

Commuter students: findings from OfS commissioned research

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Student spotlight event on commuter students

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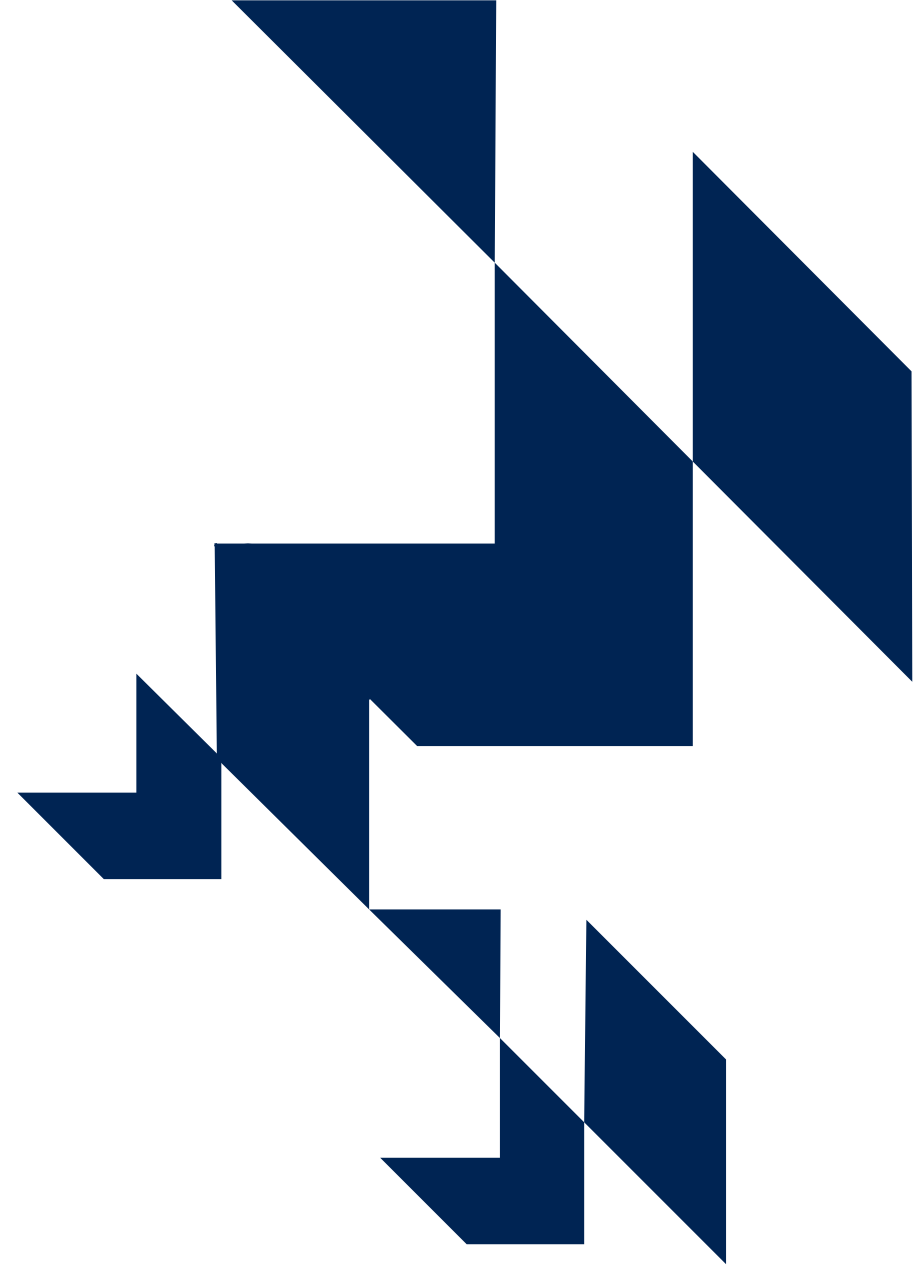
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What do we mean by
commuter students and
why does it matter?



Who counts as a commuter student?

