Understanding the importance of creating an inclusive timetable in the age of the commuting student

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Aims

• To gain a greater understanding of the impact of commuting on our students
• To develop and implement inclusive timetabling strategies to lessen the impact
Context

• Post-1992, city university/Commuters
• Transition experience/Sense of belonging
• Lower than average response to NSS Q16
• Retention
• BME attainment gap
• The design of an inclusive curriculum
Comparison of travel distances to university for BME and White students

- All (550): Average 6.02 miles
- BME (353): Average 7.24 miles, 64%
- White (186): Average 3.77 miles, 34%

Average miles: 6.02, 7.24, 3.77
The reality and impact of commuting

Map data ©2018 Google

Central
London

Heathrow Airport

BME

White

Kingston University

3.77 miles

7.24 miles

Fastest by public transport
07:03 - 08:39

1 hr 38 mins

- London Overground to Watford Junction Rail Station
  - 4 min

- West Midlands Trains to London Luton
  - 17 min

- Northern line to Waterloo
  - 9 min

- South Western Railway to Surbiton
  - 17 min

- KS3 bus or 711 bus or 281 bus or K2 bus to Kingston Univ / County Hall
  - 7 min

- Walk to 12 Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames
  - 1 min
Comparison of travel times to university by gender and ethnicity

- **BME female**: 42.3% n=228
- **BME male**: 23.2% n=125
- **White female**: 19.4% n=105
- **White male**: 15% n=81

**0-30min**
- BME female: 39.0%
- BME male: 34.1%
- White female: 46.7%
- White male: 73.8%

**30min-1.5hr**
- BME female: 26.9%
- BME male: 30.0%
- White female: 30.0%
- White male: 18.4%

**1.5-3hr**
- BME female: 23.3%
- BME male: 23.3%
- White female: 7.8%
- White male: 23.2%
Differences in travel times to university by year group

- **BME level 4**: 43.4
- **BME level 5**: 38.5
- **BME level 6**: 42.3
- **White level 4**: 74.6
- **White level 5**: 70.2
- **White level 6**: 79.4

**Legend**:
- Blue: 0-30min
- Red: 30min-1.5hr
- Green: 1.5-3hr
Distance travelled impacts on methods of transport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Walk/Bus KU/Cycle</th>
<th>Public transport</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>60.2</td>
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Impact of travel time on ‘the timetable works efficiently for me’

- 0-15 min: 73.2
- 15-30 min: 71.2
- 30min-1hr: 59.0
- 1hr-1hr30min: 58.8
- 1hr30min-2hr: 48.5
- 2hr-2hr30min: 47.8
- 2hr30min-3hr: 25.0
What students have told us

“There was no commute when at school, there is now and it can be stressful.”

“The commute takes so long, that’s a big thing it’s hard to schedule too”

“Commuting if you live at home, 2 - hours or more is hard”

“With school you know what you’re getting, there is a routine. You get more out of a school day and more contact hours with staff. The commute is much longer than school.”

“Commutes much longer, can have just one lecture opposed to a routine 6 hours a day at school. Can seem pointless coming in for such a short amount of time”

“It’s not that I thought a commute would work, I came through clearing and couldn’t get a place in halls and the university was not helpful at all in the accommodation side of things”

‘Plus 1 ½ half hour travel to and from university so 3 hours extra wasted in the day. Results in when you get home you are tired and you struggle to work.’
What students have primarily told us prevents them from attending timetabled sessions?

• Early start to the day (e.g. 09.00)
• Inconvenience of public transport (including cost of transport)
• Single timetabled sessions on a day (e.g. 1 hr)
• Personal/medical reasons

Key enablers students have told us would help them attend timetabled sessions?

• Later start to the day (e.g. 09.30-10.00)
• Guaranteed ‘free day’ per week
• Funding to support transport costs
• Ensuring at least two timetabled sessions a day (i.e. min 4 hr timetabled)
A Head of Timetabling perspective

Challenges in implementing an inclusive curriculum

- Staff and student constraints/availability
- Course pathways that feed into module(s)
- The higher than average contact time for students on STEM subjects vs other subjects
- The narrow window of opportunity to make change
- Volume of courses that have a high number commuter students
- The physical space to be able to reduce number of early start
  - Labs (health and safety and size)
  - General teaching room availability
A Head of Timetabling perspective

What has aided in addressing these issues?

• Timetable KPI dashboard
• Collaborative partnership with academic and technical staff
• Reports and data on commuting students
Overview

• BME/mature students are more likely to commute with longer travel times.

• Student satisfaction for ‘the timetable works efficiently for me’ is directly related to travel time (being independent of gender or ethnicity).

• Commuting has the potential to create differential student experiences effecting learning communities, especially for those from ethnic backgrounds.

• Timetabling changes or incentives to support/accommodate commuting students may have a significant effect on overall student satisfaction.
Comparison of travel times to university by ethnicity