

National Transport Authority

# Student & Staff Smarter Travel Survey

November, 2019



**Compiled by:**  
**Mark Russell, Strategic Development Services**  
**Andy Maguire, Sustainability Coordinator**

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## 1.0. Summary

The survey was conducted by the National Transport Authority. The initial invitation was sent to staff and students on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>. November, 2019 with a reminder being sent on the 28<sup>th</sup>. November. Data was returned to the University and it is from these returns that this report is based upon.

A total of 2579 people responded to the survey from across the University. The breakdown of these respondents was 1929 students and 650 staff. With these levels of response, the University can be confident in the validity of the data.

Amongst students, use of public transport is very high with 78% using it as their means of transport to get to college. Utilising the STARS methodology<sup>1</sup>, the percentage of students using sustainable means of transport rises to 93%. A majority of TU Dublin students (62%) are travelling more than 10kms on each journey to and from college. For half of the students, this takes them over an hour. Few students are happy with public transport though. They rate it as unreliable, slow, overcrowded and at times unsafe. Many use it as there is no alternative means of travel for them. Previous NTA surveys<sup>2</sup> indicate that car travel increases from the age of 25. Indeed, it would appear that many of our students are disaffected by the public transport system and will change to car usage when economic means allow. TU Dublin's high sustainable transport achievement with students is very positive but also appears to be circumstantial. Students are requesting more direct to campus transport services, more lockers and more changing facilities for cyclists / inclement weather and better security for bicycles. Safe cycling is also a concern.

Staff travel options are dominated (32%) by single person car usage. Reasons given for this are the need to collect children / parents, home location, working late etc. 37% are using public transport. Staff live closer to the University and have shorter commute times. Unsurprisingly, their satisfaction with their commute is quite high, with only 22% expressing dissatisfaction. Opinions on changing to more sustainable travel options were also linked to the safety of cycling and associated facilities. Staff also requested changing facilities, lockers and bicycle security.

Staff and students highlight the general lack of infrastructure across the city, such as an underground rail system, Metro North, Navan rail line, cycling infrastructure and overcrowded, unreliable buses.

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<sup>1</sup> STARS Reference

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-policy/data-analysis/modelling/surveys-2/>

## 2.0. Respondents Demographics

The on-line survey was conducted amongst staff and student of the University in November 2019. The survey was designed and conducted by the National Transport Authority. The survey aims to give an insight into the commuting habits of TU Dublin staff and students and also gauge their views on sustainable methods of travel.

Response rates are sufficient for confidence in the data.

Student 1929

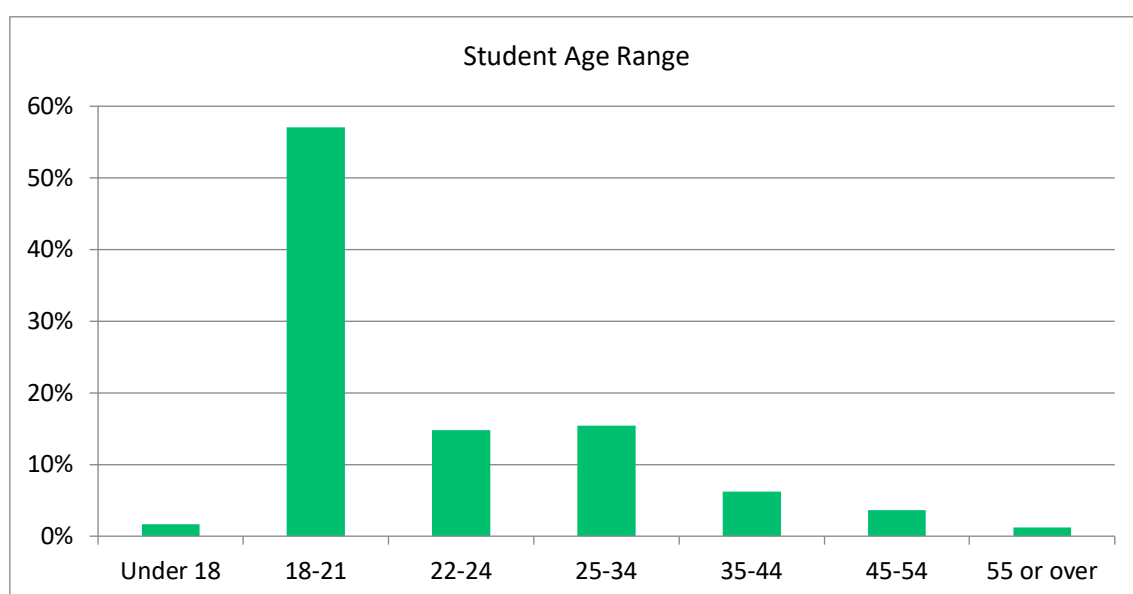
Staff 650

### 2.1. Age Profile

The age profile of the student cohort reflects the majority of fulltime undergraduates currently registered with the University. The predominance of under 24 year olds does impact on their commuting habits as this cohort (74%) generally would not have the economic wherewithal to afford a car.

#### 2.1.1. Student Age Profile:

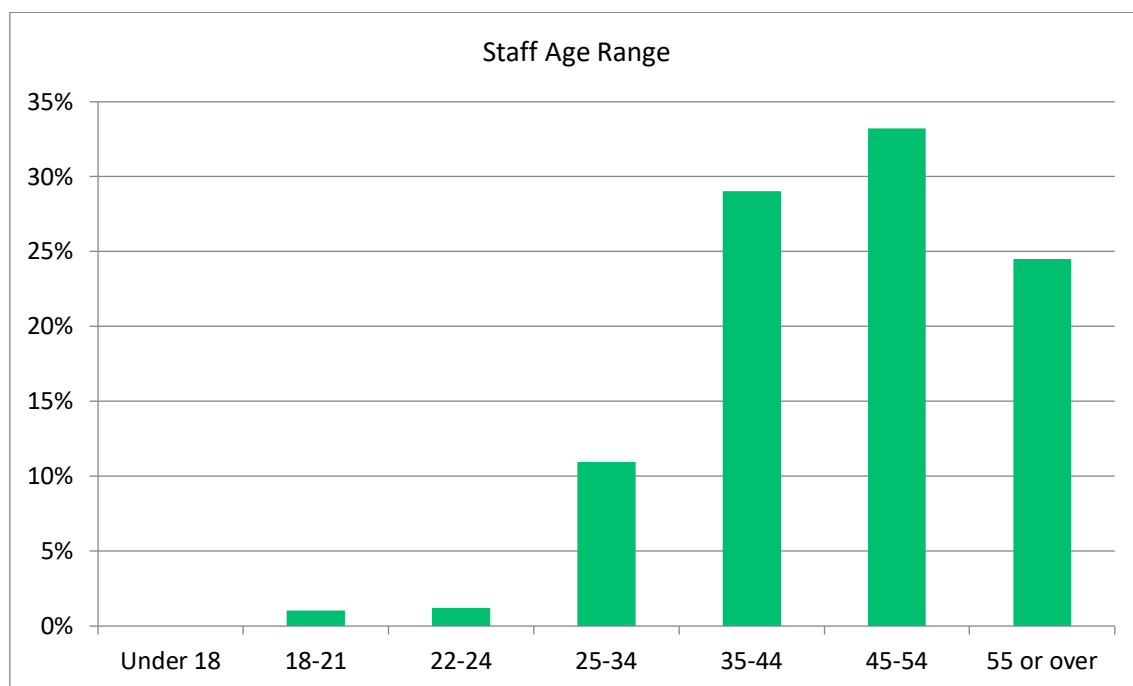
Age	Responses	
Under 18	2%	22
18-21	57%	749
22-24	15%	194
25-34	15%	202
35-44	6%	82
45-54	4%	48
55 or over	1%	16
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1313</b>



### 2.1.2. Staff Age Profile

The staff profile does not include many respondent under the age of 25. This would be in line with the potential recruitment age for our academic and professional services staff. It shows further in the report how this older profile have more options due to economic status in choosing their preferred commuting options.

Age	Responses	
Under 18	0%	0
18-21	1%	6
22-24	1%	7
25-34	11%	63
35-44	29%	167
45-54	33%	191
55 or over	25%	141
<b>Answered</b>		<b>575</b>



## 2.2 Gender Profile:

The gender profile of respondents is not in line with the actual demographic of the University. Both staff and student gender profiles are weighted more heavily in favour of female respondents, which is close to the inverse of the actual population.

### 2.2.1. Student Profile

Gender	Responses	
Male	45%	591
Female	54%	720
Other	0%	2
Prefer not to say	1%	15
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1327</b>

