in relation to the 2020-21 academic year as many students have been unfamiliar with digital learning and might be less satisfied and less committed to the programme than might have been the case in previous years. The central focus here is on identifying the extent to which factors specifically related to engagement in digital learning predict students' attitude and performance on the course.

The survey was carried out anonymously online between 4-27 May 2021. For the majority of students across the entire population this would be after all teaching had ended but before examinations or final deadlines for the submission of course work. While this might be a more stressful period for students than other periods during the academic year, it was felt to be more appropriate to separate as far as possible students' engagement with final assessments, examinations, results and feedback from the process of digital learning itself. In addition, previous research indicates that students' views of the quality of teaching and learning can be biased by information about their performance. Nonetheless, students will have received some assessments prior to this point and so a question was included to capture this aspect ('So far this academic year, my grades have been good.')

# FINDINGS

## Do Regent students display similar levels of online engagement compared to Other students?

In short, the answer is ‘no’. Overall, Regent students indicate **higher** levels of online engagement than the comparison group.

Dixon (2015) identified four key dimensions of Online Student Engagement: Skills, Emotion, Participation and Performance. Using the OSE (Online Student Engagement) Scale, on each of the dimensions, student self-assessments are higher at Regent. The SEELE (Student Engagement in E-Learning Experience) Scale has greater levels of differentiation with six significant dimensions: Psychological Motivation to Engage; Engagement in Peer Collaboration, Engagement in Cognitive Problem Solving, Engagement with Instructors, Engagement with Online Community Support and Engagement with Learning Management.

Similarly, on the SEELE Scale (Lee at al., 2019) Regent students also displayed higher levels of engagement. This pattern of higher levels of engagement, across multiple dimensions and in the context of two different conceptualisations of online engagement, reinforces the proposition that a higher level of engagement of Regent students is substantive and not restricted to some dimensions of online participation.

The following table shows how Regent students compare with Other students on the Online Student Engagement Scale:

### REGENT VS OTHER ON THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF THE OSE SCALE

Dimension	Institution	Mean	Std. Error
OSE Skills	Other	3.8	0.04
	Regent	4.2	0.05
OSE Emotion	Other	3.9	0.03
	Regent	4.3	0.05
OSE Participation	Other	3.5	0.04
	Regent	3.9	0.06
OSE Performance	Other	3.9	0.04
	Regent	4.2	0.06
OSE Overall	Other	3.8	0.03
	Regent	4.1	0.05

Dark blue indicates difference reaches statistical significance.

The following table shows how Regent students compare with Other students on the Student Engagement in E-Learning Experience Scale:

### REGENT V OTHER ON THE SIX DIMENSIONS OF THE SEELE SCALE

Dimension	Institution	Mean	Std. Error
SEELE_PSYMOT	Other	3.27	0.05
	Regent	4.28	0.07
SEELE_PEERCOLLAB	Other	3.50	0.04
	Regent	3.82	0.06
SEELE_COGPROBSOLVE	Other	3.69	0.04
	Regent	4.23	0.06
SEELE_INTERACT_INSTRUCTORS	Other	3.50	0.04
	Regent	3.75	0.07
SEELE_COMM_SUPPORT	Other	3.24	0.05
	Regent	3.92	0.08
SEELE_LEARNING_MANAGEMENT	Other	3.58	0.04
	Regent	4.21	0.06



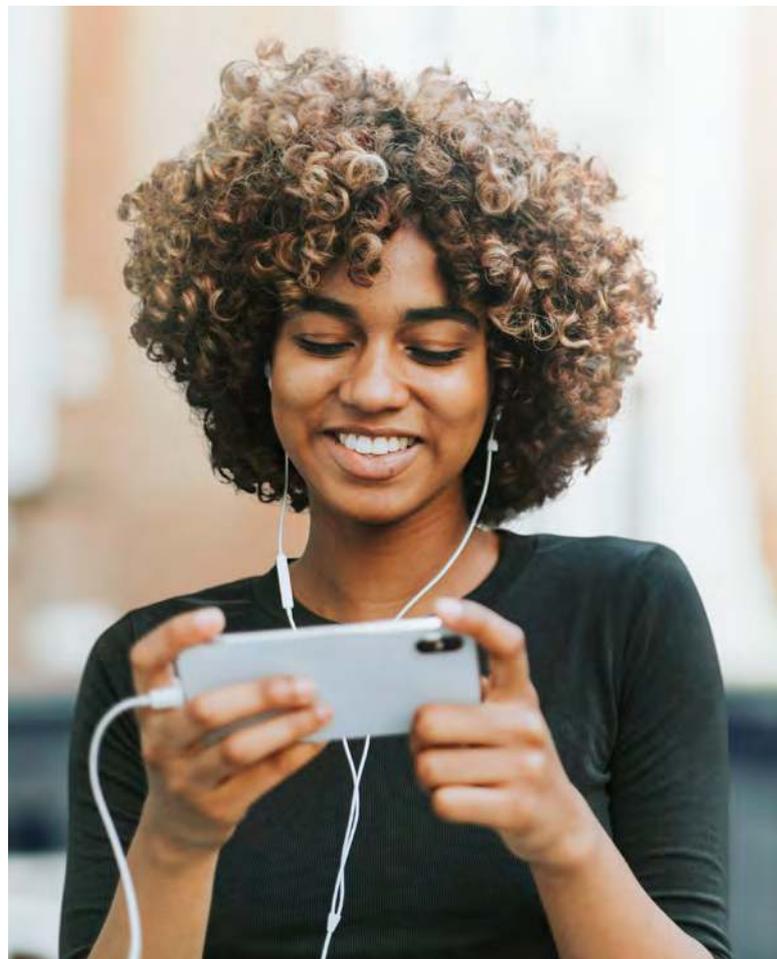
## Do Regent students display similar levels of experience on quality KPIs compared to Other students?

While academic performance and progress can be assessed in different ways depending on the context, aspirations and expectations of individual students and courses, it is generally agreed that clarity regarding future plans, a sense of academic achievement, satisfaction with one's course and not contemplating withdrawal are useful Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to a broad sense of the quality of a student's engagement with a programme of study. Again, although the overall average for all students in all institutions is above the mid-point, Regent students consistently score better than Other students on these indexes (i.e. lower on contemplating drop out but higher on the other three). All of these differences are statistically significant.

The following table shows how Regent students compare with Other students on quality KPIs. Higher scores show higher level of agreement with the statement.

