

Retention Service - Business Faculty

Term 3 Summary
2023/24

Steph Scott
Retention and Insights
Manager
s.e.scott@greenwich.ac.uk

greenwich
students'
union

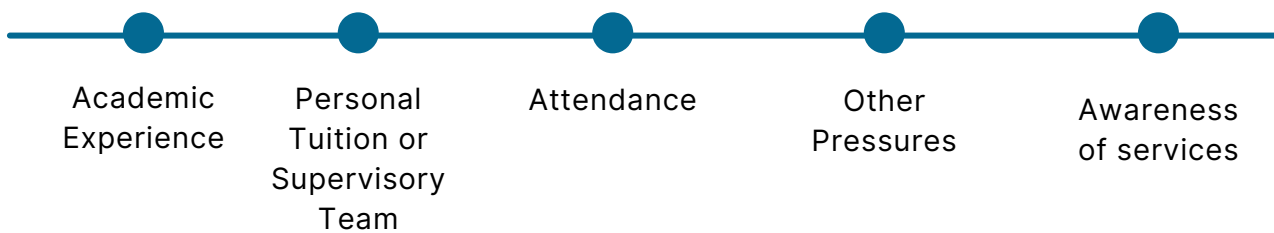
Retention Service

What do we talk to students about?

Our student callers have a 1-1 structured conversation asking students about their experience at Greenwich and reminding them of the support available.

We make it clear we're calling from the SU, that we hold their confidentiality unless they consent for us to share information and that students can be open with us about issues they are facing.

During the calls we ask questions around the following:



↳ If at any stage during the call we identify an additional support need we'll ask the student for permission to refer their case to the relevant service

Who we called

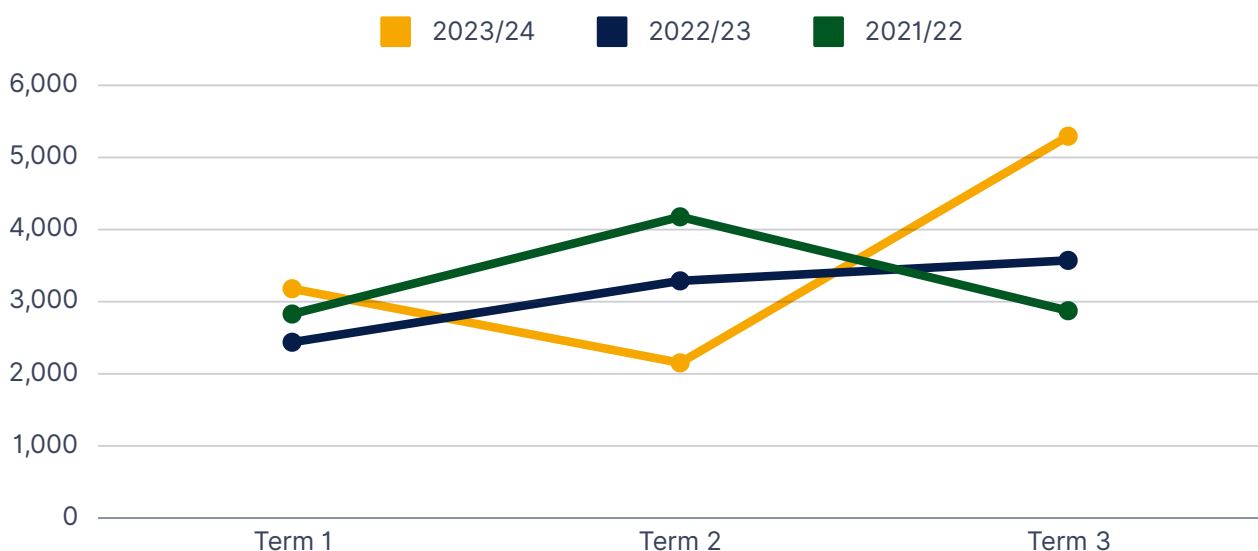
We prioritise calling students who are most at risk of being withdrawn due to nonattendance and students at risk of withdrawing or interrupting themselves.