### 2.2.2. Staff Profile

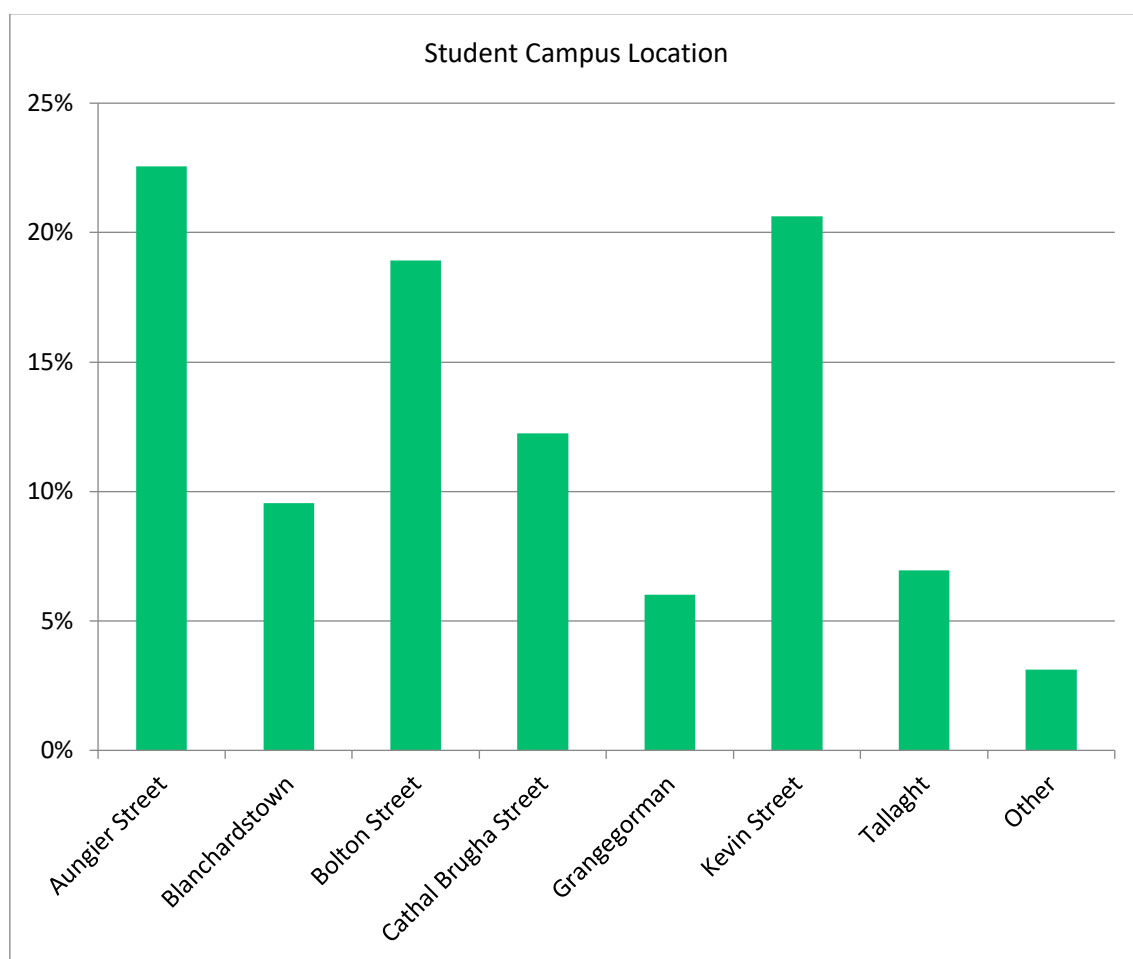
Gender	Responses	
Male	43%	251
Female	55%	320
Other	0%	1
Prefer not to say	1%	8
<b>Answered</b>		<b>580</b>

## 2.3. Respondents' Location

### 2.3.1. Student

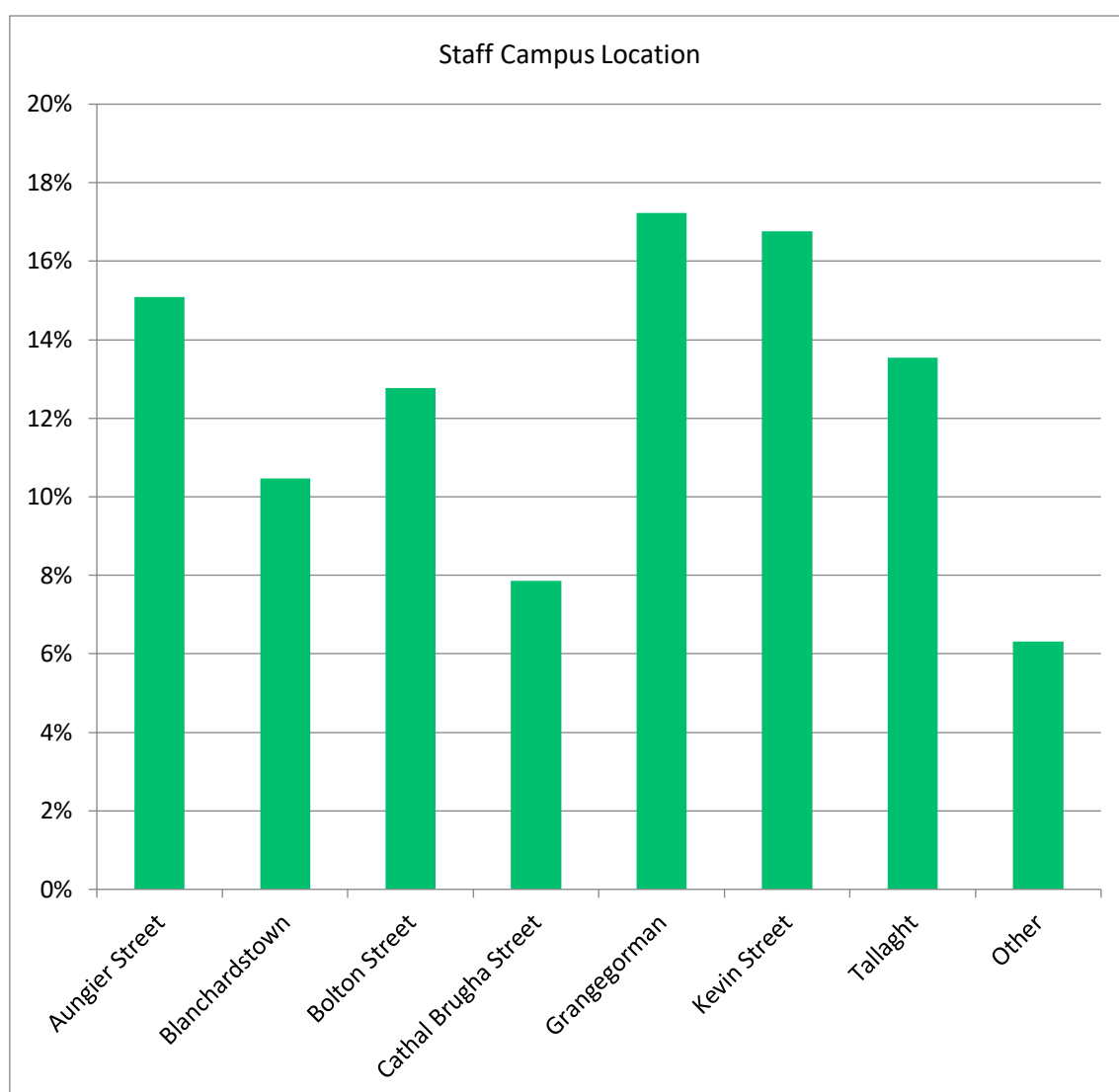
For the student respondents, they were spread throughout the University. Indeed one of the challenges in assessing commuter behaviour in the University is the variety of locations which are used. Large response rates are seen in Aungier, Kevin, Bolton and Cathal Brugha St. buildings.

Location	Responses	
Aungier Street	22.56%	435
Blanchardstown	9.54%	184
Bolton Street	18.93%	365
Cathal Brugha Street	12.24%	236
Grangegorman	6.02%	116
Kevin Street	20.64%	398
Tallaght	6.95%	134
Other	3.11%	60
Answered		1928



Staff locations are spread more evenly with Grangegorman being the largest site, which includes Park House. The variance between city centre locations and Tallaght and Blanchardstown are major differences in terms of travel. Nowhere in Dublin is immune to traffic but parking remains at a premium in the city centre. It is also better served by public transport as most routes either terminate or transverse the city centre.

Location	Responses	
Aungier Street	15.08%	98
Blanchardstown	10.46%	68
Bolton Street	12.77%	83
Cathal Brugha Street	7.85%	51
Grangegorman	17.23%	112
Kevin Street	16.77%	109
Tallaght	13.54%	88
Other	6.31%	41
Answered		650





## 3.0 Students

In terms of sustainable travel options, our students are exemplary in their use of public transport, with 78% of them availing of these options. According to the STARS methodology, 93% University's students are utilising sustainable means of transport.

### Commuting to college

**Q: How do you usually travel, for the longest part, by distance, of your journey to campus.**

Student Travel Choices	Responses	
Bus, minibus or coach	56.19%	1084
Train or DART	14.26%	275
Luas	7.98%	154
On foot	6.27%	121
Bicycle	4.25%	82
Driving a car alone	6.74%	130
Driving car w/passenger(s) same destin.	0.88%	17
Driving car w/passenger(s) diff. destin.	0.41%	8
Passenger in car same destin.	0.73%	14
Passenger in car diff. destin.	1.24%	24
Motorcycle or scooter	0.52%	10
Taxi	0.00%	0
Lorry or van	0.00%	0
Other means	0.41%	8
Work mainly at or from home	0.10%	2
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1929</b>

While this figure is clearly outstanding, it must be borne in mind, that for many students this is not an agreeable form of transport.

For those students outside of Dublin, there are many comments on the lack of reliability of both trains and buses. The length of the commute is a common factor leading to many disillusioned student comments. Class start times are quoted as an issue with 9:00am starts particularly stressful for non-Dublin commuters. It should be borne in the mind that many TU Dublin students are in the commuter counties outside of Dublin and have considerable journeys to undertake. To prepare for a commute and then find the bus / train not turning up must be particularly difficult to accept. Also many student quote that they cannot use LEAP cards outside of Dublin. This adds to what is commented upon as a considerable cost of attending college. Given the cost of rent in the capital, this is unlikely to be ameliorated by changing to rented accommodation.

