

Retention Service - Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Term 3 Summary
2023/24

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greenwich
students'
union

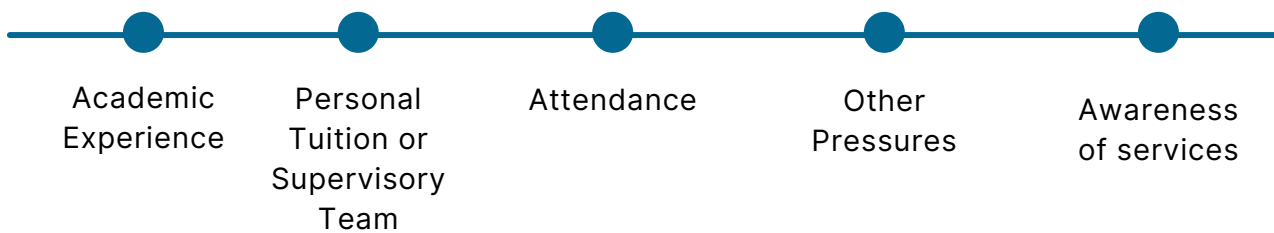
Retention Service

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

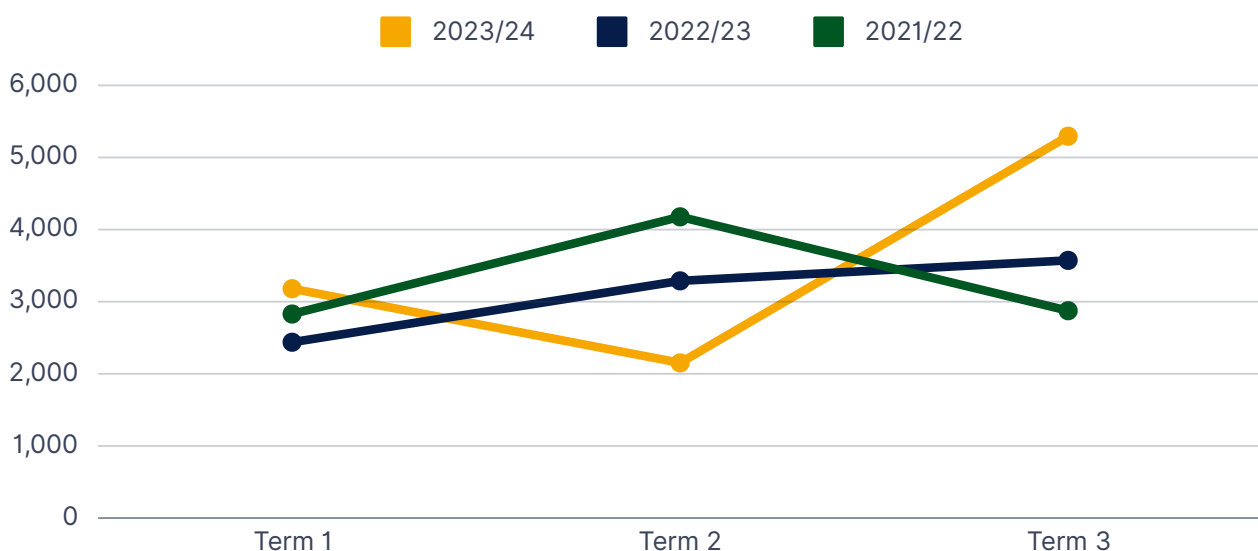
We prioritise calling students who are most at risk of being withdrawn due to nonattendance and students at risk of withdrawing or interrupting themselves.

- 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

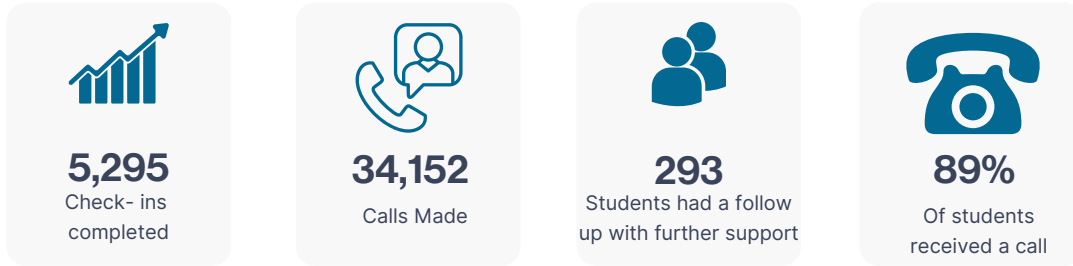
We completed calls to 5,295 students this term, which is the most calls that have been completed in one term over the lifetime of the Retention Service

