

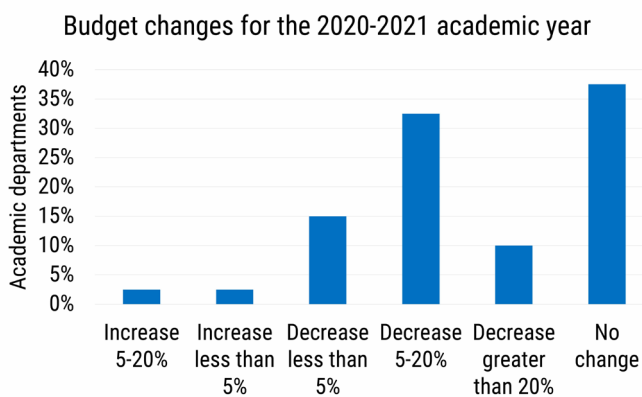
## COVID-19 Impacts to Academic Department Operations, April 2021

This data brief provides an update on the state of geoscience academic departments during the COVID-19 pandemic, including budgets, staffing, changes to degree requirements and promotion and tenure guidelines, and planning for the next academic term.

departments reporting no staffing impacts declined to 68% by April 2021. In April, 12% of departments reported not being able to hire new staff. Other impacts reported by departments since February include reduced hours for faculty and staff, termination of summer contracts, and benefits reductions.

### Budget Changes

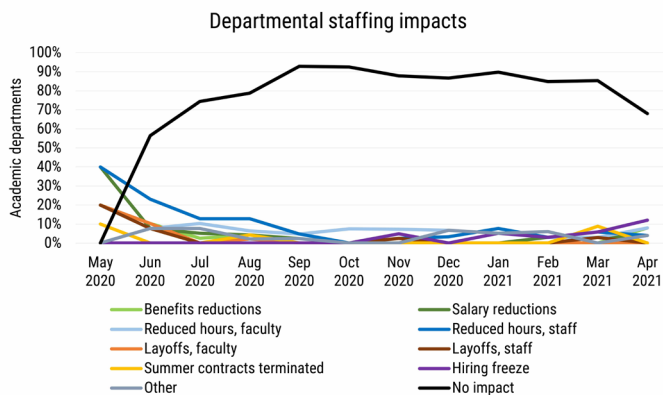
Most departments (58%) experienced budget cuts during the 2020-2021 academic year, with 48% of departments reporting cuts of 20% or less. In addition, 5% of departments reported increases to their budgets over the academic year, and 38% of departments reported no change in their budgets.



Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

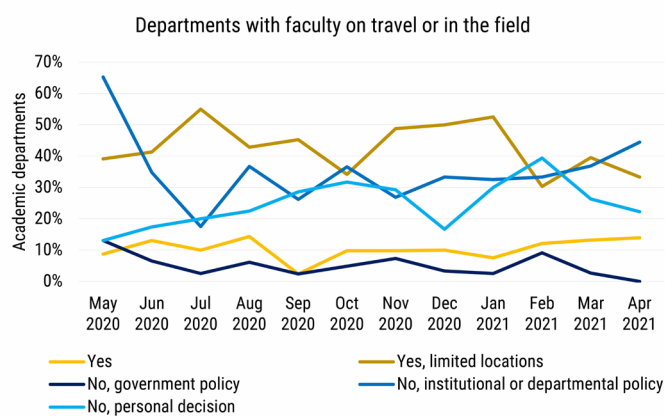
### Staffing

Most impacts to departmental staffing such as salary and benefits reductions, staff and faculty furloughs and layoffs occurred by the end of May 2020 and continued through the summer months of 2020. From September 2020 through January 2021, the percentage of departments reporting no impacts to staffing remained near 90%. Starting in February 2021, impacts related to hiring freezes and leaving open positions unfilled have started to increase, and the percentage of



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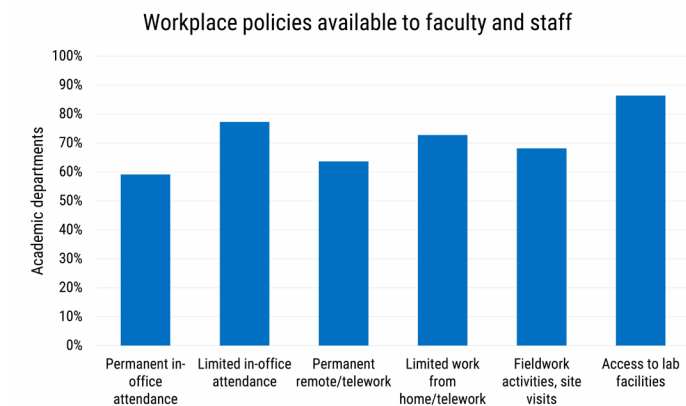
The percentage of departments reporting faculty on travel or in the field in limited locations has varied between approximately 40% and 50% between May 2020 and January 2021.



