# **Student and staff travel survey 2020**

## **1; Student travel survey 2020**

### **Student survey highlights**

* Lower response rate
* More students living at home and commuting from home due to Covid-19 due to changes in study patterns
* Less travel during term time between university and home address and journeys made by car rather than public transport.
* Students broadly travelling the same number of days to campus (2-3) but fewer more frequently than that compared to last year. Most travel either by foot or car.
* Participation and interest in cycling remains low.
* Increased awareness of university sponsored travel options as alternatives to car travel but limited take up of these.
* Most cars used are petrol but increased interest in owning a hybrid/electric vehicle.

Responses from students to the travel survey were much lower this year (n= 106), with disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic having an impact over the survey period from November 2020 to February 2021. Therefore, direct comparisons with the results from the previous year’s travel survey should be treated cautiously. Two specific questions about impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel behaviour were added.

***Travel patterns to campus***

Students were asked whether Covid-19 had changed the way they travelled to campus, with 66% saying it had not, 24% saying it had and 10% indicating they had not travelled to campus since Covid-19. Whilst this suggests limited impact, other responses to the survey highlight differences in travel patterns compared to last year and some shifts in mode for certain travel to the university as a result of the pandemic.

In contrast to last year’s survey the majority of respondents lived at home (64% compared with 42% previously), suggesting that more students were commuting from home, rather than being at a term-time address during the pandemic, with only 30% of respondents being in a shared student or private house compared with 56% the previous year. This was also reflected in responses to the question about travel to term-time address with 51% saying this was not applicable to them compared to 30% the previous year. For those that did travel to a term-time address, use of public transport (airplane or train) to do this declined significantly as a consequence of the pandemic, with most of those travelling using a car. For those living away from home in Worcester, patterns of travel during term-time to their home address altered substantially, with 51% (compared to 27% previously) only travelling once a semester and far fewer travelling more frequently throughout the semester, 37% compared to 56% the previous year. There was also a slight reduction in those not going home at all during term time, 11% compared to 16%. Again, for those who did travel, use of public transport (airplane or train) declined significantly with most choosing to use a car to travel. Cost and convenience rather than environmental concerns were again the primary influencers on long-distance travel mode choice.

The number of days that students came to campus was, in part, similar to the previous survey, with most travelling two (31%) or three (32%) days a week to campus. However, beyond this, students generally travelled less frequently than previously, with only 6% travelling five or more days a week, and 19% only travelling one day and 8% no days. Length of journeys also increased, with 36% traveling between 31 and 60 minutes and 18% travelling 61 to 90 minutes suggesting more travel from a home rather than term time address due to changed blended teaching patterns and blocked days for in-person teaching.

***Mode of travel to campus and between campuses***

In terms of travel to campus, the two main modes remained the same as in previous surveys, with 35% traveling on foot and 35% in a car on their own. Other modes of travel showed interesting variations on the previous year’s survey with an increase in the percentage of those using the train (28% compared to 9% in the previous survey), which could be the result of changed travel patterns due to the impacts of blended learning and possibly better access to services as a result of less use by other commuters. Car sharing with others declined slightly (7%) as did use of a bike (2%). Reasons for not cycling or not cycling more were similar to the previous year’s survey, with concerns about road safety and traffic key factors, alongside having too many things/heavy things to carry, the weather, it being quicker/easier by car or not owning a bike or their bike being broken, with all these options being chosen by over 30% of respondents.

A further specific Covid-19 question asked whether they had taken up cycling for leisure during lockdown, with only a small number 10% saying they had taken it up as a new activity. 81% were either not interested in cycling or did not have access to a bike, indicating a low number of students willing or able to take up this opportunity. This lack of interest and engagement in cycling is evident in other responses to the survey (see below).

In terms of awareness of university sponsored travel options as alternatives to car travel, students demonstrated increased awareness of the Woo bikes scheme in comparison to the previous survey (37% knowing about it and how it works compared to 5% previously). However, no respondents actually used the scheme, a decline on previous survey responses. The increased publicity about the scheme and visibility of it appears not to have translated into actual use of the scheme. Knowledge of the 31 Uni bus route through the St John’s Campus was similar, with 20% of respondents using the service and 31% knowing about it and how it worked. There was also increased use (10%) and awareness of (28%) the First bus 10 Journey m -Ticket, but slightly less uptake of the First bus university academic year-long ticket, again probably due to Covid-19 disruptions to teaching patterns. Whilst 46% of respondents were happy with the way they travel to campus, changes suggested to encourage them to make their travel to campus more sustainable, included cheaper tickets, more frequent and direct bus services and a train station closer to campus (a more frequently cited change than last year, with more students using train services).