- April starters
- Students not in attendance
- PGT students at dissertation stage
- Interrupting students: w/c 3rd June
- Students resitting over summer: 8th-26th July

Number of calls made

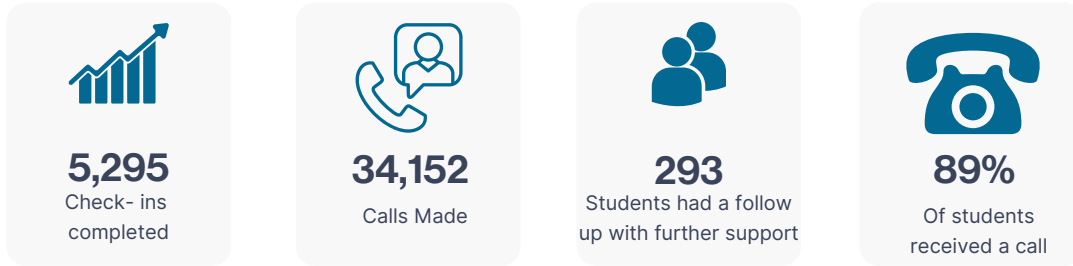
We completed calls to 5,295 students this term, which is the most calls that have been completed in one term over the lifetime of the Retention Service

Below is a graph showing completed calls per term over the past 3 years

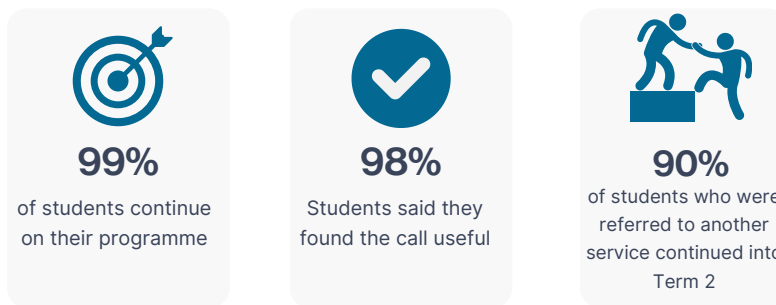


University Summary

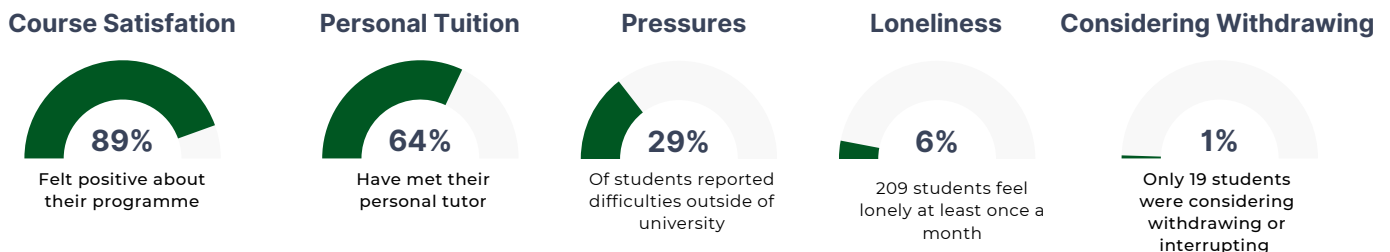
KPI overview



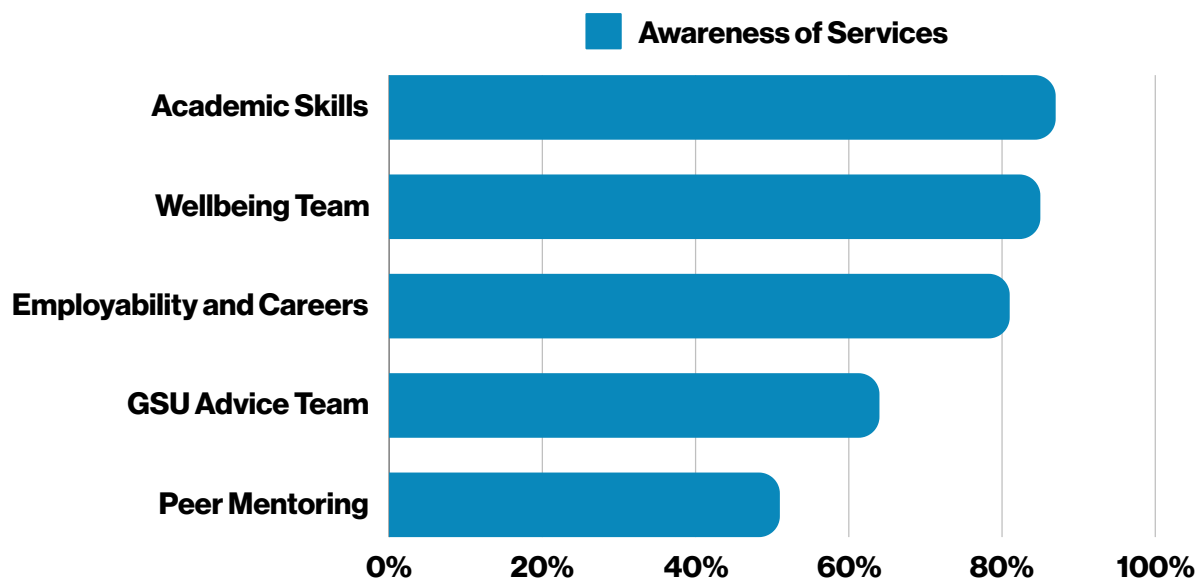
Our Impact



What are students saying?