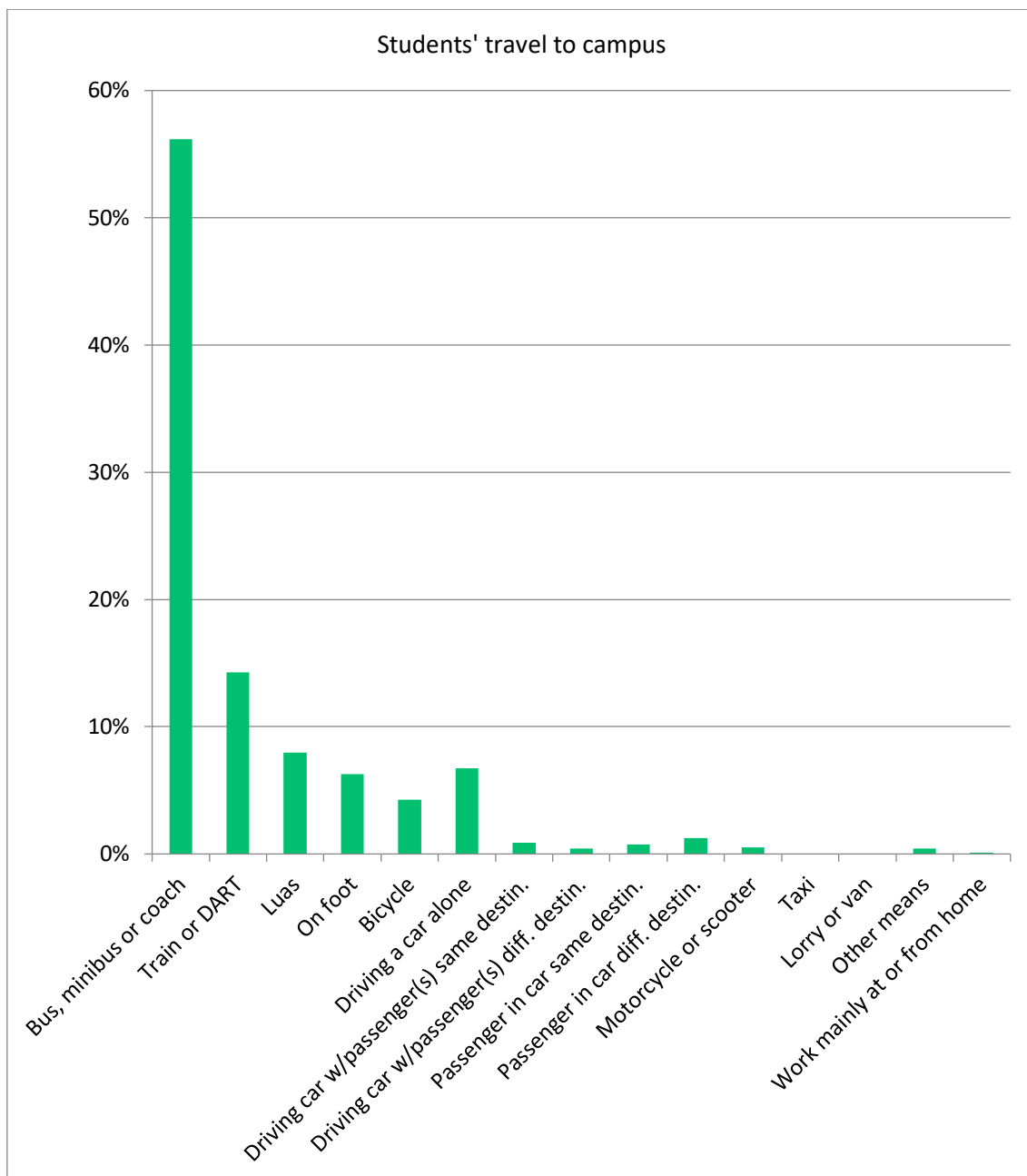
For Dublin based commuters, many comment are similar to their rural counterparts. There are comments about buses passing their stops because they are too full. The LUAS / DART appears to always be too full as well. Comments are made about safety on the LUAS, particularly on the red line.

Many commuters also wish for direct services to campuses.

In summary, in terms of behaviour, the vast majority of TU Dublin students would be deemed to commute to their campus in what would be deemed as a sustainable manner. Yet a concern must be, given their

answers to a later question (see page XX) that the experience for many of them may result in them to aim for being able to choose to use a car at the earliest opportunity.

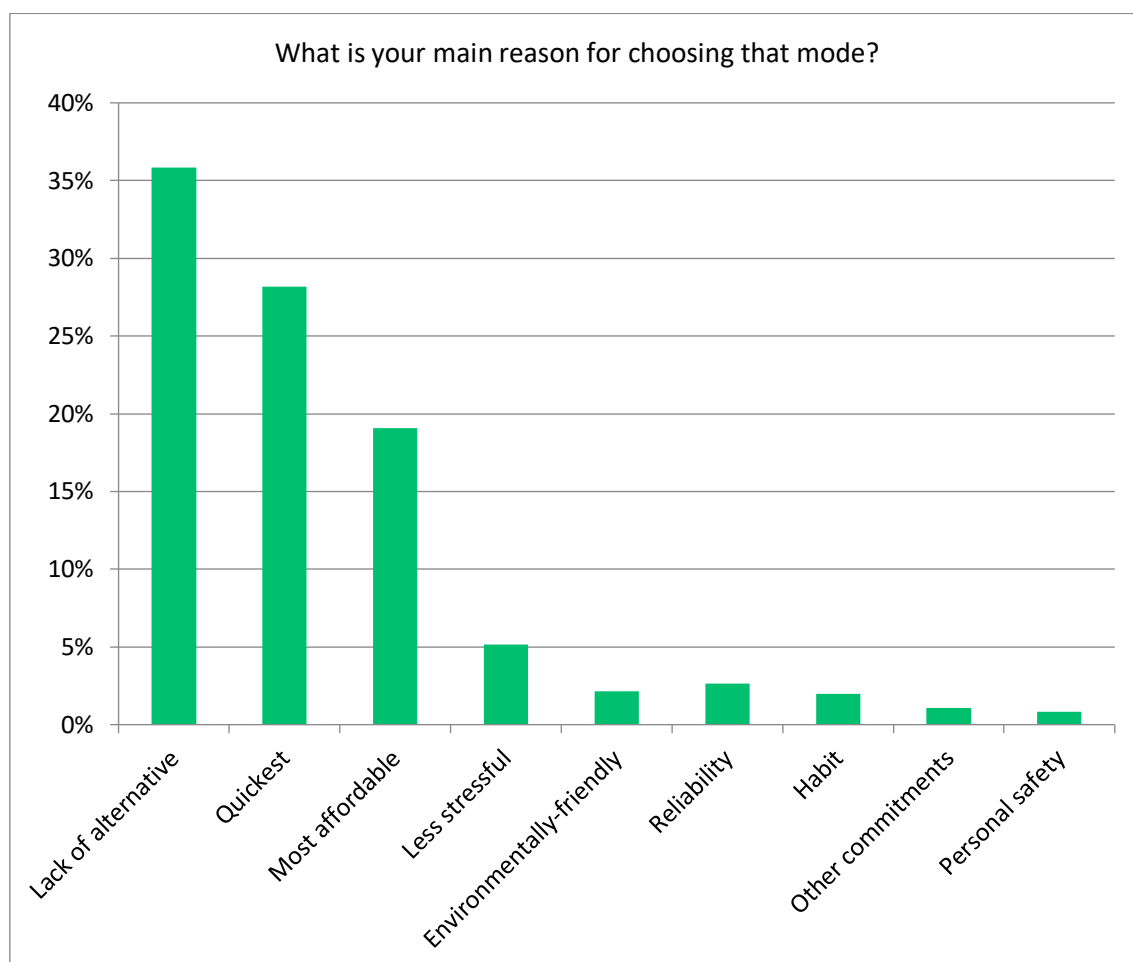
For cyclists, the issues are mainly around the lack of provision upon their arrival on campus. Many indicate that they wish to change out of the cycling clothes and store them in lockers but see no provision for doing so. This seems like a relatively easy fix, that could encourage other Dublin students to cycle.



Over one third of students indicate that they have limited options for commuting to the University. The next main reason is to choose the quickest options. For many, they select the quickest option whatever that may be. Few students indicate the sustainability of their choices or the safety and reliability of their choice.

**Q: What is your main reason for choosing that mode?**

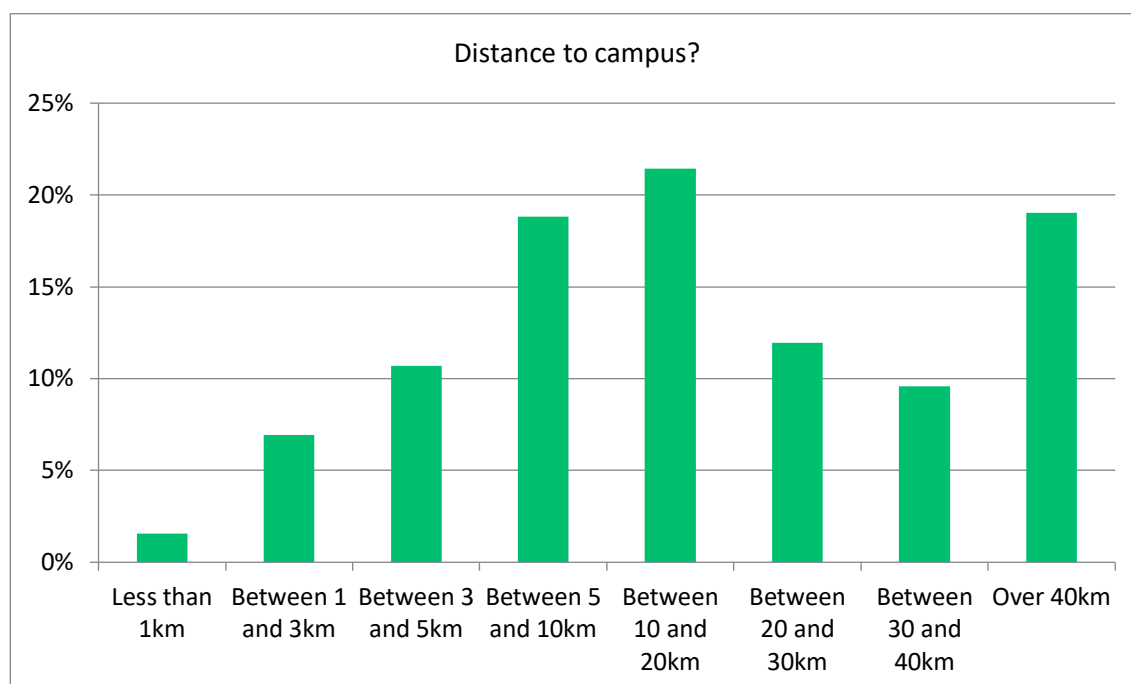
Student response	Responses	
Most affordable	19.06%	367
Quickest	28.19%	543
Environmentally-friendly	2.13%	41
Lack of alternative	35.83%	690
Less stressful	5.14%	99
Habit	1.97%	38
Personal safety	0.83%	16
Other commitments	1.09%	21
Reliability	2.65%	51
Other (please specify)		123
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1926</b>



It is notable the distances that our students travel to our University. With a distance of less than 10kms to the M50 from O'Connell Street bridge, we can see that 62% of our students travel from beyond that distance. Many of the commuter towns that now exist where family housing is more affordable are outside the M50 belt. In comments, many student mention Kildare, Navan and the M11. Given that these are well known choke points for commuters, it appears many of students are stuck in these situations. Of note is that the HEA will collect commute distance as a data point in forthcoming SRS returns.