Student A

- Lives with parents
- 20 minute bus journey

Student B

- Lives with parents
- 90 minute rail journey

Student C

- Lives in term-time student accommodation
- 60 minute journey via public transport across the city

Student D

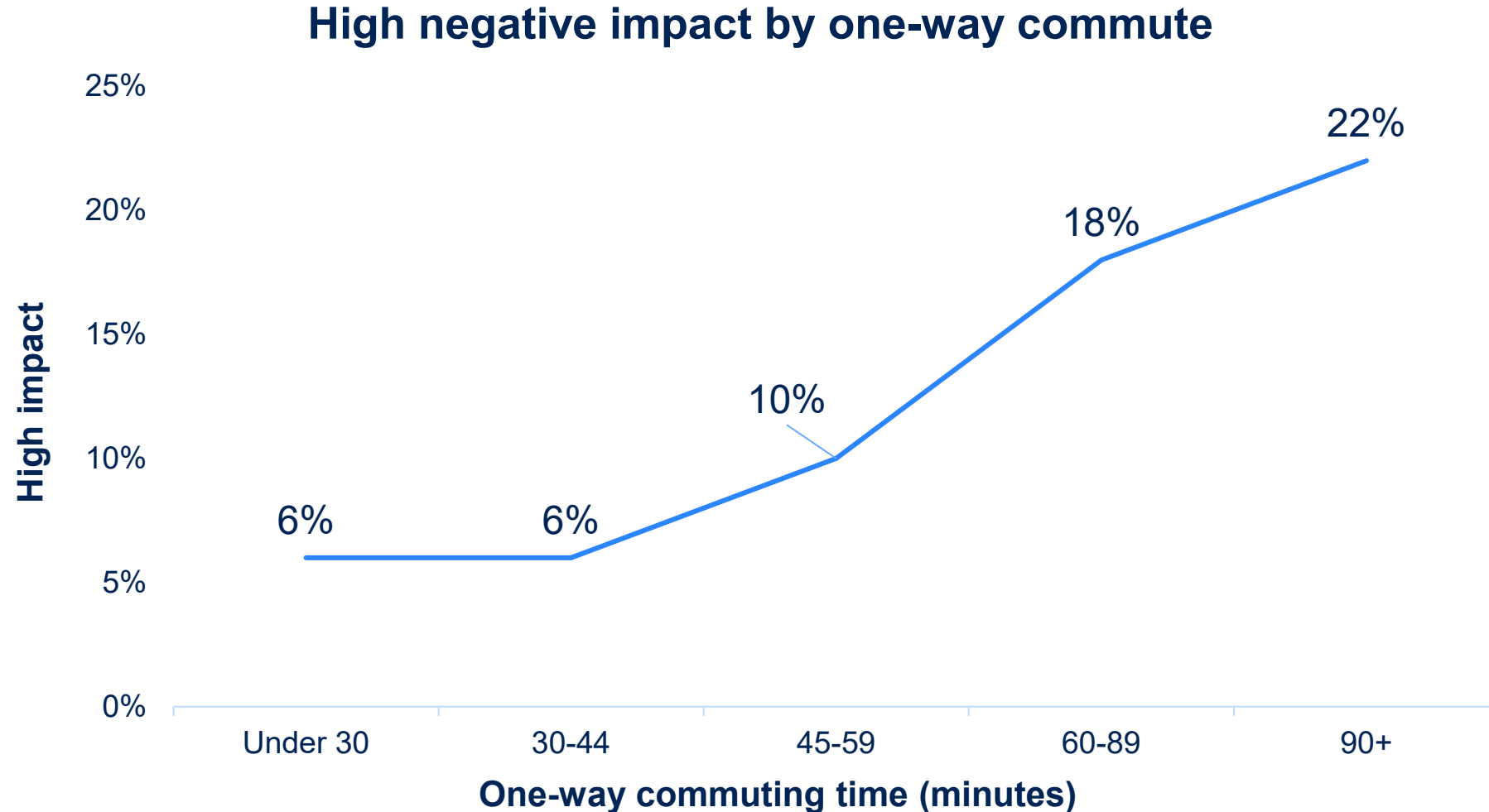
- Lives independently off campus with partner and children
- 25 minute car journey

About the study



- Survey of 1,069 higher education students in England
- Fieldwork in June 2026
- Commuting measured through
 - Travel
 - Living circumstances
- Reported impact on student experience

Journey time associated with higher reported impact



Longer journeys shape how students use campus



71% vs 59% spent less time on campus than they wanted to at least once during the term



63% vs 46% decided not to go to campus on a day when they had planned university activities.



58% vs 16% said the length of journey was a reason they left campus early

Longer journeys and the wider student experience

Academic support

- 67% vs 52% Missed academic office hours, drop-ins or other academic support.

Student support

- 55% vs 39% Missed or unable to attend student welfare support sessions.

Participation

- 67% vs 51% Unable to participate in societies, clubs or other social activities.

Preparation for learning

- 76% vs 59% Too tired from travel to prepare properly for taught sessions.

What does this mean?

- Journey time stands out as most clearly linked with reported impact
- Journey burden appears particularly important
- Biggest effects are on participation and access

Thank you for listening

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