### REGENT VS OTHER ON QUALITY KPIS

Quality KPIs	Institution	Mean	Std. Error
I have a clear idea about what I would like to do after I graduate.	Other	3.99	1.01
	Regent	4.21	0.75
	Total	4.05	0.94
So far this academic year, my grades have been good.	Other	3.77	0.98
	Regent	4.02	0.73
	Total	3.84	0.92
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course.	Other	3.75	1.11
	Regent	4.30	0.74
	Total	3.91	1.05
I have seriously thought about dropping out of my course in the last month.	Other	2.41	1.45
	Regent	2.22	1.42
	Total	2.35	1.44



## Do Regent students have similar views to Other students on synchronous (in-session) and asynchronous (between session) support for online learning?

A key aspect of modelling students' online engagement is to distinguish between the nature of their interactions with specific teaching sessions where they are learning alongside others with a tutor with all engaging in learning together at the same time (synchronous learning), and their experiences of learning from online resources at their own pace on their own between teaching events (asynchronous learning). The survey allowed multiple comparisons in this area.

In Phase 1 of the study students were asked to rate the extent to which each of an extensive series of tutor actions would be most welcomed by them. In Phase 2 we explored the extent to which students felt these actions had been carried out.

## Comparing Tutor Actions in Synchronous online teaching sessions (i.e. in session) at Regent versus Elsewhere

**Students were asked:** *Thinking about recent online video sessions (e.g. via Zoom or Microsoft Teams), to what extent do your tutors normally engage in the following?*

Comprehensively, not only did the majority of Regent students indicate that the actions had been carried out, they rated the extent to which they had been implemented significantly higher than the rated level of these tutor actions at other institutions.

The biggest differences were in relation to the use of online quizzes at the start and end of online teaching sessions, and ‘asking everyone to comment via chat what they have been doing since the last session’.

The following table shows how Regent students rated the extent to which their tutors engaged in the certain activities during synchronous teaching as compared to Other students:



## REGENT VS OTHER ON TUTOR ACTIONS IN SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TEACHING

Statement	Institution	Mean	Std. Dev
Giving a clear introduction at the beginning of the session on what will be covered and why	Other	4.23	0.91
	Regent	4.47	0.69
Asking everyone to comment via chat what they have been doing since the last session	Other	3.31	1.33
	Regent	4.1	0.97
Checking that students understand each section as we go through	Other	3.96	1.05
	Regent	4.41	0.79
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the start to check understanding so far	Other	2.99	1.33
	Regent	3.95	1.05
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the end to check understanding of session	Other	3.02	1.31
	Regent	3.94	1.05
Having small group discussions online about the topic or a related case study	Other	3.83	1.11
	Regent	4.09	1.00
Making everyone feel positive and emotionally comfortable before we start	Other	3.81	1.14
	Regent	4.32	0.85
Summarising the key points at the end of the session	Other	4.08	1.00
	Regent	4.47	0.62
Assigning a small task to each student to do before the next session	Other	3.39	1.23
	Regent	3.93	1.09
Giving some homework for everyone to do before the next session	Other	3.51	1.18
	Regent	3.96	1.00
Telling us at the end of the session what the next session will be about	Other	3.77	1.13
	Regent	4.09	0.95
Indicating what kind of assessment questions have been used for this topic in the past	Other	3.61	1.20
	Regent	4.04	1.00
Have students pair up for each online session to help keep each other engaged and on track	Other	3.18	1.37
	Regent	3.78	1.14
Check that all students are comfortable with the technology being used	Other	3.52	1.27
	Regent	4.17	0.91
Overall, I would say my tutors have increased the help they have given me in these areas during this year	Other	3.79	1.20
	Regent	4.36	0.85

## Comparing Tutor Actions in Asynchronous online teaching sessions (i.e. between sessions) at Regent versus Elsewhere

Students at Regent not only indicate that positive actions were being taken in relation to teaching management between sessions, they gave significantly stronger indications compared to Other students that this was the case across all the items. Endorsement was also strong and significantly higher than Other students in relation to the item *Overall, I would say my tutors have increased the help they have given me in these areas during this year.*

The following table shows how Regent students rated the extent to which their tutors engaged in the certain activities during asynchronous teaching as compared to Other students:

### REGENT VS OTHER ON TUTOR ACTIONS IN ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TEACHING

Item	Institution	Mean	Std. Dev
Give students specific questions to answer for each item they have to read	Other	3.37	1.18
	Regent	4.11	0.86
Be available between sessions to answer questions I might have	Other	3.95	1.01
	Regent	4.20	0.83
Run short sessions focusing on assessment tasks only	Other	3.63	1.13
	Regent	4.07	0.92
Encourage the use of online message boards for students to post questions and ideas	Other	3.54	1.21
	Regent	4.21	0.84
Organise a buddy system where two students from the same year of the same course help each other	Other	2.75	1.29
	Regent	3.67	1.14
Organise a mentoring system where a student who has already done my level of the course provides some help and guidance to me	Other	2.71	1.31
	Regent	3.61	1.21
Have weekly or fortnightly online tests that do not count towards your final official grade but help students see how they are doing	Other	2.77	1.33
	Regent	3.60	1.16
Facilitate optional online student-led study sessions	Other	2.97	1.35
	Regent	3.80	1.09
Overall, I would say my tutors have increased the help they have given me in these areas during this year	Other	3.59	1.25
	Regent	4.24	0.91



## What appears to be driving Regent students' attitude towards their sense of being supported by tutors in relation to online synchronous learning? Is it the same as Other students elsewhere?

Having established that Regent students have not only a positive perspective on the support they have received from tutors in relation to online video teaching sessions but higher than Other students, we can ask: What do Regent students appear to value when deciding whether they are being supported? What aspects of support are impacting most strongly on their overall sense of being supported in real-time online synchronous teaching sessions? And further, is that pattern of what matters to Regent students similar or different to that indicate by students outside of Regent?

To examine this a regression analysis was carried out entering the item "Overall, I would say my tutors have increased the help they have given me in these areas during this year" as the dependent variable and all the items related to tutors' actions to help synchronous delivery as the predictor variables.

The table below indicates the factors which were the main predictors of the level of support students felt they were receiving from tutors overall, for Regent and for Other students, respectively. Interestingly it can be seen that the strongest predictors are not the same for Regent students as for Other students.

Specifically, for Regent students the main predictors of the overall sense of support were: Online quizzes at the start, summarising key points at the end, indicating what kind of assessment questions have been used for this topic in the past and pairing students up. Quizzes at the end of a session decreased the overall sense of support.

By contrast, for Other students, the key predictors were: clear introduction, checking that students understand each section, making everyone feel positive and emotionally comfortable before we start, pairing students up and checking that all students are comfortable with the technology being used.

It is possible that making students feel emotionally positive and comfortable with the technology were less valued by Regent students as they, as we have seen above, are less anxious generally and have higher self-esteem.