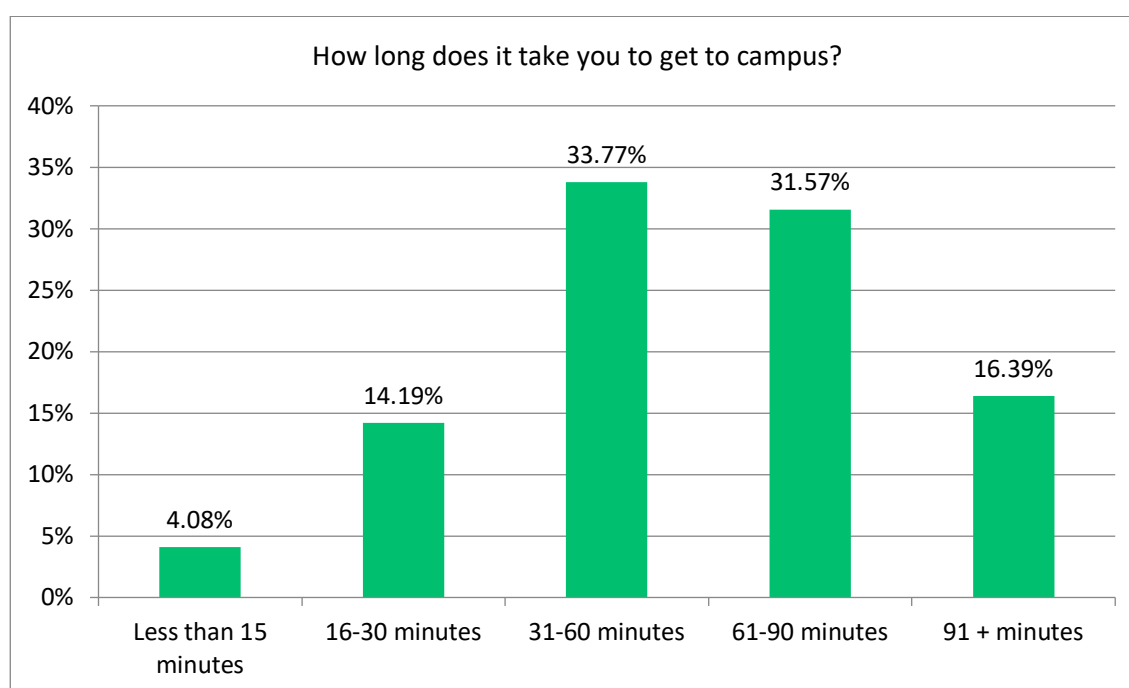
#### Q: How far do you travel to campus?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 1km	1.57%	30
Between 1 and 3km	6.92%	132
Between 3 and 5km	10.69%	204
Between 5 and 10km	18.82%	359
Between 10 and 20km	21.44%	409
Between 20 and 30km	11.95%	228
Between 30 and 40km	9.59%	183
Over 40km	19.03%	363
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1908</b>



Given the length of commutes being undertaken, the majority (52%) of our students arrive on campus within an hour. Perhaps our timetable planners would take into account that the remaining 48% of students are travelling more than an hour to get to college. That length of commute must impact on the extra-curricular activities that can be engaged in, an important aspect of the university experience.

Length of commute	Responses	
Less than 15 minutes	4.08%	78
16-30 minutes	14.19%	271
31-60 minutes	33.77%	645
61-90 minutes	31.57%	603
91 + minutes	16.39%	313
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1910</b>



Only a third of students live within a 6 minute walk of a direct bus to campus. In all likelihood, that means a transfer to another transport option. Most services are not direct to our campuses.

**Q: Do you live within 400 metres (approx. 6 minutes walk) of a direct bus to your campus?**

Answer	Responses	
Yes	32.95%	542
No	64.98%	1069
Don't know	2.07%	34
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1645</b>

The vast majority of students are not living near a DART / LUAS / train service either. The question does leave it open to interpretation as to whether any train bar the Grangegorman LUAS stop is a service to a TU Dublin campus.

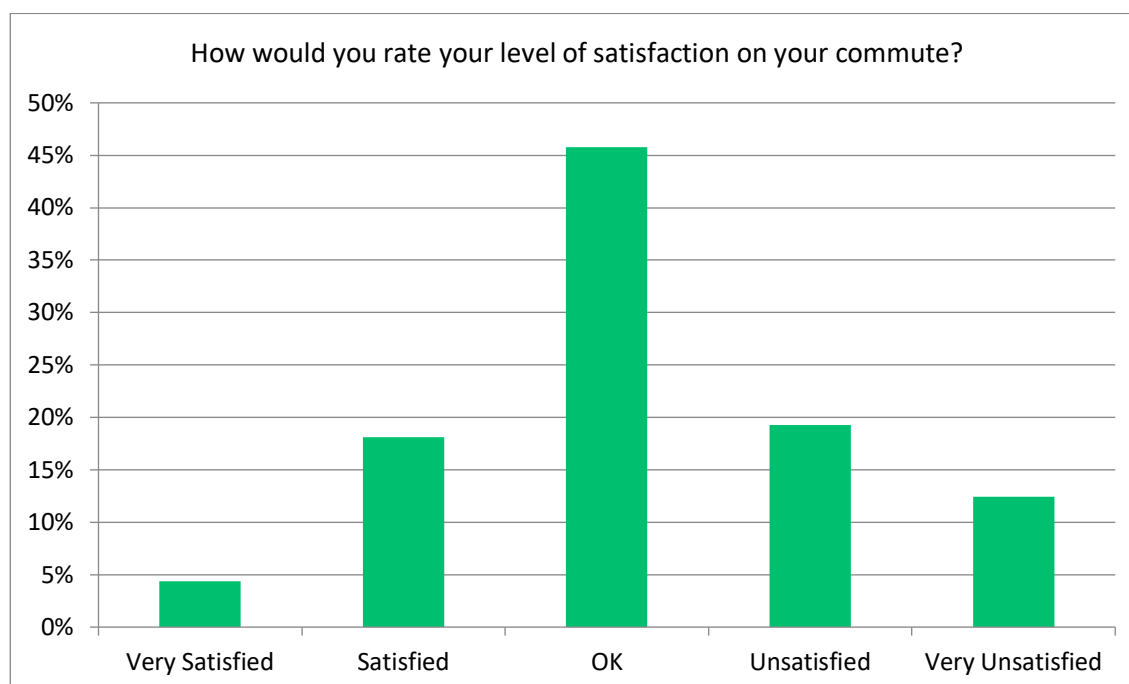
**Q: Do you live within 800m (approx.12 minutes walk) of a train/ light rail connection to your campus?**

Answer	Responses	
Yes	18.82%	310
No	79.36%	1307
Don't know	1.82%	30
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1647</b>

Overall satisfaction with their commute is split with 22% satisfied, 31% dissatisfied and 46% OK with it. The 46% OK is a high enough figure considering the length of commutes on crowded and congested routes.

**Q: How would you rate your level of satisfaction on your commute?**

Answer	Responses	
Very Satisfied	4%	57
Satisfied	18%	237
OK	46%	599
Unsatisfied	19%	252
Very Unsatisfied	12%	163
<b>Answered</b>		<b>1308</b>

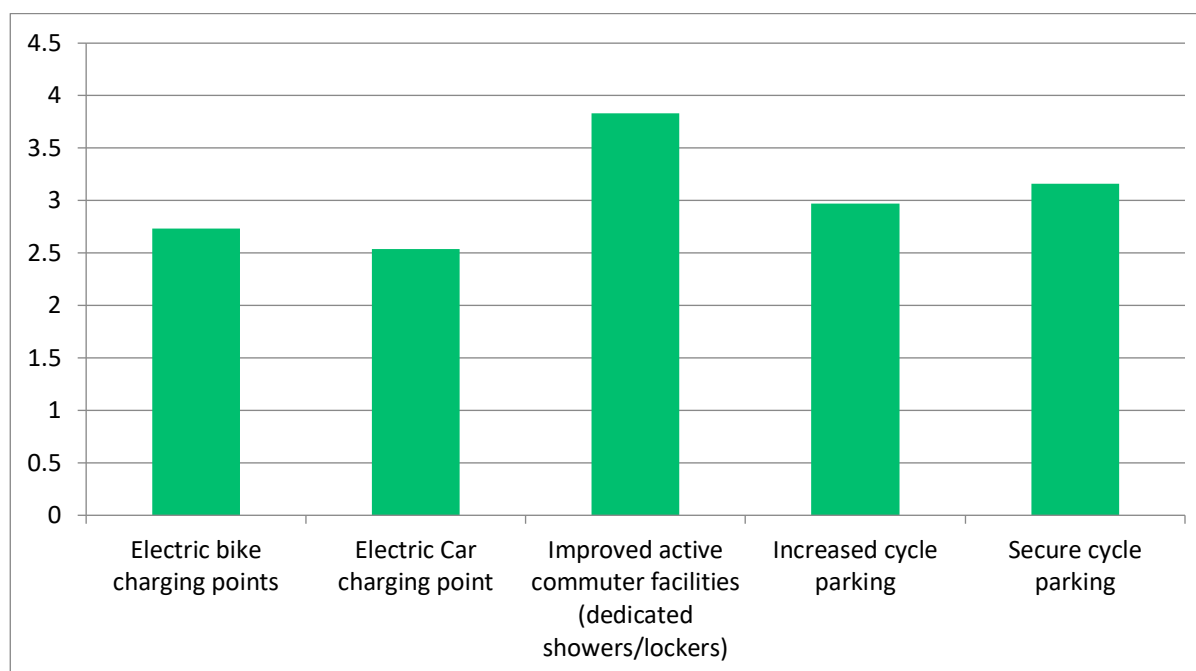


When questioned about what the University might do to assist their commuting, the overwhelming majority of students have selected lockers and showers as being their greatest need. In the open comments, lockers are frequently mentioned as something that would be of great use.

