

# **Dropout intentions of students with disabilities**

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## **Abstract**

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the conditions under which students study, work, and live. Importantly, the impact has likely varied across student groups. For instance, recent research shows that the already higher risk to drop out of higher education among students with disabilities has further increased in the wake of the pandemic. Currently it is unclear what precisely causes the higher dropout intentions of students with disabilities. Therefore, we present an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms explaining dropout amongst students with disabilities – a group which has thus far hardly been considered in the dropout literature. To do so, we integrate Tinto’s model of student integration, which focuses on students’ academic and social integration into higher education, with social stratification research, which highlights the importance of private resources for academic success. Specifically, we consider students’ financial, home learning, and mental resources. All of these resources have been strongly negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and are related to drop out of higher education. Based on data from the Germany-wide survey “Studying in Corona Times”, we find that students with disabilities are substantially more likely to intend to drop out. Linear regressions and Kitagawa-Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions show that their lower academic integration and fewer mental resources are most relevant for explaining this difference, while their lower social integration, home learning and financial resources play subordinate roles. Sensitivity analyses reveal that the difference in dropout intentions is greater among students with psychic disabilities than among students with learning and with physical disabilities. For all three disability groups, a lower academic integration and fewer mental resources are most relevant for explaining the difference in dropout intentions to students without disabilities. However, the three disability groups differ regarding the importance of the other explanatory factors. Overall, our results highlight the importance of considering both students’ integration into higher education and their private resources for understanding student-group-specific dropout intentions.

## **Further information**

Details on the DFG project “Vulnerability of students in times of the Corona pandemic: Is social inequality in higher education increasing?” can be found [here](#).