The following table shows how the factors that drive Regent students' sense of being supported by tutors in relation to synchronous learning as compared to Other students:

### REGENT VS OTHER ON SENSE OF BEING SUPPORTED DURING SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

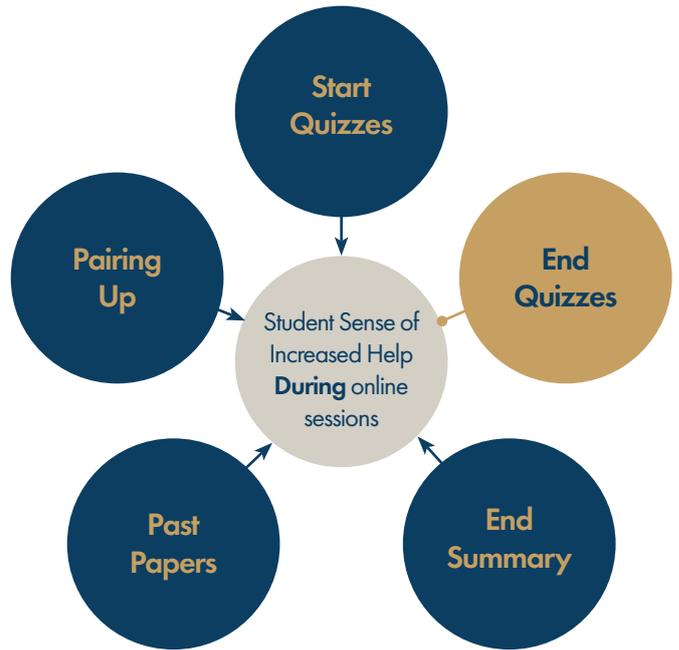
Regent Students	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta		
Giving a clear introduction at the beginning of the session on what will be covered and why	0.10	1.41	0.16
Asking everyone to comment via chat what they have been doing since the last session	0.06	0.90	0.37
Checking that students understand each section as we go through	-0.13	-1.92	0.06
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the start to check understanding so far	0.35	3.63	0.001
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the end to check understanding of session	-0.39	-3.93	0.001
Having small group discussions online about the topic or a related case study	-0.02	-0.27	0.79
Making everyone feel positive and emotionally comfortable before we start	0.01	0.10	0.92
Summarising the key points at the end of the session	0.28	4.31	0.00
Assigning a small task to each student to do before the next session	-0.11	-1.67	0.10
Giving some homework for everyone to do before the next session	0.07	1.02	0.31
Telling us at the end of the session what the next session will be about	0.00	-0.05	0.96
Indicating what kind of assessment questions have been used for this topic in the past	0.19	2.50	0.01
Have students pair up for each online session to help keep each other engaged and on track	0.20	3.06	0.00
Check that all students are comfortable with the technology being used	0.32	4.28	0.00

Other Students	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta		
Giving a clear introduction at the beginning of the session on what will be covered and why	0.14	3.74	0.00
Asking everyone to comment via chat what they have been doing since the last session	0.02	0.42	0.67
Checking that students understand each section as we go through	0.14	3.54	0.00
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the start to check understanding so far	-0.13	-2.41	0.02
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the end to check understanding of session	0.10	1.97	0.05
Having small group discussions online about the topic or a related case study	0.05	1.61	0.11
Making everyone feel positive and emotionally comfortable before we start	0.20	4.71	0.00
Summarising the key points at the end of the session	0.02	0.44	0.66
Assigning a small task to each student to do before the next session	0.05	1.07	0.29
Giving some homework for everyone to do before the next session	0.02	0.52	0.60
Telling us at the end of the session what the next session will be about	0.04	1.12	0.26
Indicating what kind of assessment questions have been used for this topic in the past	0.04	1.17	0.24
Have students pair up for each online session to help keep each other engaged and on track	0.09	2.57	0.01
Check that all students are comfortable with the technology being used	0.26	6.61	0.00



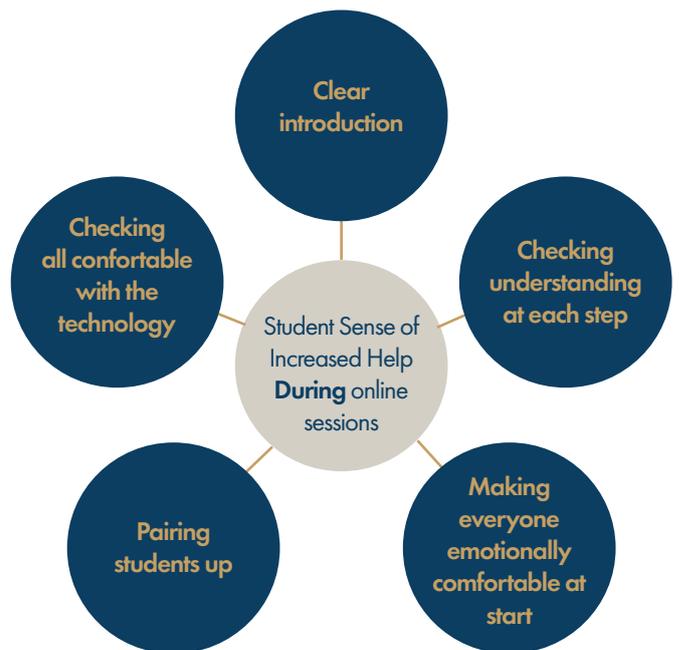


Summary of Factors impacting on Regent Students' sense of being supported during online digital teaching sessions (below)



Dark blue shows factors impacting positively on sense of support.  
Gold shows factor impacting on decreased sense of support.

Summary of Factors impacting on Other Students' sense of being supported during online digital teaching sessions (below)



Dark blue shows factors impacting positively on sense of support.  
Gold shows factor impacting on decreased sense of support.

## What appears to be driving Regent students' attitudes towards their sense of being supported by tutors in relation to online asynchronous learning? Is it the same as Other students elsewhere?

In other words, what lay behind Regent students' perceptions of what constitutes effective tutor action in relation to asynchronous support? What actions by tutors drive up students' perceptions that they are being supported between teaching sessions?

Results indicate that, for Regent students, tutor availability and message boards on student-led sessions were the main drivers of students' overall sense of being supported between online teaching sessions. By contrast Other students' overall perceptions of support between sessions was driven by a wider range of factors: reading questions, tutor availability, assessment sessions, online message boards, formative assessments and student-led sessions. This would

seem to suggest that Regent students have a more focused model of what will help them between teaching sessions, with the consequence that should their needs within that model be met, they will feel supported. By contrast, Other students have a more multifaceted model of what constitutes good between-session support.

Given that Regent students rated the level of support they received more highly than Other students it would appear that Regent students were having that narrower range of needs met. It is possible that Other students, whose views about satisfactory support are based on a wider range of considerations were giving lower ratings on the levels of overall between-session support because not all of the wide range of needs were being met.