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

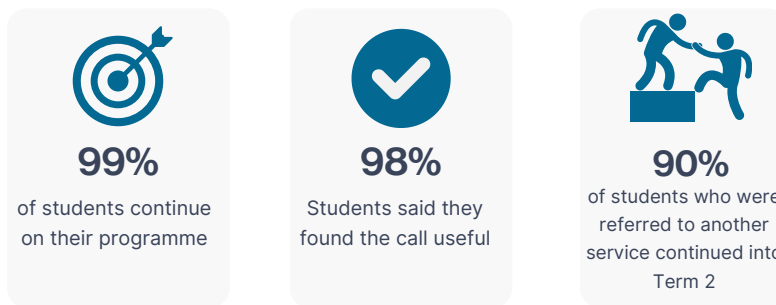


University Summary

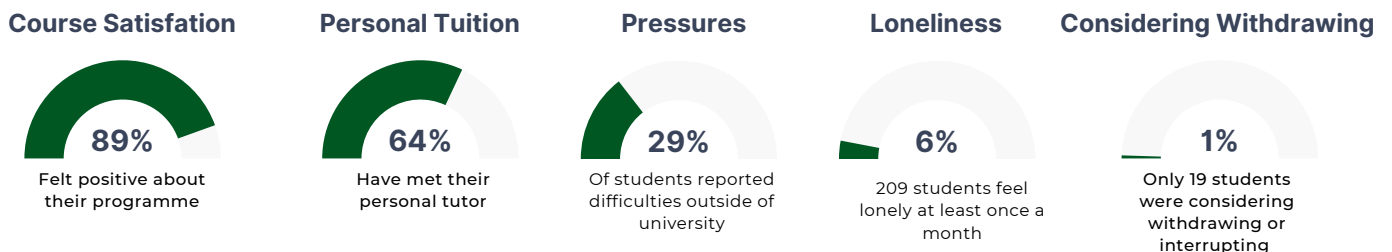
KPI overview



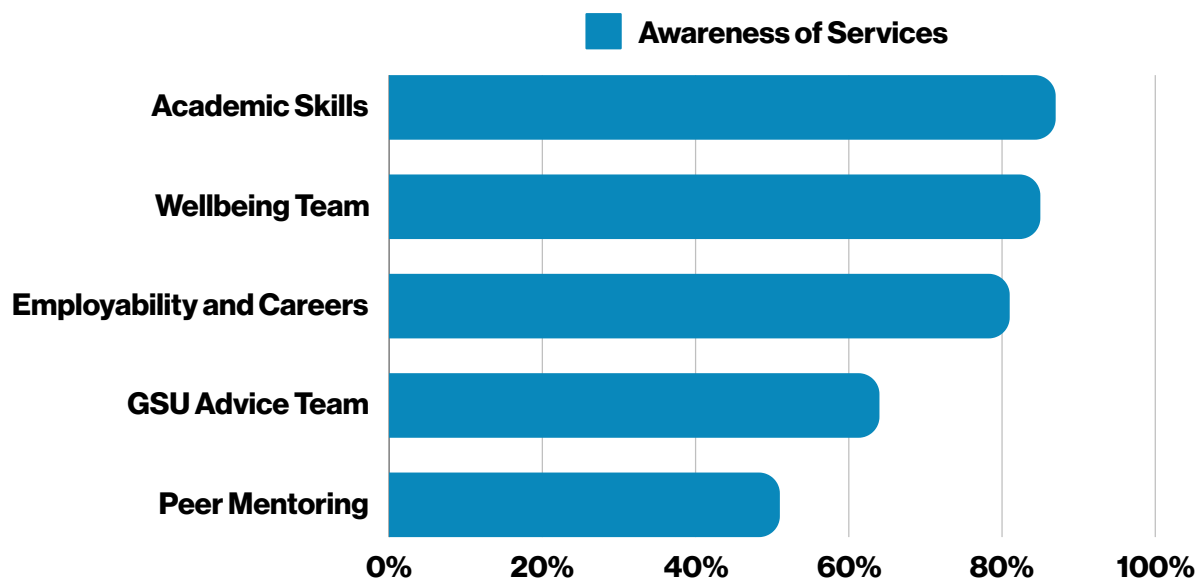
Our Impact



What are students saying?

