

## Online | Offline

# I'm fed up with it



Lecturers can teach in-person again at last. Is that good news, or have they had enough of all the switching between online and offline? Six lecturers on teaching after yet another lockdown.

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## Gemma van der Haar

assistant professor of Sociology of Development and Change

'Campus education is extremely important to students. You can tell that from their motivation. So I don't want to go back to being entirely online again. But I do embrace the flexibility of online education. In period 1, for example, I was able to invite a guest lecturer from Kenya to teach.

It is not compulsory, but I intend to continue offering my courses in a hybrid form so that students who are not feeling well or are in quarantine can attend classes from home. To start with, especially, it was stressful to cater for both the students online and those in the lecture hall, and there is definitely room for improvement, but I am glad it is possible. I expect Covid to be around for a while and by offering education in a hybrid form, we make it future-proof.' LZ



## Hannah van Zanten

associate professor of Farming Systems Ecology

'It means changing gear all the time and that requires a lot of flexibility. I am teaching a course in this period, but WUR's Christmas holidays did not coincide with the children's school holidays. In addition, the schools closed a week earlier due to the lockdown. Fortunately, I was able to hand over the first week of teaching to someone else, so that I could really enjoy the Christmas holidays. But when the children had been at school for three days, a friend tested positive and we had to quarantine at home. There's always something. In that respect, I am glad that we are now continuing to give the lectures online, because that is clear to everyone. Of course, I prefer to lecture on campus and I miss the informal conversations. Now I don't really know how the students are doing, but I'm also aware that my options are limited.' AS



## Tarek Alskaif

assistant professor, Information Technology Group

'Teaching the first two periods on campus this year was a very nice experience. For me, a three-hour online class where I'm talking to a screen causes way more stress than a four-hour class on campus. Also, the students had clearly missed it, and there was a lot of energy. In the third period, we were asked to switch to online again. By now, we know how to do that, but it is not very convenient to keep switching, especially in the middle of a period. WUR teachers are flexible, but there is a limit to that. We have been working overtime a lot in the past two years. I think if it goes on like this, we'll be asking too much of our teachers.' LZ



### Dieuwertje Lont

lecturer in Breeding and Genetics

'It hasn't affected me personally as I didn't have to change any courses because of the coronavirus measures in this period. In period 2, I taught a course to 30 students on campus, which was wonderful. That made me think: this is what I do it for. In this period, I am teaching a course in which the students have to carry out a consultancy assignment pretty independently, and it is now done online. That's complicated, especially for the students. I am also a study advisor and I notice that more and more students are really fed up with it all. They spend more time at home with their parents, they are working less effectively, and some of them are really not progressing in their studies.' <sup>AS</sup>



### Catriona Lakemond

assistant professor of Food Quality and Design

'I take it as it comes, I can't change anything anyway. The December lockdown was unexpected, but the course I was teaching had been online the year before, so it was doable. I didn't have to change it completely overnight. I think I can make the switch fairly easily. I was quite happy working online. You can sometimes be more in touch with people that way: I take more time to ask how someone is doing. I will miss that when everything is back on campus. At first it was difficult to combine it with the family, but now we are used to it. We're making the best of it.' <sup>SS</sup>




### Jeroen Scheper

lecturer in Plant Ecology and Nature Management

'Nobody likes this situation, of course, but I don't get worked up about it. We always come up with solutions. The hospitality industry and the cultural sector have been much harder hit. I am now preparing the Restoration Ecology Master's course for period 4 in February and March. There will be more than 150 students. With linked lecture theatres, it might just be possible. Lectures can still be given online, but online group work is really not ideal. The course also includes an excursion. The Peek app, introduced just before Covid, is a wonderful solution. Students use the app to do the excursion themselves; we supervisors are around to help them.' <sup>RK</sup>

How do you find the teaching at the moment? Let us know at:

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