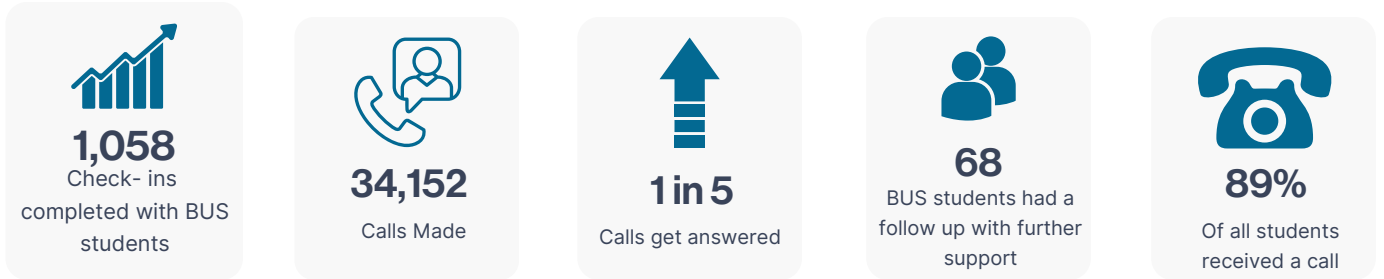


Support Service Awareness

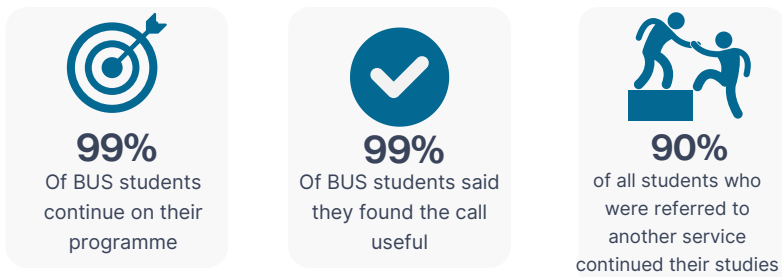


Business School Summary

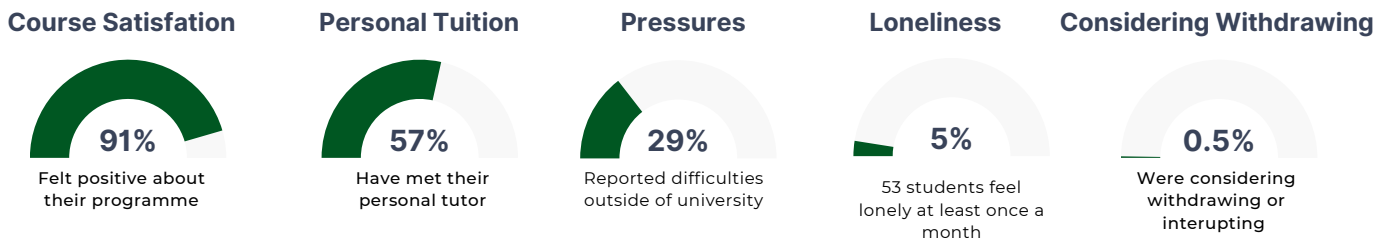
KPI overview



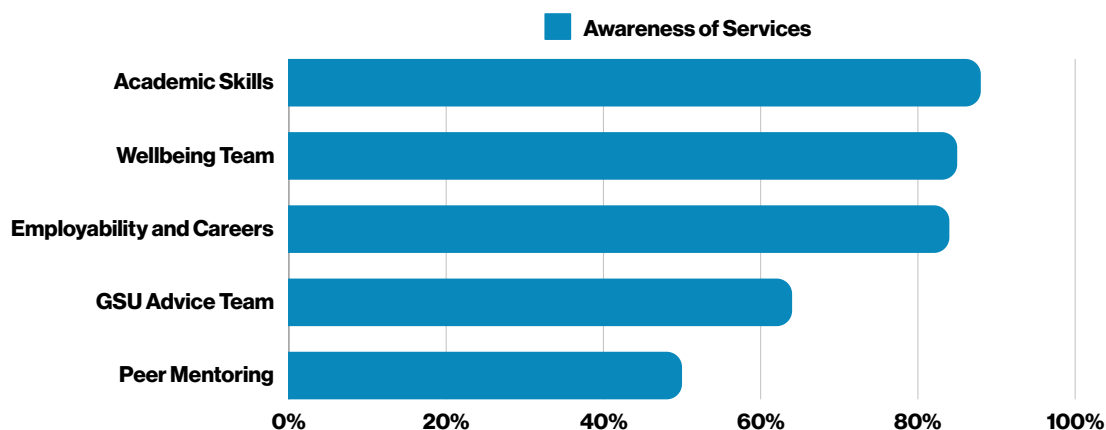
Our Impact



What are BUS students saying?



Support Service Awareness



Term 3 Service Overview

This report gives a summary of the key findings, themes and recommendations from the Retention service in term 3 of 2023/24.

Who we call

- April starters
- Students not in attendance
- PGT students at dissertation stage
- Interrupting students: w/c 3rd June
- Students resitting over summer: 8th-26th July
- Student Reps Offboarding calls

These groups are therefore over-represented in the findings below.

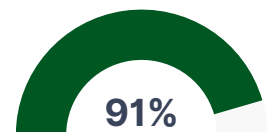
Bangladeshi Student Check in

At the end of the term we also called Bangladeshi students to check in and signpost to places of support within the university, during the political instability and protests in Bangladesh. We spoke to 232 Bangladeshi students and the majority were primarily worried about not being able to contact family. They were all signposted to the Wellbeing team for support.

Course Satisfaction

91% of BUS students felt positively towards their course and only 1% negatively, with the remaining 8% offering a neutral response.

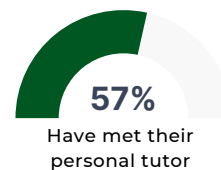
Home students also ranked slightly greater course satisfaction (92%) than their overseas counterparts (91%).



Felt positive about their programme

Personal Tutoring

57% of BUS students know and have met their personal tutor and 20% know, but have not met them.



Have met their personal tutor

The lectures were interesting, the course work was effective. The lecturers and tutors were supportive.

PGT
International Student,
Executive Business School

Linking students with support

We aim to link students with the right support at the right time.

We believe if we support students with the underlying issues they are facing they will be more likely to continue on their course of study.



Business students had a follow up with further support

This is why we prioritise making contact with students who are likely to be withdrawn because of poor attendance or who we know are more likely to withdraw because of their personal circumstances.

Direct Referrals to other services

25 Business students were referred for support to another university service who aim to follow up with the student the next day as per an agreement set out in service level agreements.