The following table shows how the factors that drive Regent students' sense of being supported by tutors in relation to asynchronous learning as compared to Other students:

### REGENT VS OTHER ON SENSE OF BEING SUPPORTED DURING ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Regent Students		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Std. Error	Beta		
Give students specific questions to answer for each item they have to read	0.07	0.07	1.17	0.24
Be available between sessions to answer questions I might have	0.07	0.20	3.09	0.002
Run short sessions focusing on assessment tasks only	0.06	0.01	0.22	0.82
Encourage the use of online message boards for students to post questions and ideas	0.07	0.24	3.99	0.001
Organise a buddy system where two students from the same year of the same course help each other	0.07	0.24	2.52	0.01
Organise a mentoring system where a student who has already done my level of the course provides some help and guidance to me	0.07	-0.20	-2.13	0.04
Have weekly or fortnightly online tests that do not count towards your final official grade but help students see how they are doing	0.05	0.12	1.81	0.07
Facilitate optional online student-led study sessions	0.06	0.23	3.13	0.00
Other Students		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.14		0.69	0.49
Give students specific questions to answer for each item they have to read	0.04	0.17	4.66	0.001
Be available between sessions to answer questions I might have	0.04	0.25	7.35	0.001
Run short sessions focusing on assessment tasks only	0.04	0.10	2.80	0.01
Encourage the use of online message boards for students to post questions and ideas	0.04	0.12	3.24	0.00
Organise a buddy system where two students from the same year of the same course help each other	0.05	-0.02	-0.45	0.66
Organise a mentoring system where a student who has already done my level of the course provides some help and guidance to me	0.05	0.11	2.17	0.03
Have weekly or fortnightly online tests that do not count towards your final official grade but help students see how they are doing	0.04	0.12	2.72	0.01
Facilitate optional online student-led study sessions	0.04	0.17	3.64	0.001

## Do Regents students have similar patterns of anxiety and self-esteem compared to Other students?

Considerable interest has been paid in recent years to the mental health of students in higher education. There have been concerns and subsequent evidence that psychological wellbeing has declined during Covid-19 due to movement restrictions and social isolation alongside health and financial worries. For many students in higher education, these concerns have been compounded by uncertainty over teaching and assessment schedules and locations.

The study examined the extent to which Regent students demonstrated mental health issues comparable to Other students. Using the empirically-validated GAD2 and RSE1 measures (being shortened versions of the GAD7 and Rosenberg Self-Esteem scales, respectively) this study was able to assess differences in anxiety and self-esteem.

The results indicate a very significantly lower level of anxiety and a higher level of self-esteem amongst Regent students. The GAD2 asks respondents to indicate the extent to which over the last two weeks they have been 'Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge' and 'Not being able to stop or control worrying', with higher scores between 2-8 indicating higher levels of anxiety. The RSE1 simply asks respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree with the statement 'I have high self-esteem' with higher scores between 1-7 indicating higher levels of wellbeing.

As can be seen in the table below, Regent students scored a midrange 3.07 on the GAD2 while Other students scored a high 4.5.

GAD2 and RSE1			
	Institution	Mean	Std. Deviation
P2_GAD2	Other	4.50	2.17
	Regent	3.07	1.76
I have high self-esteem	Other	4.23	1.87
	Regent	4.93	1.95

Having identified above that Regent students have a lower level of anxiety it is worth exploring what aspects of online engagement might be associated with this reduced level of stress. Further, it is possible to examine whether the features of online engagement associated with anxiety levels amongst Regent students are the same features associated with anxiety amongst Other students.

In order to examine these issues, a statistical analysis of the coefficients of each of the engagement subscales from both the OSE (Online Student Engagement) Scale, and the SEELE (Student Engagement in e-Learning Experience Scale) were calculated in relation to each student's GAD2 (anxiety score). This enables an assessment of the extent to which each of these subscales independently contribute to the GAD2 score.

It can be seen from the table below that in both cases Psychological Motivation is the single most important factor for both Regent and Other students. It is difficult to identify whether Engagement is driving Anxiety or vice versa, or both.

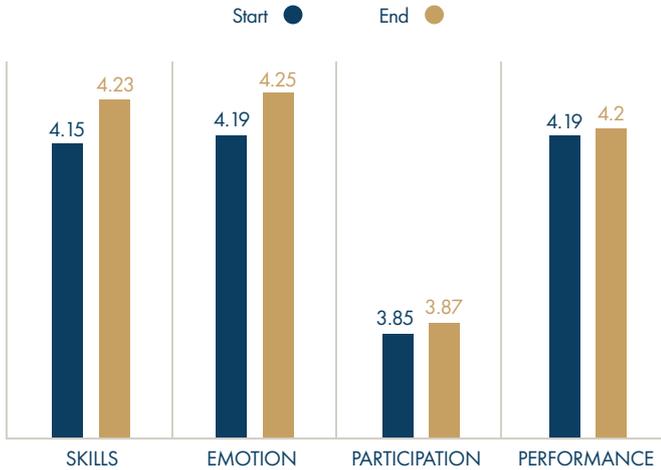
### REGENT VS OTHER ON ENGAGEMENT PREDICTORS OF ANXIETY

Regent	Standardised Beta Coefficients	Sig.
OSE Skills	0.17	0.20
OSE Emotion	0.10	0.46
OSE Participation	-0.12	0.33
OSE Performance	-0.19	0.06
SEELE_PSYMOT	-0.29	0.01
SEELE_PEERCOLLAB	0.01	0.94
SEELE_COGPROBSOLVE	-0.14	0.22
SEELE_INTERACT_INSTRUCTORS	0.08	0.39
SEELE_COMM_SUPPORT	0.10	0.46
SEELE_LEARNING_MANAGEMENT	0.06	0.58
Others	Standardised Beta Coefficients	Sig.
OSE Skills	0.00	0.96
OSE Emotion	0.11	0.11
OSE Participation	-0.10	0.16
OSE Performance	-0.04	0.49
SEELE_PSYMOT	-0.20	0.00
SEELE_PEERCOLLAB	0.02	0.75
SEELE_COGPROBSOLVE	-0.08	0.24
SEELE_INTERACT_INSTRUCTORS	0.07	0.16
SEELE_COMM_SUPPORT	0.00	0.99
SEELE_LEARNING_MANAGEMENT	-0.12	0.06

## Comparing Phase 1 and Phase 2 Levels of Engagement

In order to assess whether or not Regent students became more or less engaged during the second year of online learning i.e. Phase 2, comparisons were carried out on a between-subjects basis on the four dimensions of the OSE. The graph below shows the results.