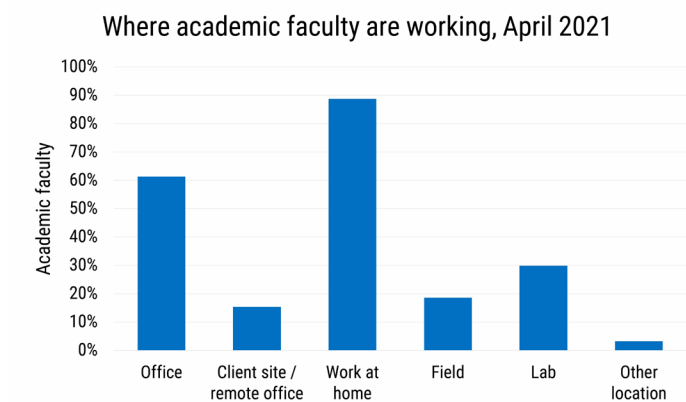
Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

Since February 2021, more departments have reported institutional or departmental policies preventing faculty travel and fieldwork, from 33% of departments in February 2021 to 44% in April 2021. Over the same period, the percentage of departments reporting faculty on travel or in the field in limited locations declined to between 30% and 40%.

In April 2021, we asked departments about the workplace policies available to faculty and staff. Over half of departments offer office, work-from-home, fieldwork, and lab access to their faculty and staff. While 89% of faculty reported working from home, 61% reported working from the office or on campus. Furthermore, 84% of faculty working from home reported working in that location at least half-time, and just over half of faculty who worked in the office reported working in that location at least half-time.

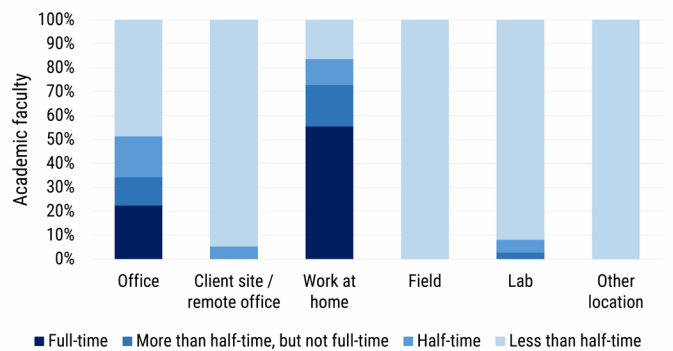


Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey



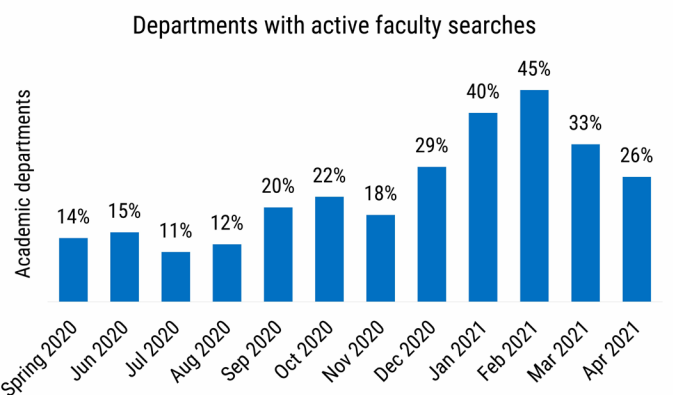
Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

Time spent at work locations by faculty, April 2021



Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

The percentage of departments with active faculty searches peaked in February 2021 at 45%, and since declined to 26% by April 2021. We will continue to track active faculty searches to understand if this is a normal trend in faculty searches or is due to other factors.