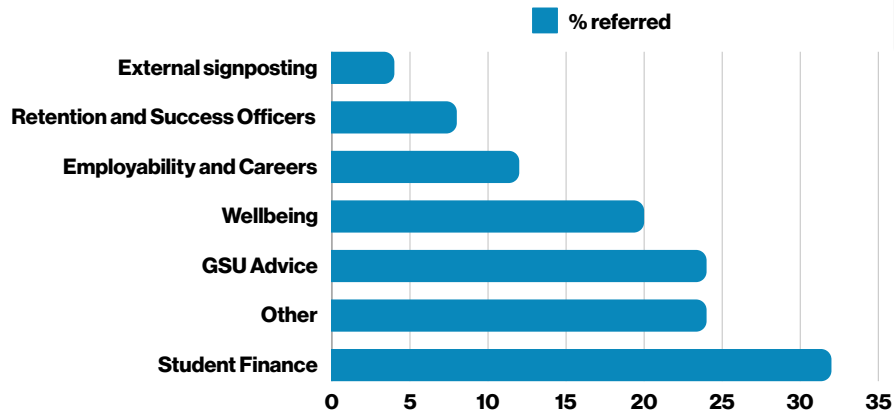
25

Business students had a direct referral made to another service



90%

of all students who were directly referred to another service continued their studies



In addition to those students who were directly referred for support, 43 students told us about financial concerns, social support, and course issues. We send these students additional information in support packs.



36

Business students told us they were concerned about their finances, and were sent a finance support pack



9

Business students told us they felt lonely, and were sent a social support pack



4

Business students told us they were struggling with their course, and were sent a course support pack

The finance support pack includes information on ways to access cheaper food shopping, such as Too Good To Go or local community pantries, the free breakfasts and dinners provided by GSU on campus, university hardship funds and bursaries, budgeting tips and the opportunity to get a free Totum card.

The social support pack includes information on the Global English courses, Vygo (the peer mentoring app), GSU's buddy schemes, a downloadable calendar and colouring pages and information on GSU societies.

The course support pack includes information on the interruption and withdrawal process, how to contact your personal tutor, financial, academic and wellbeing support and information for international students on the visa implications of interrupting or withdrawing from their studies.

I am grateful - there is a lot of information in the packs that I was unaware of.

BUS undergraduate student

Continuation Rate

99% of all students called continued on their programme.

This may reflect this point in the academic year, as the deadline to interrupt studies fell early in this term for September starters and students are less likely to withdraw in term 3.

Faculty	Continuation %
Faculty of Education, Health and Human Science	100%
Greenwich Business School	99%
Faculty of Engineering and Science	99%
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science	99%



99%

Of Business students called continue on their programme

Those considering withdrawing

6 Business students told us they were considering withdrawing or interrupting. Of these 6, 5 continued on their studies.

All of them were home students. 4 were UG students and 2 were PGT students.

All students who are considering withdrawing or interrupting receive follow-up support including signposting to Retention and Success Officers, their personal tutors and to any other additional support tailored to their situation.



6

Business students told us they were considering withdrawing

1

withdrew (or was withdrawn) or interrupted their studies

5

students continued on their studies

£378,900

of fee income retained in Business School this year*

*1 x PGT home, 4 x UG home + Term 1 and 2 figures

Co-Curricular Experience

Loneliness

53 Business students we spoke to reported feeling lonely in Term 3 equating to 5% of respondents in the faculty. This is 1% less than the number for all students.

Of these, students most often (30%) reported feeling lonely on a weekly basis. 72% of those who feel lonely were international students. 42% cited homesickness as a reason for their loneliness.