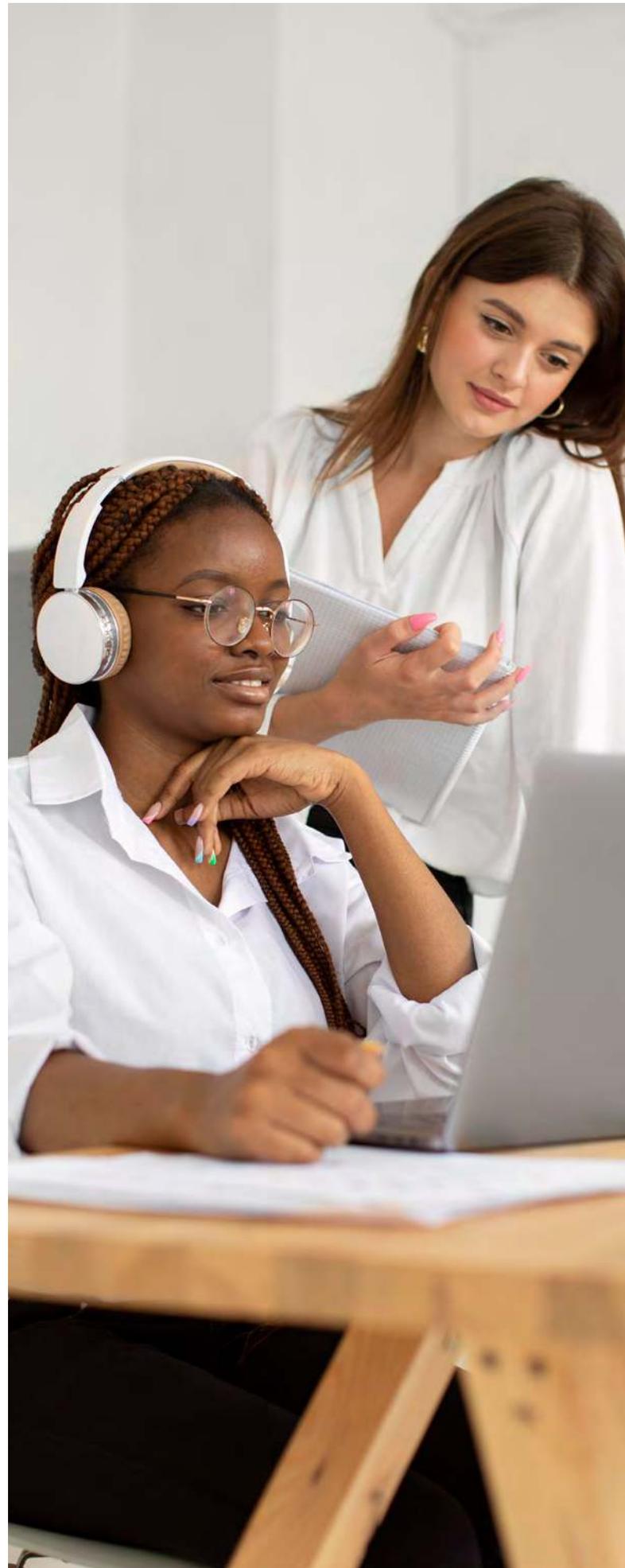
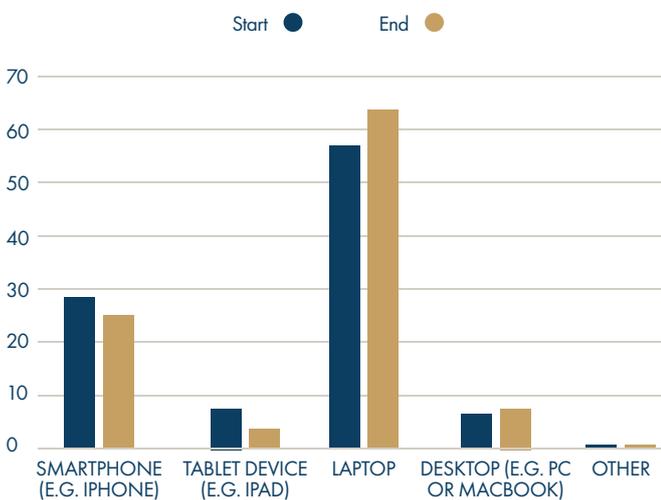
### LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT START VS END OF ACADEMIC YEAR



None of the differences in the levels of engagement measures comparing Start vs End of the academic year are statistically significant, although the Skills measure approaches significance. This may be a ceiling effect where the scores on three of the four subscales are already high at the start of the year.

Phase 2 also investigated whether there had been changes in the types of devices used by Regent students to engage with online sessions from Phase 1 to Phase 2. While the levels of smartphone usage fell slightly and the usage of laptops increased, this was not statistically significant. The graph below shows how usage compares for various devices.

### DEVICES USED FOR ONLINE SESSIONS - START VS END OF YEAR



## In their own words: Regent students' views on what practices should be carried forward to 'teaching as normal'

What do Regent students say should be carried forward from digital learning to blended or campus-based delivery?

In order to identify those aspects of learning which students had experienced during Covid via remote digital delivery, we asked the question: *What aspects of remote online learning during Covid would you like to see continue when teaching is 'back to normal'?*

While many students were in favour of retaining the online-learning model only and a minority rejected digital delivery in favour of a return to the classroom, a very large number of students appeared to accept the inevitability of a return to wholly or principally campus-based learning. However, they had clear ideas about what elements of digital learning should be carried into the classroom. It is interesting to note that while some of these recommendations from students are directly related to the use of online synchronous delivery, some are pedagogic features which are not particularly linked to remote digital delivery. In many cases tutors appeared to be taking steps to make online learning more manageable and more accessible to students – and all the evidence points to these interventions being effective – however these interventions are seen by students as teaching tactics tutors should continue with when delivery returns to face-to-face on campus learning.