**Q: In your opinion, if resources were available, please indicate in order of merit, (with highest priority at no 1.) your top three choices you feel TU Dublin should prioritise**

	1	2	3	4	5
Electric bike charging points	15%	15%	17%	31%	21%
Electric Car charging point	12%	19%	17%	18%	35%
Improved active commuter facilities (dedicated showers / lockers)	46%	15%	21%	9%	8%
Increased cycle parking	11%	26%	26%	25%	13%
Secure cycle parking	20%	27%	21%	13%	19%

Answered 1841



# STAFF

In terms of sustainable travel options, our staff are unlike our students in their use of public transport, with 37% of them availing of these options, a full 40% less than the students. According to the STARS methodology, 68% of University's staff are utilising sustainable means of transport. This contrasts with 93% for the University's students.

The single greatest mode of transport is the use of the car, alone. There may be a campus effect here with ample parking available on Blanchardstown and Tallaght campuses.

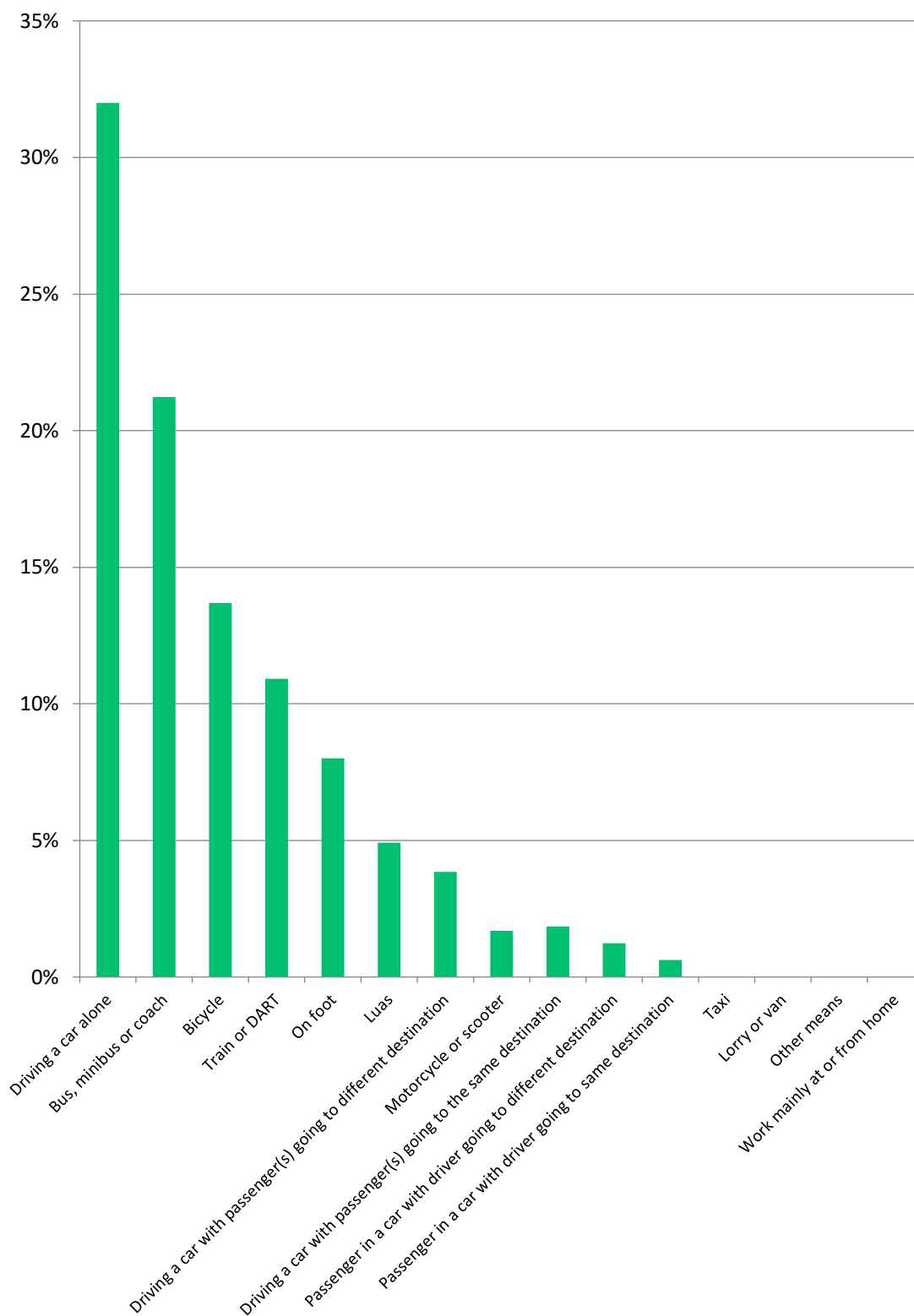
Interestingly use of a bicycle is much higher amongst staff with nearly 14% of staff using it as their mode of transport. This contrasts with 4% for the student body. Clearly the home location and earning power of the University's staff allows many to live closer to city. However, a great number of text responses indicate that cycling is unsafe and that staff have little changing / storage options on campus.

It is interesting to note that many respondents mentioned working from home, using tele-conference facilities etc. The survey was conducted November 2019, and 0% report working mainly from home as an option. Obviously events have overtaken this. But it notable that staff were ready for this option beforehand.

Staff Travel Choices	Responses	
Driving a car alone	32.00%	208
Bus, minibus or coach	21.23%	138
Bicycle	13.69%	89
Train or DART	10.92%	71
On foot	8.00%	52
Luas	4.92%	32
Driving a car with passenger(s) going to different destination	3.85%	25
Motorcycle or scooter	1.69%	11
Driving a car with passenger(s) going to the same destination	1.85%	12
Passenger in a car with driver going to different destination	1.23%	8
Passenger in a car with driver going to same destination	0.62%	4
Taxi	0.00%	0
Lorry or van	0.00%	0
Other means	0.00%	0
Work mainly at or from home	0.00%	0
Answered		650

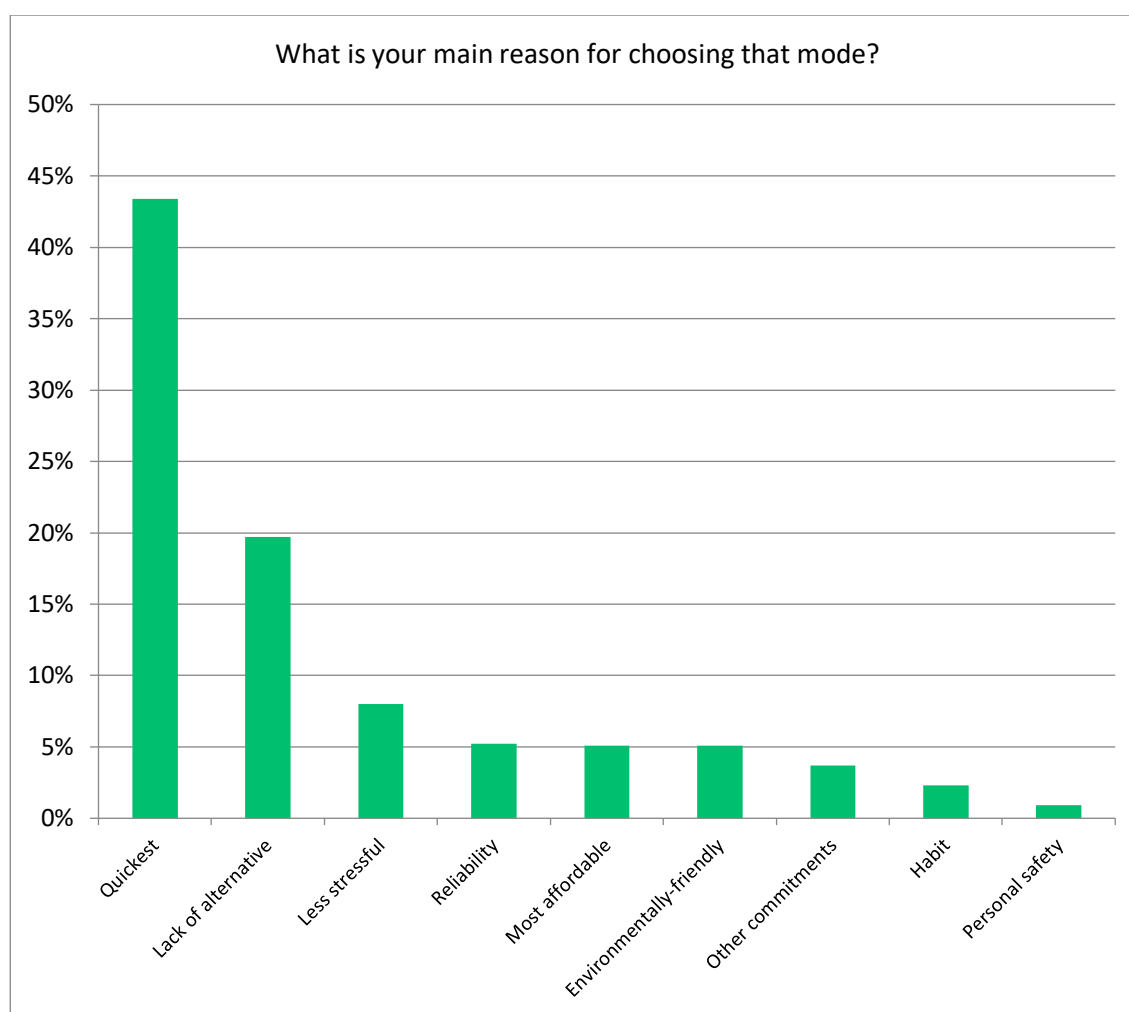


Staff: How do you usually travel to campus?