Cost of Living Concerns

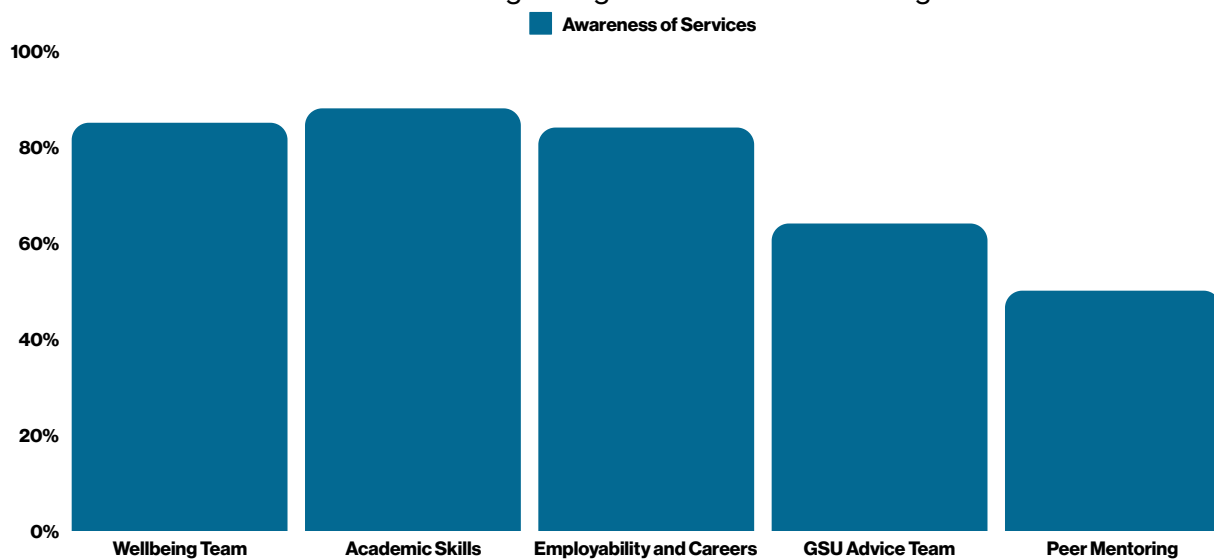
9% of Business students said they were concerned about supporting themselves financially or paying their fees which is the same as the % of all students called.

Commuting and travel came up as a consistent concern. This was spread fairly consistently across all campuses, and consisted of comments regarding the Medway bus, parking issues and students who live far from campus. Part-time work and worries about employment were also repeated issues. Students, particularly international students, are struggling to find part-time work alongside their studies and they highlighted this as an additional pressure which was impacting their studies.

Support Service Awareness

During the calls, students are asked if they are aware of and have used, the following services.

All students called were reminded about the support that these teams offer, and many students commented at the end of the call regarding how useful it is to be given this information.

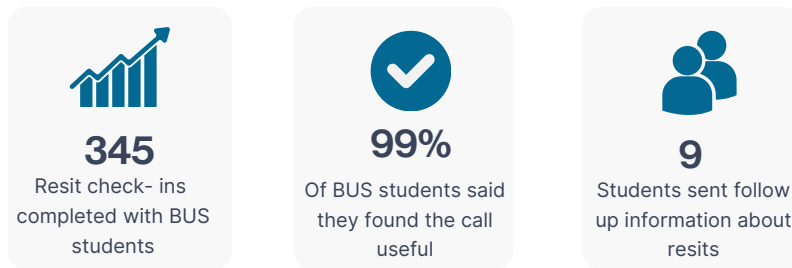


It was really great to get the call, as I felt I was being cared about and given places to find solutions.

UG Business Student

Analysis of Resit Calls

Call statistics



Resit Specific Questions

When calling students who have resits over the summer, we ask questions specifically about the resits, as well as reminding students of the support that is available to them.

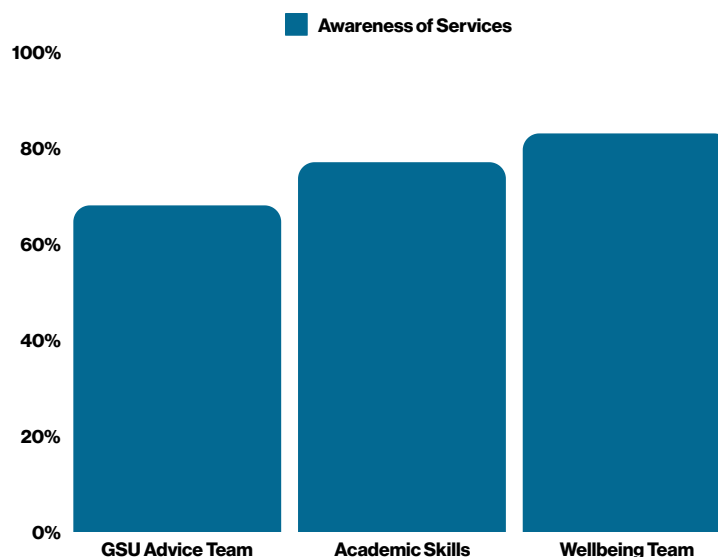


Support Service Awareness

During the calls, students with resits are asked if they are aware of and have used, the following services which may be relevant during the resit period.