Distance from home, convenience and time saving were again the main reasons why students chose a vehicle to get to university, although the need to use for personal responsibilities such as caring or childcare was much less frequently cited (4%) than previously. A lower percentage of respondents had a parking permit this year (20%), again probably linked to less frequent travel to campus due to Covid-19 disruptions. For those without a permit, free parking on a nearby street (46%) was the most popular option, followed by the university long-stay carpark (27%). Only 11% car shared, with not knowing any other students living near them and current Covid-19 restrictions cited as reasons for travelling alone by car.

For those using a car, most had a small or medium sized petrol car (78%). The number using a diesel car declined, but only one respondent had a petrol hybrid car and again no student owned an electric car. However, there was an increase in the number considering buying a petrol hybrid or electric car (up to 28%), with many more saying they were unsure (47%) rather than saying no (25%) – a reverse on last year’s answers. In similarity to last year, two thirds said they would like the ability to charge a vehicle on campus, but just over half (54%) wanted this to be free and part of the parking charges. Only 23% said they would pay if it was reasonably priced, a slight increase on last year, with the rest unsure.

In terms of travel between campuses whilst at the university, as last year most travelled by foot (80%), and although slightly lower than last year, a significant minority continued to use a car (20%), suggesting some journeys that could be undertaken by other more sustainable means given the proximity of most of the university’s campuses, excluding Lakeside. Cycling between campuses declined slightly and remained low at only 5%. This year more were willing to consider using the bus rather than a car if there was a more frequent service (31%), but slightly fewer were prepared to consider bike share (18%) or e-bikes (14%).

Similarly to last year’s survey, the majority of the respondents were full time undergraduate home students and were female and aged under 25.

## **2; Staff travel survey 2020**

### **Staff survey highlights**

* Lower response rate
* Fewer staff travelling into the university five days a week and some staff not travelling in at all due to the impact of covid-19 on working practices.
* Most staff continue to travel into work in a car on their own and public transport use declined slightly.
* Slight increase in those using short stay parking on campus.
* Most cars used are petrol but with a smaller engine size, with fewer diesel cars used. Also, significant increase in interest in owning a hybrid/electric vehicle. Most wanted the ability to charge a vehicle on campus.
* Participation and interest in cycling remains low.
* Variable awareness of university sponsored travel options as alternatives to car travel and limited take up of these.

Responses from staff to the travel survey were lower this year (269 – 53%) compared with 374 (74%) the previous year. Two specific questions about impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel behaviour were added.

***Travel patterns to campus***

Staff were asked whether Covid-19 had changed the way they travelled to campus, with 64% saying it had not, 20% saying it had and 16% indicating they had not travelled to campus since Covid-19. Whilst this suggests limited impact, other responses to the survey highlight differences in travel patterns compared to last year and some shifts in mode for certain travel to the university as a result of the pandemic.

Staff were asked how many days per week they normally travelled to work at the university, with responses distributed between zero and five days a week. Covid-19 appears to have exerted some impact with 22% of respondents indicating they were not travelling into work. Travelling in for two days a week was the most popular response (24%), and 17% indicating they travelled in one day a week, reflecting the impact of the shift to blended teaching patterns and blocked days for in-person teaching. 19% indicated that they travelled to work five days a week, identifying those staff who were either required to be on campus or chose to work on campus. The remaining 20% travelled in either three or four days a week (more three than four). This was a very different pattern to the previous survey year when 62% travelled in 5 days a week

The majority of staff (43%) indicated that their journey to work took between 16 and 30 minutes, with 30% indicating that it took them between 30 and 60 minutes and 19% having journey times of up to 15 minutes, all percentages that were fairly similar to the previous year’s survey results.

***Mode of travel to campus and between campuses***

In terms of travel to campus, the main mode remained the same as in previous surveys, with 70% travelling in a car on their own, with only 4% sharing a car with others. The number travelling by car on their own had slightly increased from last year (66%). Walking was the next most popular mode with 16% walking to work (slightly down on last year 17%), followed by cycling at 9% (roughly the same as last year). Other modes had lower numbers with public transport (train and bus) each being used by 3% of respondents, a slight decline for both on the previous year (4%) and motorcycle being used by only 0.7% of respondents (an increase on 2019 where no one reported using this mode. In terms of frequency of use of these modes during the week, responses were split for all modes with both frequent and occasional users, apart from motorcycling which was only used occasionally, similar to the previous year’s responses.