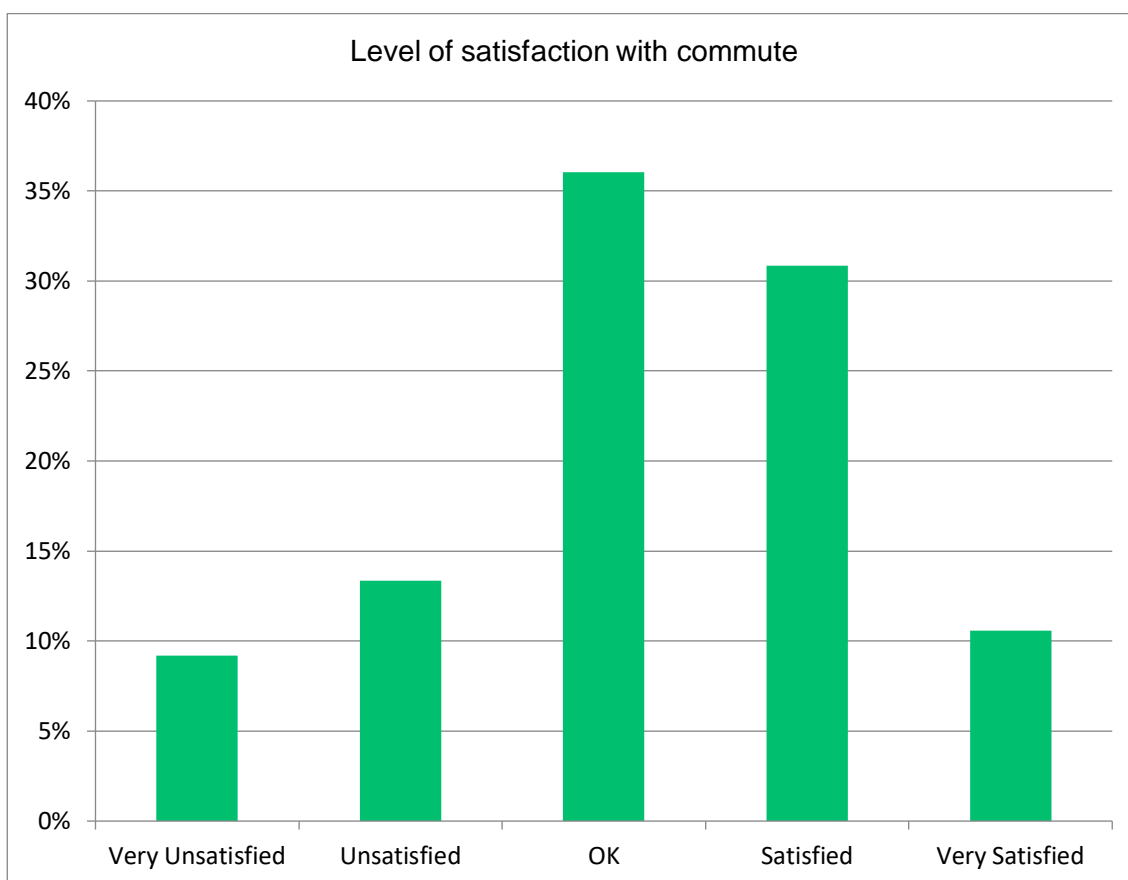
By far the most pressing thing determining travel options is time. With 43% of staff picking speed as their reason. This is not an unexpected answer. The fact that 20% of staff cite a lack of alternative is more surprising. It must be noted that staff with disabilities indicated in text responses that their options are limited. Many staff (50% of car drivers) drop off / pick up children and parents on the way to work, with the car being the most useful option for doing these tasks.

Staff Response	Responses	
Quickest	43.38%	282
Lack of alternative	19.69%	128
Less stressful	8.00%	52
Reliability	5.23%	34
Most affordable	5.08%	33
Environmentally-friendly	5.08%	33
Other commitments	3.69%	24
Habit	2.31%	15
Personal safety	0.92%	6
Other (please specify)		79
<b>Answered</b>		<b>650</b>



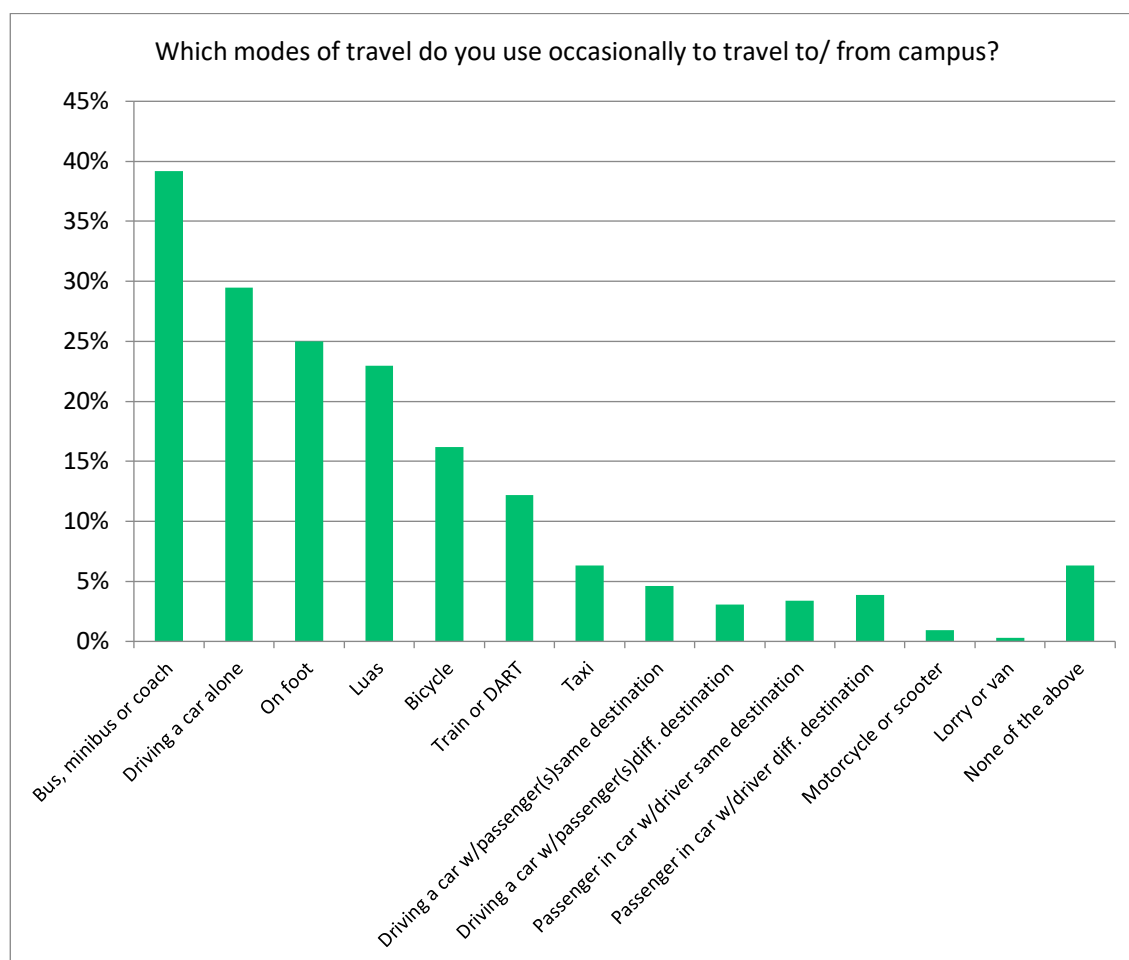
Staff are reasonably satisfied with their commute to work. While there is significant dissatisfaction, with 22% dissatisfied, the majority are comfortable with their commute. While this is absolutely a good thing, it may prove difficult to initiate change when so many are pleased with their commute.

Very Unsatisfied	9%	53
Unsatisfied	13%	77
OK	36%	208
Satisfied	31%	178
Very Satisfied	11%	61
<b>Answered</b>		<b>577</b>



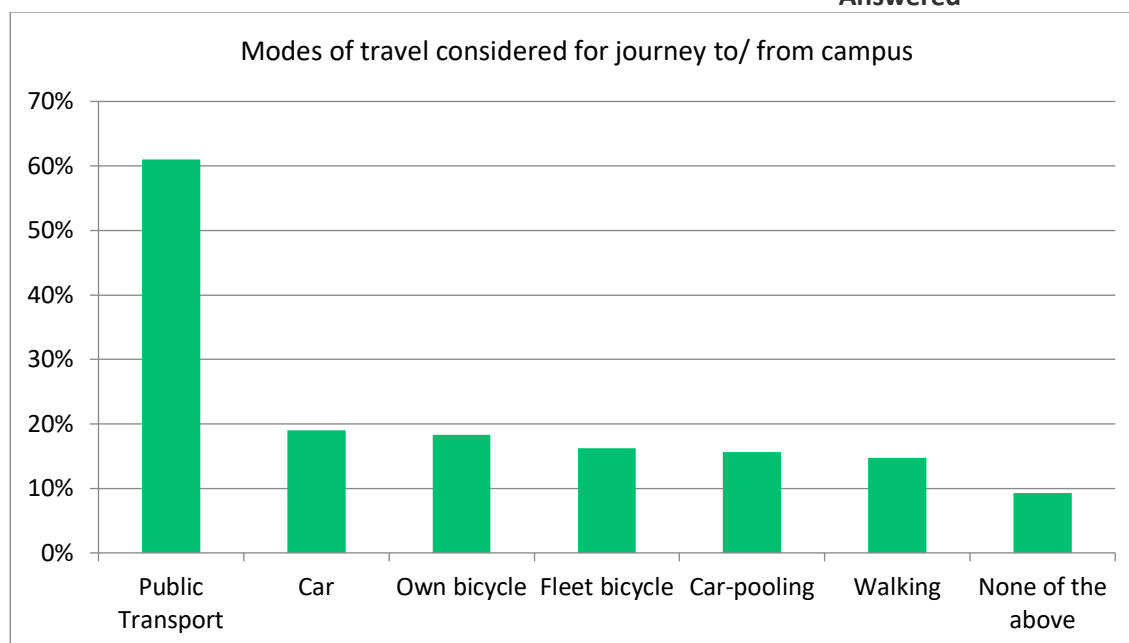
When asked which modes of transport are used occasionally, the number of staff indicating they travel on foot rises from 8% to 25%. That leaves a lot of scope for changing people's behaviour, particularly if the time / speed issue can be addressed. Use of the bus / LUAS / train rises to 74% from 37%, again illustrating the huge scope for changing behaviour.