Students' answers to this question varied from wanting to have the fully digital online experience continue to a desire to get back into a 'normal' classroom experience. In their own words:

**"I prefer to continue online, same way as now."** - Business /Law/Finance student

**"All the process."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"I prefer to continue online education."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"I love online learning and I find myself loving this even more, I would love for the online learning to be a 'thing' and to continue as this has helped me a lot with my anxiety and I simply love online classes!"**

- Business / Law / Finance student

**"I want to continue the classes online."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"For me it is much more convenient for online courses because I have a family and I am not from London. I have more time to spend with my family and I save some money."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"Teachers can pass on any information they want very quickly. Thus, it is no longer necessary to synchronize people in order to meet physically; no one will lose anything because the information remains online. That should remain even after everything returns to 'normal'."**

- Business/Law/Finance student

**"I think that the online learning are better and make you to focus more on the lessons."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"I don't want to go back to normal. I love it like this."**

**"To still have it remote."**

**"I prefer the online teaching."**

**"I would like to continue to make online lessons because I have more time for lessons, if we go back to the College I will lose a lot of time and I will be tired so I will not be able to understand the lessons."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"I would like to continue studying online."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"Online learning is safe."**

**"Online lessons, because they are perfect to manage time, to take notes and to see the records of the lessons."**

**"I really hope we will gonna continue to learn online because for myself it's better, I have more time for learning... the time that I will gonna spend for travelling will gonna make me tired so I would not be able to pay attention on the lessons. I love online classes because I really learn!"** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"The same as with Covid-19. For me, online learning is better. I manage to concentrate on the lectures and the material. And at the same time - not lost but from discussions with teachers and classmates."** - Business/Law/Finance student

**"The option for online classes because it is easier to take part like this from the comfort of your house and you don't lose time to go to university and back home."**

**"Many advantages of online learning are not possible with 'back to normal' teaching." "I would prefer online learning."**

**"I would prefer online learning."**

**"I like to be online because the difference between online and 'normal' is travelling to college. So if I drink coffee in front of the laptop, I will do it in class too. But I feel more comfortable in my chair at home than the small and terrible chair in the classroom."**

***“I would like to continue with online learning as it is more convenient for me.”***

***“I would like to continue my online studies, I save a lot of time doing online courses, the time spent in traffic going to school I can use more efficiently.”***

***“I would like to continue learning online” “I think doing it online will be great.”***

***“To continue online class”*** - Science/Technology/  
Engineering/Maths Student

***“All please, I prefer online learning”*** - Health/Social Care  
Student

***“Absolutely all aspects of online distance learning during Covid”*** - Business/Law/Finance Student

### Negative views of digital learning

By contrast another group of students – a minority - were keen to get back to the previous face-to-face teaching regime. In response to the question, What aspects of remote online learning during Covid would you like to see continue when teaching is ‘back to normal’? responses were focused on preferring traditional face-to-face campus-based teaching. In their own words:

***“I don’t like online learning.”***

***“Back normal.”*** - Business/Law/Finance student

***“I’m not sure to be honest. It’s been a real struggle with online class and I just can’t wait to go back to normal.”***

***“Nothing, how it was before, it was perfect.”*** - Business/  
Law/Finance student

***“None! Online classes are just terrible and I have lost any form of motivation to even finish this degree.”***

***“NONE - Unless tutors are able to use the platform to its full potential, then it does not make any sense to continue. Since being online there has been only one opportunity to be put in groups and even that was not well organised.”***

### Distinctively Digital Practices that Students would like to see applied to Campus Delivery

The specific recommendations from students on what could be carried forward into campus delivery can be split into those practices which are distinctively digital (e.g. recording of classes) and those which might be considered good practice irrespective of delivery method. This latter category seems to have been made up of activities by tutors which were either missing before online delivery or were given more salience during online delivery. In their own words, the following are distinctively digital practices that students would like to see applied to campus delivery:

- Is more interaction online and courses are more interactive as students are not shy and afraid to talk
- The sessions being recorded
- PowerPoint
- Recording lessons
- Easy access
- Communication between teachers and students
- Power point presentations
- To have access to digital tools to use in search of academic articles or information related to certain topics of the course
- Having an online access to all materials already discussed in class
- Using slide materials to help us understand better
- Recording of lectures

### General Practices increased during digital delivery Students would like to see applied to Campus Delivery

However, in addition to students’ generally positive attitudes towards digital practices being carried forward to campus-based face-to-face teaching, many of the recommendations they offered in response to this question did not relate to practices which were distinctively digital such as:

- Social experience
- Shorter breaks
- To give us the feedback on time
- Having (...) as our teacher!!!
- Meeting with the class
- About how to protect ourselves from covid
- Academic development courses for students
- The way teachers support us in making the assessments
- Tutorials

- Small activities to do at the end of lessons
- Support from the teachers!!
- My chair!
- The same attitude that I experienced from my colleagues and tutors
- The days and hours when we have to attend the courses
- More time spent on one 2 one help
- Working in groups with my colleagues
- One-to-one support for feedbacks
- Maybe short sessions with the tutors, in case that I didn't understand something in class
- Creativity
- Online one to one feedback
- More video stories and updated media events to back up the studied subject
- Academic tutorials, online sessions with students and teachers
- Many advantages of online learning are not possible with 'back to normal' teaching

*"I would say mix the classes if possible for example weekly online classes and normal classes weekends because most of students work at the same time."*

## What predicts Regent students' thoughts of dropping out of their course?

Programme non-continuation is an issue for institutions in terms of both lost fee revenue and league table position, but most importantly the loss of opportunity for the students themselves.

Additionally, dropout rates can impact on the Office for Students' baseline expectations and visa compliance. For students, leaving a course of study can be dispiriting and demoralising, and in some contexts a source of shame.

But students rarely leave at short notice, and in such circumstances, there is little the institution can do apart from provide the opportunity for re-entry at a suitable point in the future. Much more common is where a student gradually comes to feel that the course is not right for them.

Anecdotally and from previous research, we see that this can involve a number of factors such as sense of academic progress, support from tutors, clarity of goals, and uptake of support. Beyond that there is an increasing recognition of the role of mental health factors which can both be a direct cause of student withdrawal but also a refractory feature through which other factors are aggravated.

One way of identifying the distinctive features of students who are at risk of dropping out is to simply ask if they have thought about dropping out recently. We can then identify the extent to which other characteristics of the students are associated with such rumination on dropping out.

In order to assess the features which predict deliberation over withdrawal, participants in the study were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement: *I have seriously thought about dropping out of my course in the last month.*

As shown in the table below, the results indicate that students who have thought about dropping out in the last month are characterised by:

- Low levels of satisfaction with the quality of a course
- Higher levels of anxiety
- Better grades
- Higher attendance at personal tutorials

However, there is no association with levels of self-esteem or clarity of post-graduation plans.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS CONSIDERING WITHDRAWAL

Predictor of dropping out	Standardised Co-efficient	t-value	Probability (of being due to chance)
Anxiety Level (GAD2)	0.20	3.20	0.002
I have high self-esteem	-0.02	-0.37	0.71
I have a clear idea about what I would like to do after I graduate	0.05	0.69	0.49
So far this academic year, my grades have been good	0.18	2.30	0.02
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course	-0.33	-4.32	0.001
I attend personal academic tutorials when they are offered to me	0.22	3.46	0.001

*Grey indicates positive association, dark blue indicates negative association.*

## What is the relationship between levels and types of engagement with digital learning and withdrawal?

It can be seen from the table below that low levels of Performance Engagement, Psychological Motivation to Engage and Engagement in Cognitive Problem Solving were predictors of Considering Withdrawal. By contrast, higher levels of Participation marginally predicted increased consideration of withdrawal. Here, the dependent variable is: *I have seriously thought about dropping out of my course in the last month.*

	Engagement Factor	Standardised Co-efficient	t-value	Probability
OSE Factors	Skills Engagement	.004	.029	.98
	Emotion Engagement	.070	.56	.58
	Participation Engagement	.23	2.0	.05
SEELE Factors	Performance Engagement	-.29	3.03	.003
	Psychological Motivation to Engage	-.233	-2.25	.025
	Engagement in Peer Collaboration	.16	1.293	.2
	Engagement in Cognitive Problem Solving	-.29	-2.84	.005
	Engagement with Instructors	.16	1.87	.06
	Engagement with Online Community Support	.14	1.1	.27
	Engagement with Learning Management	.05	.53	.6

Grey indicates positive association, dark blue indicates negative association.