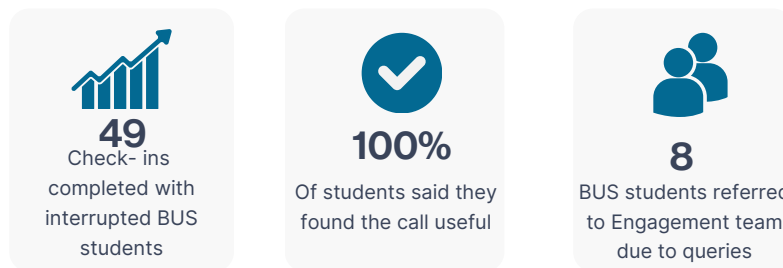
All students called were reminded about the support that these teams offer including resit specific support on offer, and many students commented at the end of the call regarding how useful it is to be given this information.

The table below shows that support service awareness is higher in students taking resits, which is positive as it implies there has been communication about these services to them.



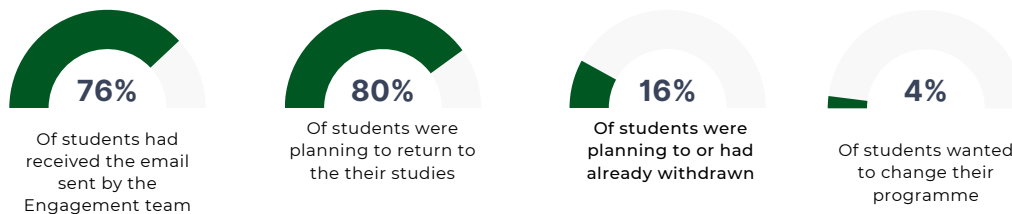
Analysis of Interrupted Students Calls

Call statistics



Interruption Specific Questions

When calling students who are on an interruption, we ask about students' plans in terms of returning to university and if they have received the email sent by the Engagement team offering information about returning to university.



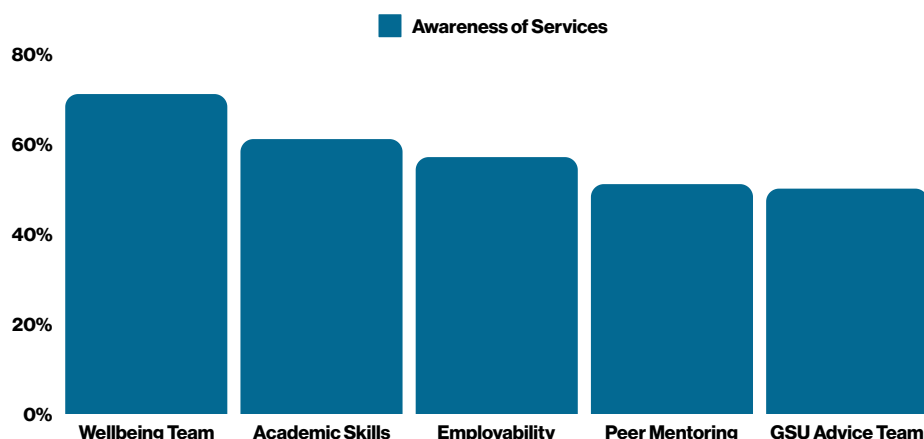
The majority of the follow up support needed by students was regarding how to defer their return further, how to communicate their withdrawal to the university and how to register for the coming term.

8 students were referred to the Engagement team for further support with their queries, 3 of these were regarding withdrawal, 4 were regarding deferral and 1 was a more complex query.

7 students said they were concerned about financial issues and were sent follow up information about support from the Student Finance team.