Which modes of travel do you use occasionally to travel to / from campus?	Responses	
Bus, minibus or coach	39%	254
Driving a car alone	29%	191
On foot	25%	162
Luas	23%	149
Bicycle	16%	105
Train or DART	12%	79
Taxi	6%	41
Driving a car w/passenger(s) same destination	5%	30
Driving a car w/passenger(s) diff. destination	3%	20
Passenger in car w/driver same destination	3%	22
Passenger in car w/driver diff. destination	4%	25
Motorcycle or scooter	1%	6
Lorry or van	0%	2
None of the above	6%	41
<b>Answered</b>		<b>648</b>



Of the options that staff are willing to consider using, public transport is the most common with 61%. Of interest is that cycling, combined personal and fleet, is around 31%. This, in spite of concerns for safety, changing facilities and lockers.

Which of the following modes of travel would you consider using for your journey to/ from campus, if they were available? Please choose all that apply.			Responses	
Public Transport			61%	386
Car			19%	120
Own bicycle			18%	116
Fleet bicycle			16%	103
Car-pooling			16%	99
Walking			15%	93
None of the above			9%	59
Other (please specify)				57
Answered				633



When asked what was the most important item the University could do to change their commuting behaviour, staff strongly indicated the need for improved active commuter facilities with dedicated showers and lockers. This is followed by secure cycle parking, an ever present scourge of city campuses. Third is an increase in cycle parking. The interest in cycling indicates a latent desire to change from one mode of transport to another.

	1	2	3	4	5
Electric bike charging points	9%	20%	22%	30%	19%
Electric Car charging point	28%	16%	12%	15%	28%
Improved active commuter facilities (dedicated showers/lockers)	45%	22%	23%	5%	5%
Increased cycle parking	7%	24%	34%	19%	16%
Secure cycle parking	30%	31%	18%	10%	11%

Answered 572

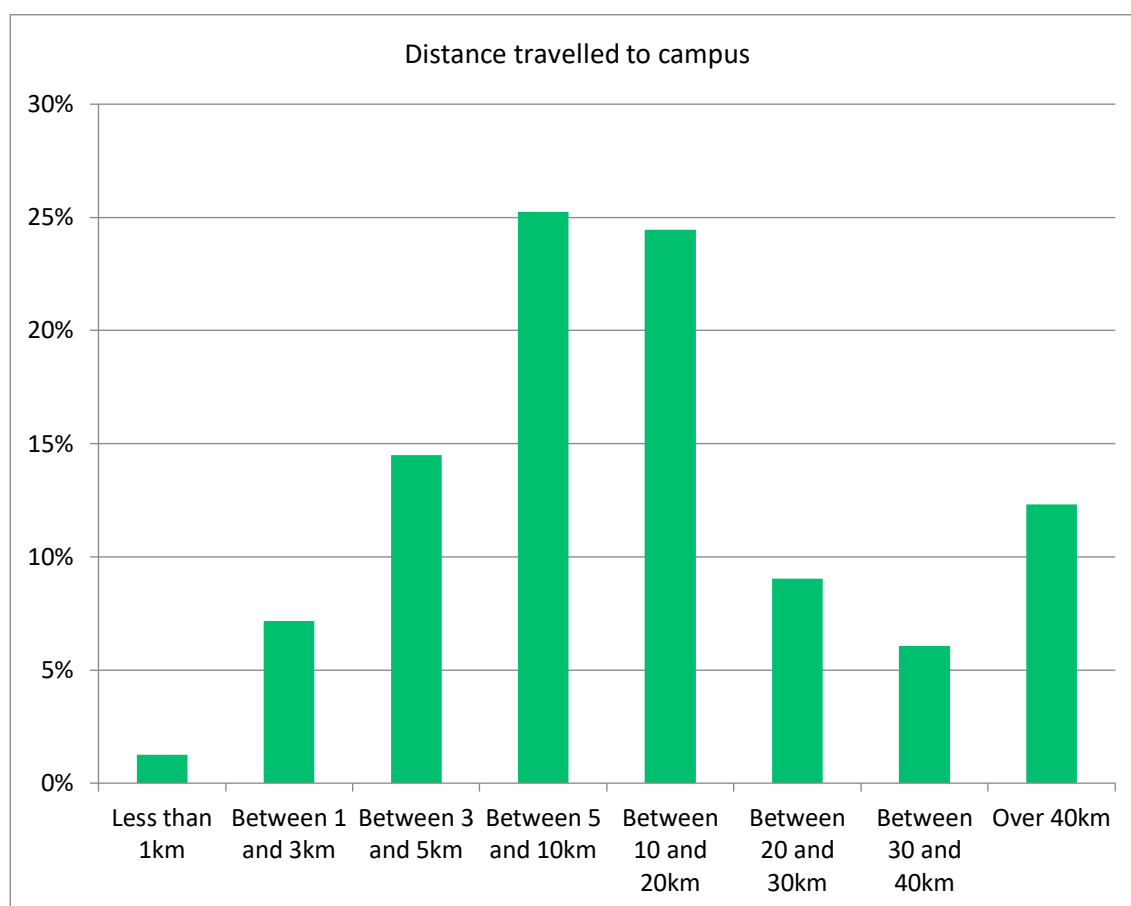
The following table is a series of statements that staff were asked to give their opinion on.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements below:

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>I feel confident cycling my bike to campus</b>	21%	18%	10%	8%	5%	38%
<b>I enjoy walking (all or part of the way) to campus</b>	9%	12%	24%	30%	12%	13%
<b>Public Transport is convenient for my commute</b>	15%	14%	19%	31%	18%	2%
<b>I try to use sustainable transport when I can</b>	3%	6%	23%	35%	24%	10%
<b>I travel the way I do out of habit</b>	15%	22%	18%	28%	11%	6%
<b>I use my car on the commute because I have no alternative</b>	13%	9%	5%	5%	8%	59%
<b>Driving a car is the most effective way to commute</b>	24%	15%	8%	11%	12%	30%
<b>I would like to walk more often</b>	9%	15%	25%	27%	11%	14%
<b>I would like to cycle more often</b>	15%	15%	16%	21%	14%	19%
<b>I would like to use public transport more often</b>	10%	17%	31%	19%	13%	10%
<b>I would like to car-pool more often</b>	12%	12%	20%	22%	12%	23%

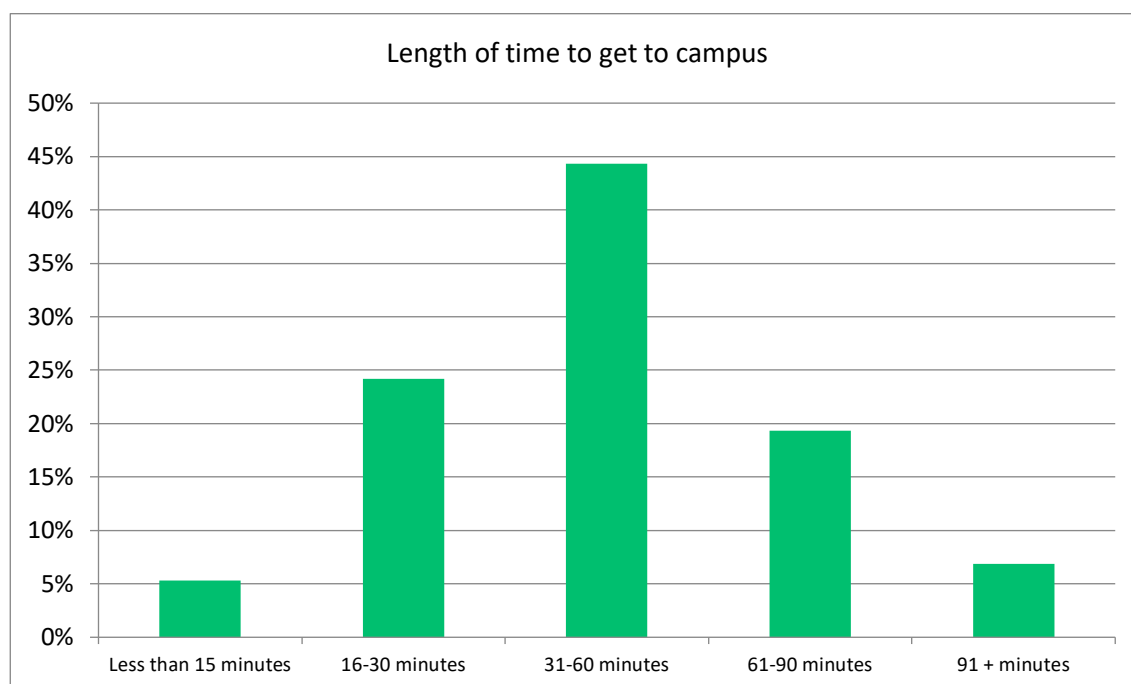
Staff commutes are split 50 / 50 between those under and over 10 kms. This threshold is approximately the distance from O’Connell St. bridge to the M50. It would be a good determinant of commuter behaviours.

Length of commute	Responses	
Less than 1km	1.25%	8
Between 1 and 3km	7.17%	46
Between 3 and 5km	14.49%	93
Between 5 and 10km	25.23%	162
Between 10 and 20km	24.45%	157
Between 20 and 30km	9.03%	58
Between 30 and 40km	6.07%	39
Over 40km	12.31%	79
<b>Answered</b>		<b>642</b>



With nearly 75% of staff getting to campus within an hour, commuter times are much better than for students, with only just over 50% getting to campus within an hour. The fact students predominately use public transport and staff predominately use cars are factors in this. Plus staff are living closer to campus.