The majority of staff said it was not feasible for them to travel from their home to the university by public transport 60%, although this was slightly fewer than last year (63%). The main reason for using their own vehicle to get to university was that the distanced from home was too far to walk or cycle (26%), followed by caring responsibilities/dropping off children (18%), time saving and convenience (15% for each) and lack of available public transport (14%). The broad balance of reasons cited were similar to last year, but with a slight increase in those citing convenience (12% I 2019) and lack of available public transport (12% in 2019) as a factor.

Most respondents had a parking permit or were going to buy one for the year (83%) which is the same as last year, with most using the on campus long-stay car park (51%). However, 21% used free on street parking on a nearby street, although this was less than 2019 when 29% used this option. In contrast more used the short stay car park than last year, 17% compared to 10% in 2019, perhaps reflecting shorter stays on campus due to changes in working patterns due to Covid-19. For those using a car, most had a small or medium sized petrol car (63%), an increase on 2019 when 52% owned these types of car, reflecting a rise in small petrol car ownership at the expense of larger petrol cars. A significant proportion also had a diesel car (31%), although this represents a significant decline in relation to last year when 41% used a diesel car. Four respondents had a petrol hybrid car and four owned an electric car, a similar proportion of respondents to last year. However, half of respondents (50%) were considering getting a plug-in hybrid or fully electric vehicle when they next changed car, a big increase on the previous year when only 29% were considering this option. 88% wanted the ability to charge their vehicle whilst on campus, an increase on 77% the previous year, but opinion was split on whether they would be willing to pay for this, with 40% saying yes and 42 saying no, with the rest unsure, although a slightly higher percentage were willing to pay than the previous year.

A further specific Covid-19 question asked whether they had taken up cycling for leisure during lockdown, with only a relatively small number 17% saying they had taken it up as a new activity, although a fifth of respondents (21%) indicated that they had always cycled for leisure. 62% were either not interested in cycling or did not have access to a bike, indicating a low number of staff willing or able to take up this opportunity. This lack of interest and engagement in cycling is evident in other responses to the survey (see below).

Staff demonstrated some awareness of the Woo bikes cycle hire scheme (40% knowing about it and how it works compared to 36% previously). However, no respondents actually used the scheme, a decrease on the six respondents who used it last year. The Woo bikes scheme includes both peddle and e-bikes and respondents were asked whether they had used an e-bike. Most respondents had heard of e-bikes but had not used one (86%), which was an increase on the previous year (80%), with only 2% of respondents owning and using an e-bike and only 3% having used one through a loan scheme or test ride. As we the previous year, the majority of respondents (69%) were not interested in having a go on an e-bike, citing reasons such as the length or complexity of their commute or concerns for road traffic as reasons for not wanting to try an electric bike. Concerns about road safety and too much fast traffic were also the most frequently cited reasons for not cycling more generally, along with having too much to carry, the weather, lack of cycle routes and time constraints, with 51% indicating it was quicker and easier to use a car. There were also some concerns about personal cycling ability and concern about facilities for cyclists at work although there were less frequently cited.

In terms of awareness of other university sponsored travel options as alternatives to car travel, there was limited awareness of the First bus 10 Journey m -Ticket with 54% knowing nothing about it and only 4% using it (similar to last year), and even less awareness and use of the First bus university academic year-long ticket, with 62% not knowing anything about this option and only one respondent (0.4%) using it, similar knowledge to last year but decreased use when 6 respondents used this. As in the previous year, whilst most (53%) of respondents were happy with the way they travel to work, the most frequently chosen changes suggested to encourage them to make their travel to work more sustainable, included safer cycle routes, more frequent and direct bus services and a train station closer to their home and to work.

In terms of travel between campuses whilst at the university, most travelled by foot (82%), a slight increase on last year, but a significant minority continued to use a car as an option (32%), although fewer than last year (36%), suggesting some journeys that could be undertaken by other more sustainable means given the proximity of most of the university’s campuses, excluding Lakeside. Cycling between campuses remained low at 9%. Of those using a vehicle, some felt bikes that you didn’t need to book (14%), e-bikes for hill (17%) or a more frequent bus service (14%) would make it easier not to use a vehicle, a similar range to last year. However, similar to last year, 27% said nothing could change them from using a vehicle.

Similarly to last year’s survey, the majority of the respondents were female, a full-time employee of the university for over three years and aged over 35.

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