Support Service Awareness

During the calls, students on an interruption are asked if they are aware of and have used, the following services. All students called were reminded about the support that these teams offer so that they can make use of them if needed, on their return.



Recommendations

The recommendations made here stem from the conversations had with students and the themes that emerged. It is proposed that these are reviewed by university services, faculties and the GSU.

Timetabling

The issue: Timetabling has been a recurrent theme this year and in the previous academic year.



Students said: Timetables can be sporadic which result in frequent journeys to campus and difficulty with balancing other commitments. There have also been reports of last-minute timetable changes and overcrowded teaching spaces.

The Retention Project recommends: Coordination across faculties and programmes to ensure that, from the beginning of the year, there are as few issues as possible. As suggested last year, flexibility for students to change seminar groups to ensure they are convenient for students is recommended, although initially arranging timetables carefully may limit disruption for both students and teaching staff of mid-term changes.

Spreading payments for international student fees

The issue: A recurring theme in the Retention calls and the GSU Advice Service is international students asking for payment plans, although they do not meet the University of Greenwich criteria for a payment plan.



Students said: They felt the payment plan was too harsh, worry about paying fees was impacting on their ability to study and the Student Finance team were very slow to respond to emails and queries. Students reported feeling very stressed and worried about finances and visas.

The Retention Project recommends: Additional fee payment installments could be offered to all self-funding students. Other London universities already offer this - e.g. Goldsmiths College, UCL, LSE and London South Bank University offer three installments. These do not include the initial deposit that international students are required to pay. We believe this could significantly reduce the number of students contacting the GSU Advice Service and the Student Finance team to request payment plans, as well as addressing the stress and detriment that students report.

Employability support in Term 3

The issue: Term 3 may be a particularly important term to host employability and employment activity so that students feel confident leaving university and moving into the UK job market.



Students said: They felt stressed and worried about being able to find a job after graduation. They were looking for more employment support from the university.

The Retention Service recommends: More employment support offered in Term 3 after assessments have concluded. These would need to be advertised very specifically to students who are graduating and looking for post-academia support.

Placements

The issue: During placements there is a higher risk of students having negative experiences which are missed by the university and this leaves students feeling isolated if they face any issues.

Students said: There were several students who spoke about difficulties with placements, including experiences of bullying and other issues, as well as difficulty finding placements for students who have to apply independently.

The Retention Service recommends: Ensure that students know who to contact for support with finding placements (if needed) and are given enough support to find them. Strengthen the processes for students reporting difficulties on placements so that they can be supported through any issues. Ensure students are given support to find placements when needed.



Academic Year 24/25

In the coming academic year we have refocused our objectives for the service. We are focusing on the support and retention aims of the project, and therefore focusing on students who are at higher risk of withdrawal.

We have laid out a number of strategies which we will implement over the next academic year, to ensure that we are reaching the students that we would like to reach, and to provide the most high quality support to those students.

Strategy	Objective
<u>Outreach</u> Calls; updated survey Texts and WhatsApp; new ways of reaching students	<u>Outreach</u> Diversify contact methods and therefore reach more students Focus on support and retention aims Targeted support to students with an increased risk of withdrawal
<u>Follow Up Support</u> Signposting and referring Additional follow ups for escalated students	<u>Follow Up Support</u> Tracking outcomes for students and ensuring communication has reached them Consistent support and monitoring Early identification of unresolved or repeating issues
<u>Marketing</u> Social media Updated website New brand identity for the service	<u>Marketing</u> Increasing the visibility of the service Potentially increasing self-referrals
<u>Training and monitoring</u> More in-depth training and refreshers Call quality monitoring alongside 121s	<u>Training and Monitoring</u> Increased quality of support and signposting Callers feel supported and upskilled
<u>Collaborative targeted support</u> Linking with the university when reacting to global events Linking with Engagement and Opportunities to launch the AH and GRE buddy schemes	<u>Collaborative targeted support</u> Ensuring a joined up approach Increased visibility of the service for university staff Targeted support for students facing loneliness

If you have any further questions about our aims and strategies for next year, or questions about any of the information and recommendations given above, please to reach out to:

Steph Scott - Retention and Insights Manager - s.e.scott@greenwich.ac.uk