Length of time to get to campus	Responses	
Less than 15 minutes	5.30%	34
16-30 minutes	24.18%	155
31-60 minutes	44.31%	284
61-90 minutes	19.34%	124
91 + minutes	6.86%	44
<b>Answered</b>		<b>641</b>



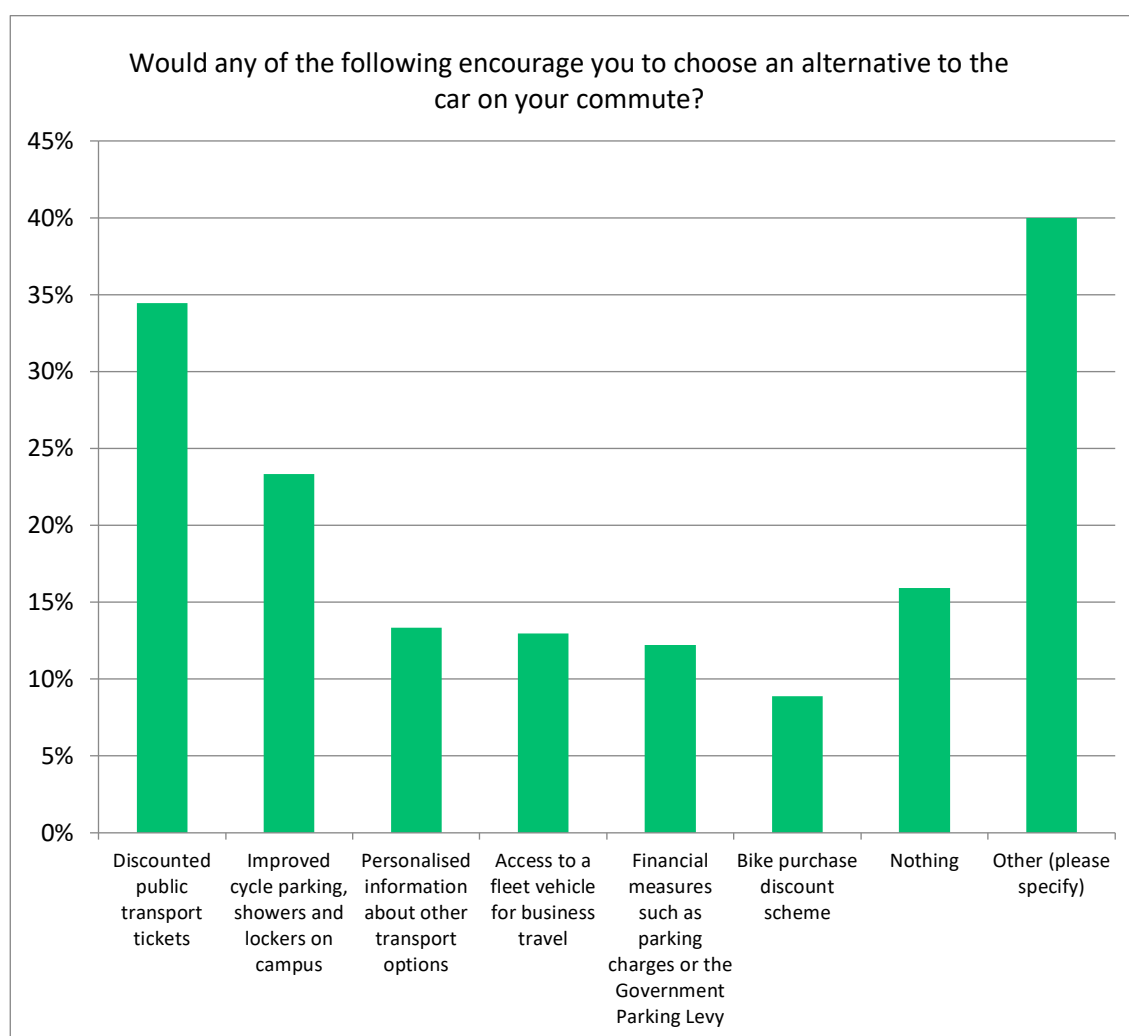
Staff were also asked if they lived within 400 metres (approx. 6 minutes walk) of a direct bus to campus. 30% do have that facility available. A further 21% live within 12 minutes walk of a train / LUAS line.

	Direct Bus 400m	Train/LUAS 800m
<b>Yes</b>	30%	21%
<b>No</b>	69%	78%
<b>Don't know</b>	0.65%	1%



The next topic was directed at staff who drive their cars to work. When asked what would cause a change in their behaviour, most selected the Other option. In the text box provided, the overwhelming response was more frequent, reliable, faster public transport.

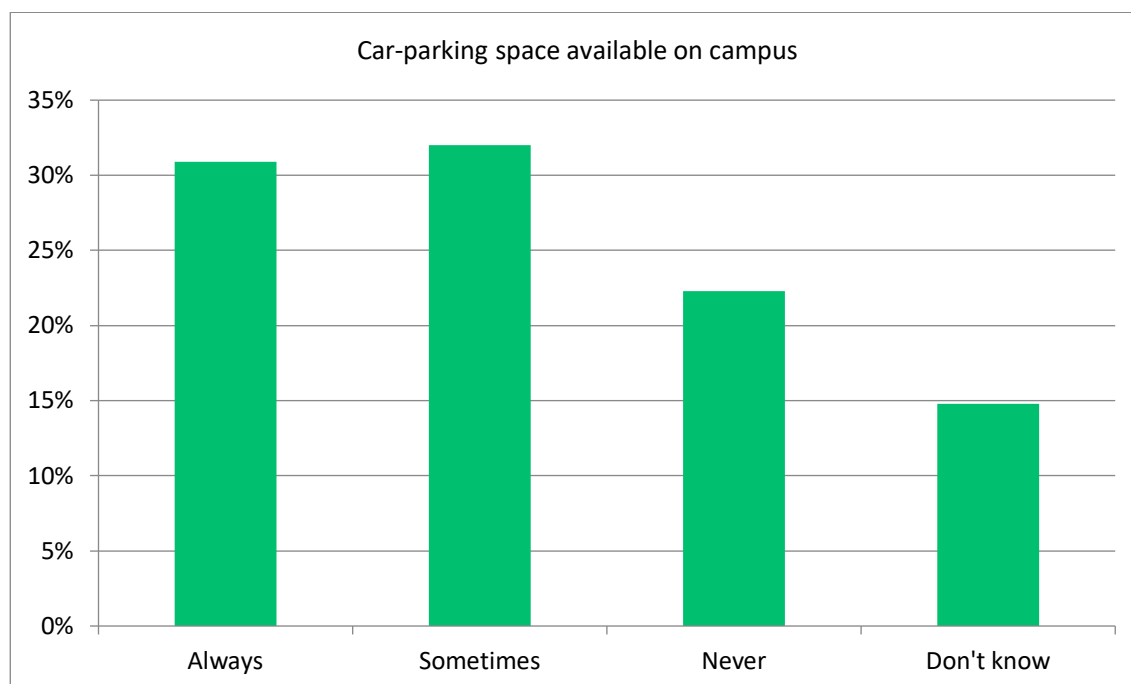
What would encourage you to choose an alternative to the car on your commute	Responses	
Discounted public transport tickets	34%	93
Improved cycle parking, showers and lockers on campus	23%	63
Personalised information about other transport options	13%	36
Access to a fleet vehicle for business travel	13%	35
Financial measures such as parking charges or the Government Parking Levy	12%	33
Bike purchase discount scheme	9%	24
Nothing	16%	43
Other (please specify)	40%	108
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>270</b>



On the issue of car-parking, many staff have the opportunity to park on site. This is especially true in Blanchardstown and Tallaght. Increasingly this will diminish for city campuses with the move to Grangegorman. It may be of interest to track this item longitudinally over time as the transition to Grangegorman takes place.

Do you usually have a car-parking space available to you on campus?

Car-parking space available on campus	Responses	
Always	31%	169
Sometimes	32%	175
Never	22%	122
Don't know	15%	81
<b>Answered</b>		<b>547</b>



Staff were asked a variety of statements about commuting behaviour and asked to indicate their level of agreement with those statements.

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>I feel confident cycling my bike to campus</b>	23%	17%	9%	13%	9%	29%
<b>I enjoy walking (all or part of the way) to campus</b>	7%	7%	14%	28%	23%	20%
<b>Public Transport is convenient for my commute</b>	24%	17%	15%	27%	14%	3%
<b>I try to use sustainable transport when I can</b>	4%	5%	18%	32%	30%	11%
<b>I travel the way I do out of habit</b>	15%	27%	21%	23%	9%	6%
<b>I use my car on the commute because I have no alternative</b>	17%	11%	8%	10%	21%	34%
<b>Driving a car is the most effective way to commute</b>	28%	12%	10%	14%	19%	16%
<b>I would like to walk more often</b>	6%	9%	20%	29%	21%	15%
<b>I would like to cycle more often</b>	14%	11%	17%	21%	19%	18%
<b>I would like to use public transport more often</b>	10%	12%	26%	22%	18%	11%
<b>I would like to car-pool more often</b>	24%	17%	24%	13%	5%	18%

**From:** Update City <[update.citycampus@TUDublin.ie](mailto:update.citycampus@TUDublin.ie)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday 20 November 2019 11:48  
**To:** Update City <[update.citycampus@TUDublin.ie](mailto:update.citycampus@TUDublin.ie)>  
**Subject:** National Transport Authority Survey

Dear Colleagues,

Every two years, the National Transport Authority carries out a travel survey for TU Dublin staff and students to understand their current travel needs and to make transport plans for your campus in the future. As you know, transport is a significant issue in Dublin, and your input will inform decisions about the overall travel system.

If you can take the few minutes required to complete their survey, designed in consultation with us here in TU Dublin, it would be much appreciated.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TU\\_Dublin\\_November\\_2019](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TU_Dublin_November_2019)

Thanking you in advance,

Andy Maguire, Sustainability Co-ordinator