

Financial Support for Low-Income Commuter Students

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In this session we will cover

01 *Overview of UEL Bursary Support*

02 *Engagement Bursary – Travel Costs*

03 *Sharing and Analysing 2024/5 Data*

04 *Data Trends across the APP Lifecycle*

UEL BURSARY SUPPORT

| APP Bursaries: | Non-APP Bursaries: |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Hardship Bursary | Hardship Bursary |
| Engagement Bursary | Digital Equipment Support |
| Progression Bursary | Emergency International Fund |
| Young Independent Students | Humanitarian Crisis Fund |



Engagement Bursary – Travel Costs

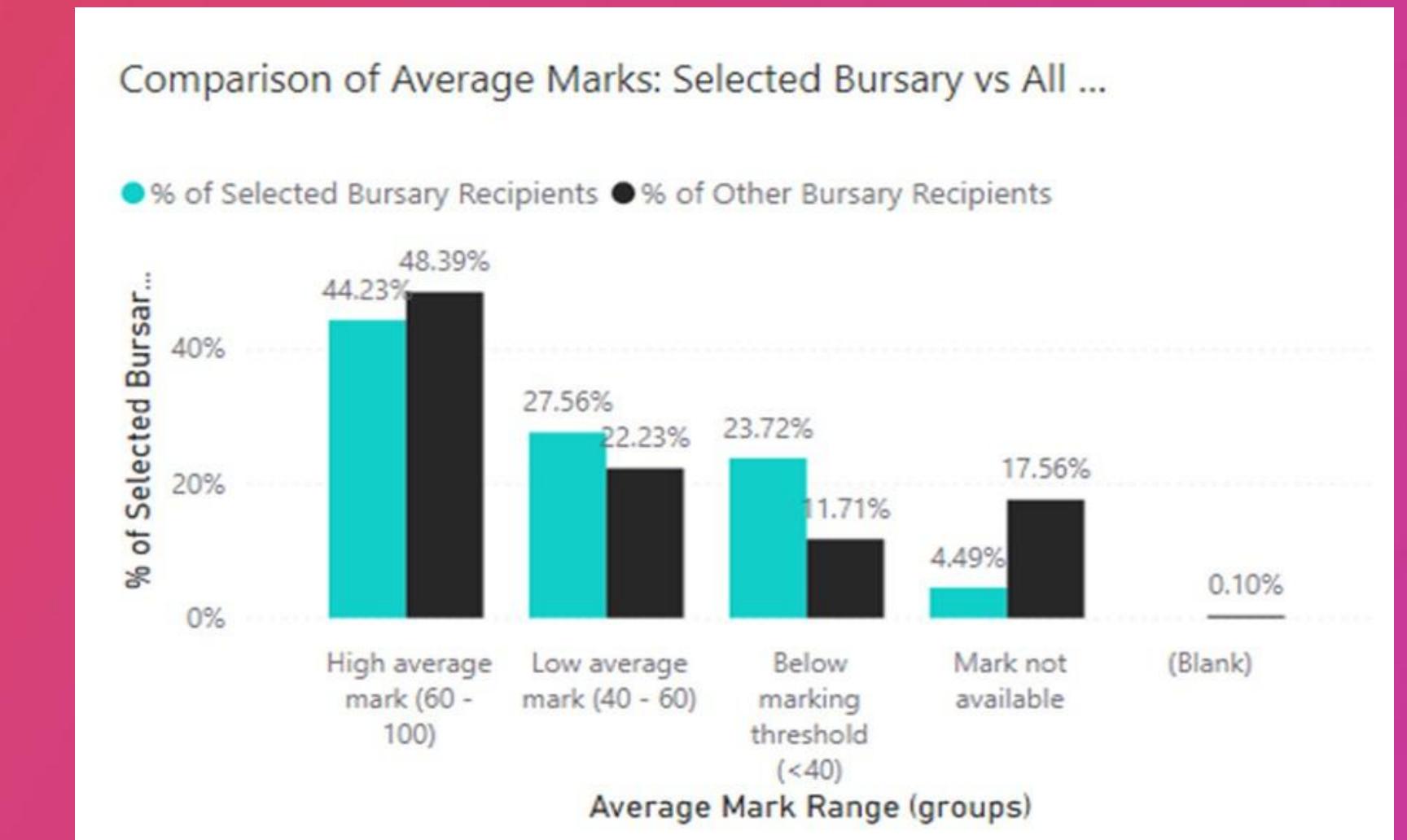
- Why?
- How?
- Payment Process?
- Promotion of Funds?

Sharing and Analysing 2024/5 Data – UEL Engagement Bursary (Travel Costs)

- Received 456 applications
- Awarded 157 low-income UG Commuter students
- Awarded £98k in Bursary Support
- Average award £625 per student

Data Findings (from Bursary 2024/5 questionnaire):

- Travel time and fatigue – longer commutes can reduce time for study and participation.
- Lower sense of belonging – commuter students may engage less in campus life.
- Financial pressures beyond tuition – commuting costs may offset bursary benefits.
- Less access to academic and wellbeing support – due to limited on-campus time.



Data Trends and Outcomes across the APP Lifecycle

The continuation gap between commuter and non-commuter students has been decreasing. In 2018/19 it was 5.5 percentage point (pp) difference with commuter students outperforming non-commuter students. However, in 2020/21 this gap narrowed to 0.2pp

The completion gap between commuters and non-commuters has shown historic fluctuation with commuter students outperforming non-commuters in some years, and vice-versa in others.

The attainment gap shows the largest and most consistent trend. With commuter students consistently outperforming non-commuter students in achieving at least a 2.1 degree classification. in 2021/22, commuter students attained a "good degree" at a rate of 82% which was 8.7pp higher than non-commuter students.

These results could be interpreted in a number of ways:

- UEL has effectively supported commuter students to the extent that they now perform on-par with, or exceed non-commuter students
- There are other factors unrelated to commuter status which result in these outcomes

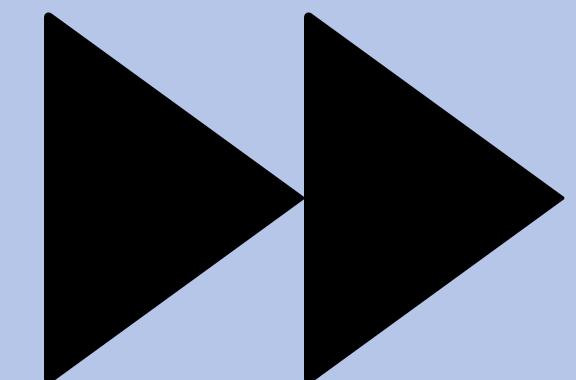


Looking Forward

Financial bursary support alone may not mitigate the structural and engagement challenges faced by commuter students.

Universities may also consider targeted interventions such as:

- Dedicated commuter student engagement programs.
- Hybrid academic and support services for flexibility.
- Reviewing whether bursary criteria or support mechanisms should differ for commuters.



QUESTIONs?