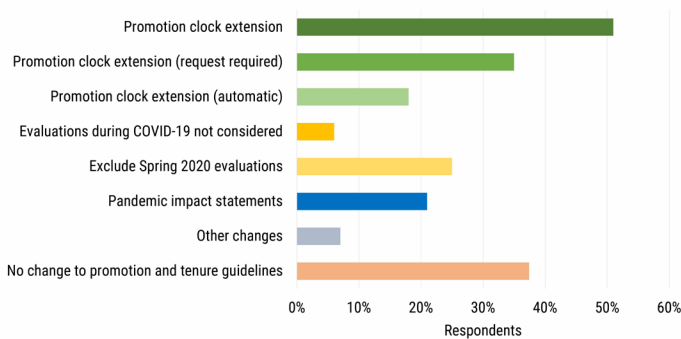
Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

## Promotion and tenure guidelines

Responses from departments and faculty were pooled as departmental reports to understand the changes that have been made to promotion and tenure guidelines to address the impacts from the pandemic on faculty productivity. Sixty-three percent of departments changed their promotion and tenure guidelines, with the most common change being an extension of the promotion clock by one year (51% of departments). Other tenure and promotion changes included not considering student evaluations during the pandemic period, allowing faculty to submit pandemic impact statements as part of their promotion review, de-weighting performance during the pandemic, and adapting teaching evaluation questions to be more qualitative and open-ended.

Of the faculty who reported that their departments changed the promotion and tenure guidelines, 13% opted to take advantage of the changes, which included taking advantage of promotion clock extensions, including pandemic impact statements, and excluding teaching evaluations from the pandemic period.

Changes to promotion and tenure guidelines to address COVID-19 impacts on faculty

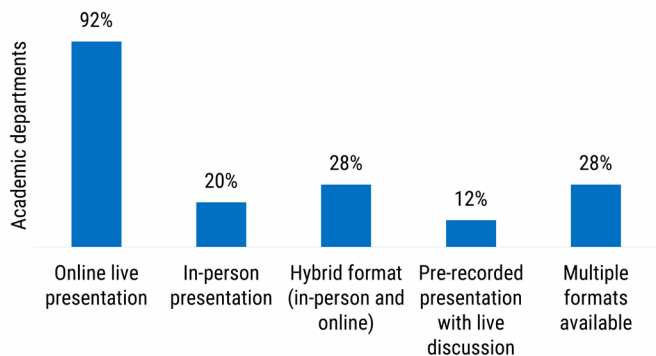


Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

## Changes for graduating students

As of March 2021, 72% of departments reported no change to degree requirements for geoscience majors, while 28% did report changes. Changes reported by departments included counting pass-fail courses towards the major, waiving the field course requirement for students who could not complete field courses prior to graduation this academic year, substituting classes for required classes that could not be taken, and accepting virtual field camps or other substitutions such as extensive field work for the field course requirement.

Final presentation formats for graduating students

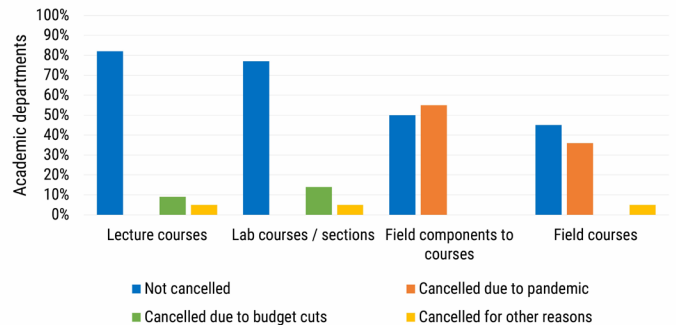


Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

## Changes to instructional activities

Most departments reported no cancellations of lecture or lab courses or sections for the 2020-2021 academic year. Although half of departments reported no cancellation of field components to courses and 45% of departments reported no cancellation of field courses, field activities were more likely to be cancelled due to the pandemic than other instructional activities.

Impacts to instructional activities during the 2020-2021 academic year

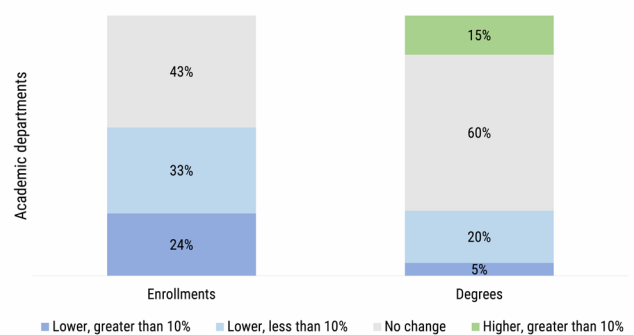


Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

## Enrollments and degrees

Compared to the 2019-2020 academic year, enrollments were lower for just over half of departments this academic year, and degrees conferred this academic year were lower for one-quarter of departments. In addition, 15% of departments reported an increase in degrees conferred compared to the 2019-2020 academic year.