The above indicates that low levels of overall engagement in digital learning might not be the most useful way to monitor students' intentions to leave the course. Rather, it might be more effective to specifically monitor students' levels of engagement in relation to academic achievement (OSE Performance), their psychological

commitment to the course (SEELE Psy Mot) and levels of engagement in problem solving activities (SEELE Eng Cog Prob), as shown in the graph below.

Engagement Factor	Considering Withdrawal	Clear Graduation Plan	High Course Satisfaction
OSE Factors			
Skills Engagement			
Emotion Engagement			
Participation Engagement	Grey		
Performance Engagement	Dark Blue		
SEELE Factors			
Psychological Motivation to Engage	Dark Blue		Grey
Engagement in Peer Collaboration			
Engagement in Cognitive Problem Solving	Dark Blue		Grey
Engagement with Instructors			
Engagement with Online Community Support			
Engagement with Learning Management			

Grey indicates positive association, dark blue indicates negative association.



## What predicts digital engagement in Regent students?

In order to assess what factors might predict levels of overall digital engagement, analyses were carried out to assess the extent to which demographic and wellbeing factors predicted students' scores on the Dixon Overall measure of engagement, as seen in the table below.

### PREDICTORS OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Factor	Significant predictor of Overall Digital Engagement?
Which academic area is your programme in?	No
Anxiety (GAD2)	No
How would you describe your gender?	No
Would you consider yourself to have a disability?	No
Would you consider yourself to be a member of an ethnic minority?	No
Did either of your parents attend a university or equivalent?	No
What year of your degree are you in?	No
I have high self-esteem	Yes

Grey indicates statistically significant association.

Overall, students with high self-esteem reported higher levels of engagement. Interestingly students with low levels of anxiety did not report higher levels of engagement.



## What is the impact of different tutor interventions on overall course satisfaction?

In terms of considering the impact of tutors' interventions within synchronous engagements (e.g. MS Teams teaching sessions) very few aspects of digital engagement were significantly associated with overall course satisfaction as seen in the table below.

### IMPACT OF TUTOR INTERVENTIONS ON COURSE SATISFACTION

	Withdrawal Consideration	Course Satisfaction	Clear plan for after graduation
Giving a clear introduction at the beginning of the session on what will be covered and why			
Asking everyone to comment via chat what they have been doing since the last session			
Checking that students understand each section as we go through			
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the start to check understanding so far			
Having weekly informal online quizzes at the end to check understanding of session			
Having small group discussions online about the topic or a related case study			
Making everyone feel positive and emotionally comfortable before we start			
Summarising the key points at the end of the session			
Assigning a small task to each student to do before the next session			
Giving some homework for everyone to do before the next session			
Telling us at the end of the session what the next session will be about			
Indicating what kind of assessment questions have been used for this topic in the past			
Have students pair up for each online session to help keep each other engaged and on track			
Check that all students are comfortable with the technology being used			

Grey indicates statistically significant association.

# SUMMARY

## Key Findings

Overall, Regent College has managed the second year of remote teaching well, as evidenced by high levels of employability focus, academic performance, satisfaction and course commitment. The College has also taken considerable measures to build on the positive experience of students and to ensure as far as possible that best practice can be carried forward into the 2021-22 academic year and beyond.

There are still some areas which might benefit from additional review and reflection. This includes assessment, support for students who prefer working from home and the management of students' expectations of a hybrid face-to-face and digital experience.

The four key indicators of employability focus, academic performance, course satisfaction and course commitment were particularly crucial in relation to the 2020-21 academic year as many students were previously unfamiliar with digital learning and might be less satisfied and less committed to the programme than might have been the case in previous years. The central focus here was on identifying the extent to which factors specifically related to engagement in digital learning predict students' attitude and performance on the course.

The four key indicators were measured by levels of agreement with their respective statements:

- 1. Employability focus** - 'I have a clear idea about what I would like to do after I graduate.'
- 2. Academic performance** - 'So far this academic year, my grades have been good.'
- 3. Course Satisfaction** - 'Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course.'
- 4. At Risk of Withdrawing** - 'I have seriously thought about dropping out of my course in the last month.'

Regent students scored highly on these indicators and higher than the average of other institution across the partnership network of which they are a part.

The relationship between engagement in digital learning and performance on these indicators is complex with distinctive patterns emerging on each one.

Additionally, students' self-rated perspectives on these four dimensions improved at the end of the academic year, however these did not achieve statistical significance. The indications from the quantitative measures are reinforced by the testimony from students in the qualitative open-ended responses. Students are very positive about remote digital learning in general, and the way restrictions of Covid were handled by the College in particular. For a significant number the opportunity to spend more time at home per se during their studies was felt to be a major positive.



## 'Our Approach'

Recently the College published a summary of their pedagogical approach for the academic year 2021-22. This is a concise and clear summary which lays out the commitment of the organisation to build on what has been learned through the 2020-21 year.

### 'OUR APPROACH'

REGENT Education – Core Competencies

1. Digital synchronous live delivery via any device, any place, with scheduled sessions, but not anytime.
2. Digital asynchronous delivery via any device, any place, anytime.
3. Digital live face-to-face delivery via any device at REGENT's technology powered compact campus locations.

All three core competency options above have the combination of choices that consumers can make...