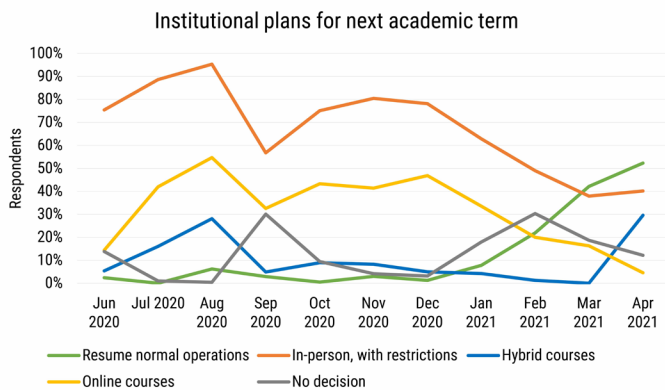
Changes in enrollments and degrees, current academic year vs. 2019-2020



Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

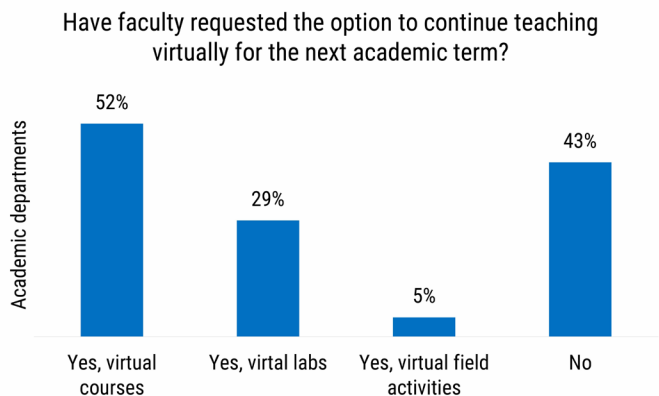
## Planning for next term

Since December 2020, institutional planning for the next academic term has increasingly focused on a return to normal operations, with 52% of departments reporting in April 2021 expecting to return to normal operations in the next academic term. In April 2021, there was a sharp increase in the percentage of departments indicating hybrid formats for the next academic term, and some of this may be in part from introduction of this option on the survey. In addition, 40% of departments reported expecting the use of in-person instruction with pandemic related restrictions for the next academic term.



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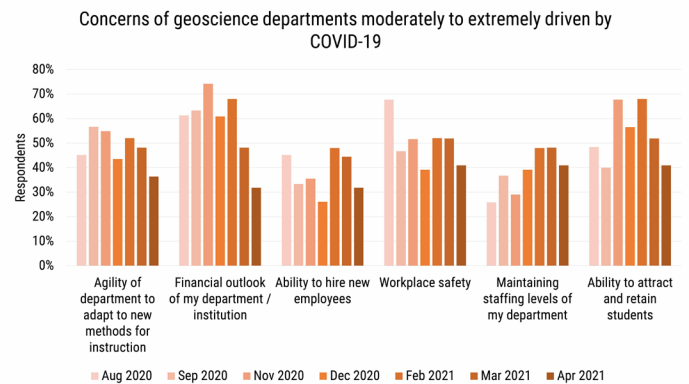
While departments are increasingly expecting to return to normal operations, in April 2021, just over half of departments indicated that faculty had requested to teach virtual lecture courses and 29% of departments reported faculty requesting the option to teach virtual labs for the next academic term.



Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

## Concerns

Concerns by departments that were moderately to extremely driven by the pandemic have declined across most categories, especially since February 2021. The exceptions are workplace safety, which has been a concern of at least half of departments since August 2020, and the ability to maintain staffing levels which has been a concern that has been reported by an increasing percentage of departments since August 2020.



Credit: AGI; data from AGI's Geoscience COVID-19 Survey

We will continue to provide current snapshots on the impacts of COVID-19 on the geoscience enterprise throughout the year. For more information, and to participate in the study, please visit: [www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/covid19](http://www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/covid19)

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