- Any device
- Any time
- Any place

<https://www.rcl.ac.uk/our-approach/>



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Regent should continue to implement the actions from the Phase 1 report, discussed further in Appendix 1.
2. A shorter version of the survey should be carried out at the beginning and end of each academic year.
3. In line with the recommendations of students, the College should make provision for more 1-2-1 sessions and ask students what they want from such sessions.
4. In line with the reports from students about indicating what predicts their engagement with **synchronous** digital learning, the College should continue and expand specific teaching practices e.g. having weekly informal online quizzes at the start to check understanding so far and summaries at the end of sessions.
5. In line with the reports from students about indicating what predicts their engagement with **asynchronous** digital learning, the College should continue and expand specific teaching practices such as tutors being available between sessions to answer questions students might have and encouraging the use of online message boards for students to post questions and ideas.
6. In the light of the range of student views about the intrinsic merit of face-to-face and digital teaching, and the range of practicalities around the advantages and disadvantages of learning from home versus commuting to campus, the College should prioritise ways in which all students feel welcomed and supported in 2021-22 whatever their attitudes and anxieties about the **transition** to more campus-based learning.
7. The College should develop clear practical plans to accommodate the offer to students to allow them to **choose** whether they study certain course components online or on campus. Clear **boundaries** around notice, support, viability and student responsibility should be developed in collaboration with students and shared widely.





## APPENDIX 1

### Progress Report on Action from Phase 1

Phase 1 of the Project highlighted 23 actions that the College might wish to implement in order to build on the progress made during the initial move to digital and to address emerging ideas and issues from students and staff. These were all accepted by the College as worthy of implementation, but inevitably, the College recognised there would be difficulties and challenges around implementation schedules.

As anticipated in the analysis of the Phase 1 report, the context of teaching and learning throughout 2020-21 and in 2021-22 was always going to be a rapidly moving, and in many respects, unpredictable landscape. However, the College has invested time and resources in responding to the identified recommendations and has made significant progress on a large number of these. This appendix reviews the key elements regarding the progress made by the College in connection with the key points raised from students and staff, and within the context of the JISC framework.

While there are inevitably some areas which have made more progress than others, the overall profile is commendable. This is particularly in the context of the recurrent challenges around managing transitions from what was effectively a fully online digital experience for students and staff and the movement to a campus-based system. The fact that the Regent model for 2021-22 includes significant amounts of blended digital learning and not simply a return to a pre-2020 delivery model arguably makes the actions more difficult but more essential.

It is recommended that the College continues to work on these actions and to fold them into the broader operational and strategic reviews. The status of each of these actions is laid out in the below table.

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL LEARNING PROJECT - PROGRESS DASHBOARD

Actions	Progress Report	Status
<b>1. Based on the recommendations of students, the College should prioritise the introduction of the five highly rated enhancements highlighted by students and staff for the delivery of digital sessions as follows:</b>	Through the synchronous delivery model that evolved during pandemic we use MST for teaching and support sessions; this has been incorporated into all delivery methods.	Complete
a. Checking that students understand each section as we go through	Academic leads	Complete
b. Summarising the key points at the end of the session	Academic leads	Complete
c. Checking that all students are comfortable with the technology being used	Academic leads	Complete
d. Giving a clear introduction at the beginning of the session on what will be covered and why	Academic leads	Complete
e. Making everyone feel positive and emotionally comfortable before the start of each session	Academic leads	Complete
<b>2. Based on the recommendations of students, the College should prioritise the introduction of the five highly rated enhancements highlighted by students and staff for the support of digital delivery as follows:</b>	Through the synchronous delivery model that evolved during pandemic we use MST for teaching and support sessions this has been incorporated into all delivery methods and the HubX mechanism supports this	Complete
a. Encourage the use of online message boards for students to post questions and ideas	Academic leads	Complete
b. Be available between sessions to answer questions I might have	Academic leads	Complete
c. Run short sessions focusing on assessment tasks only	Academic leads	Complete
d. Give students specific questions to answer for each item they have to read	Academic leads	Complete
e. Facilitate optional online student-led study sessions	Academic leads	Complete
<b>3. Based on established best practice, the College should implement the recommendations as specified in the JISC framework table as follows:</b>	Student survey completed in [date tbc] and follow up due [date tbc]. Weekly open forum with the Principal and team allows for student views to be heard	Complete
a. A follow up survey of this cohort's experiences of digital learning be carried out in the Spring of 2021	Completed	Complete
b. Module Evaluation (ME) Questionnaires to incorporate questions on digital engagement	Students access ME through the learning dashboard and questions are devised in a way to garner holistic responses. These are incorporated indirectly into these questionnaires and reviewed by programme teams	Almost complete
c. Advise students against poor practice such as using smartphones to access teaching sessions	This is conducted through HubX mechanism	Complete
d. Make assessment at entry of students' digital skills a key part of the induction of students into the institution	This will be implemented [date tbc]	Not started

Actions	Progress Report	Status
e. Staff training should incorporate awareness of special needs, individual differences and the general dividend of inclusiveness	This is incorporated in most of the sessions that we deliver and is evidenced in the content delivered and also features in some of the discussions that follow amongst participants and facilitators. The first set of workshops in October on Fellowships will also expose staff to relevant indicators within the UKPSF.	Complete
f. Staff training should include awareness around the distinctive pressures of digital learning and the ways different individuals can be impacted	Scheduled for AY 21 /22 planner	Almost complete
g. Staff training should highlight how digital learning can help some students who, for example, lack confidence in classroom settings	Scheduled for AY 21 /22 planner	Almost complete
h. Staff training should highlight how the College can help staff secure additional technical, pedagogical and student support skills	Pedagogical skills training are supported by academic Services Team and the Enrichment team. Technical skills are wide ranging and the functional teams deliver training and support academic staff on induction. Partner Universities also hold sessions that RCL staff can participate in such as how to work effectively on Grademark, using various functionalities of different VLE platforms to promote student engagement and enhance the learning experience	Complete
i. The College should prioritise the production of the <i>A Student's Guide to Digital Learning</i> and identify a means of involving students in content creation	A draft version will go to Academic Council Q4 21	Started
j. The College should incorporate an annual review of assessment with partners and ensure all assessments are in line with the JISC assessment principles of being Authentic, Accessible, Appropriately automated, Continuous and Secure	Annual reviews are incorporated with EE reports; also we hold EE induction sessions and an annual review of our Teaching Strategy. All of this is supported by standardisation meetings under the auspices of the Head of School	Complete
k. The College should design a series of pilots for formative digital assessment that does not contribute to the final module mark which incorporate remote 'proctored assessments'	Planning in operation to include this for staff development AY 21 /22	Started
l. The College should develop a project to identify and support those students who are struggling with digital learning due to home circumstances and provide additional customised help	The Student Engagement team lead in this area and oversee the HubX support. HubX provide support to students across pastoral, welfare and academic and students are monitored closely to ensure they receive the support they require. Academic staff as ASOs work with CSOs to lead on academic matters under the HubX model.	Complete
m. The College should strengthen the governance around Regent Digital and develop a road map for the implementation of all the components of the Regent Digital vision including a Risk Register for the project	This is a living document and will be furnished during AY 21 /22.	Started