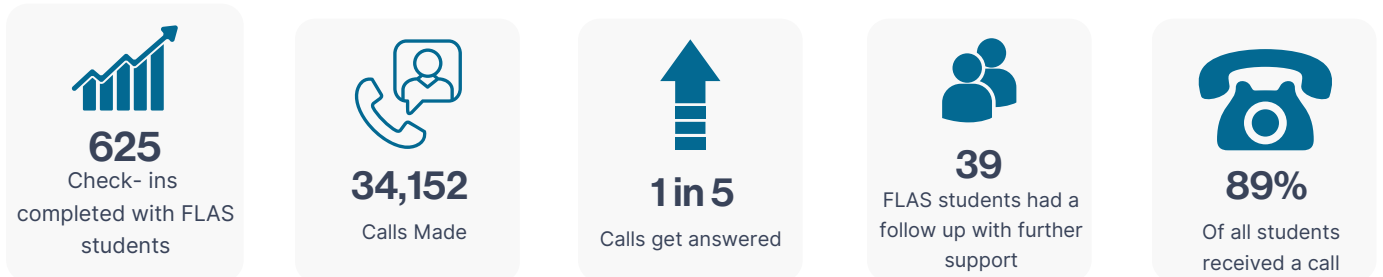


Support Service Awareness

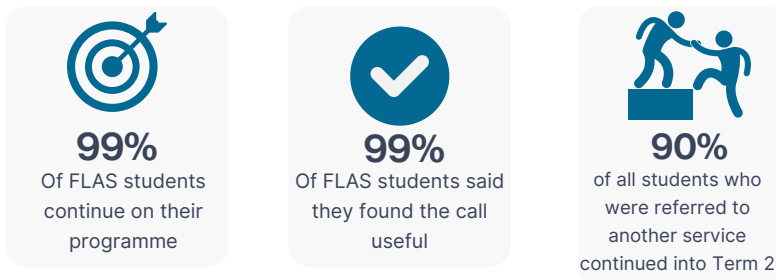


Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science Summary

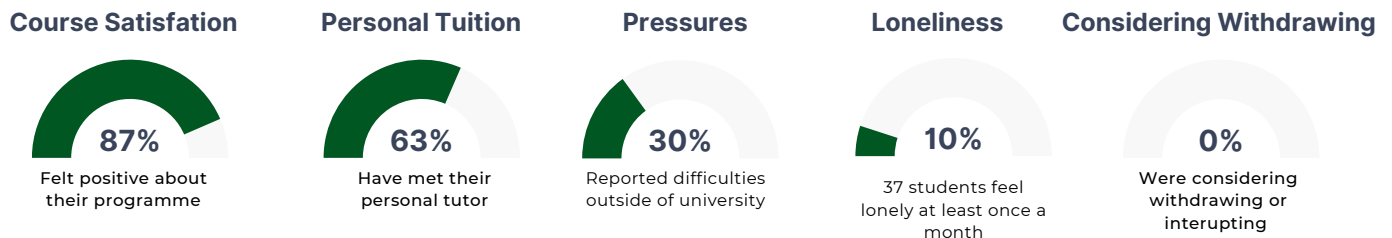
KPI overview



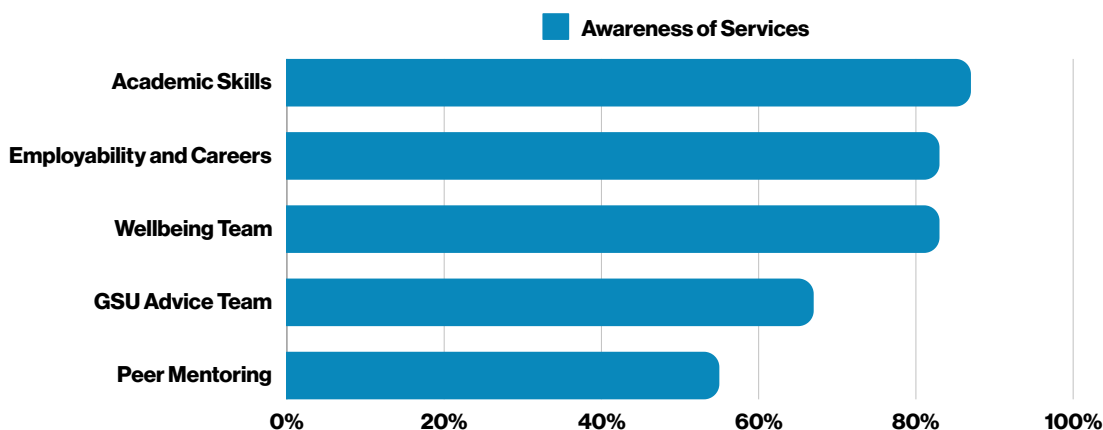
Our Impact



What are FLAS students saying?



Support Service Awareness



Term 3 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

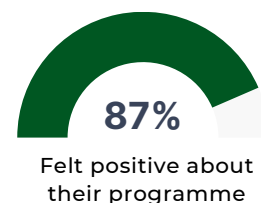
At the end of the term we also called Bangladeshi students to check in and signpost to places of support within the university, during the political instability and protests in Bangladesh. We spoke to 232 Bangladeshi students and the majority were primarily worried about not being able to contact family.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

Course Satisfaction

87% of FES students felt positively towards their course and only 2% negatively, with the remaining 11% offering a neutral response.

ANALYSIS HERE

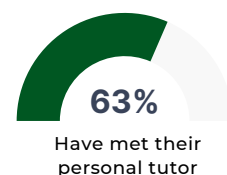
Overseas students also ranked slightly greater course satisfaction (87%) than their home counterparts (86%).



Personal Tutoring

63% of FLAS students know and have met their personal tutor and 18% know of, but have not met them.

We have seen a steady increase in students knowing and meeting their personal tutors. Next term we will be asking follow up questions regarding the quality of support students have received from their personal tutors.



I'm very grateful that GSU called me, I haven't been able to find the time to reach out and discuss my concerns so that have the call and the space is very useful.

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.

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.

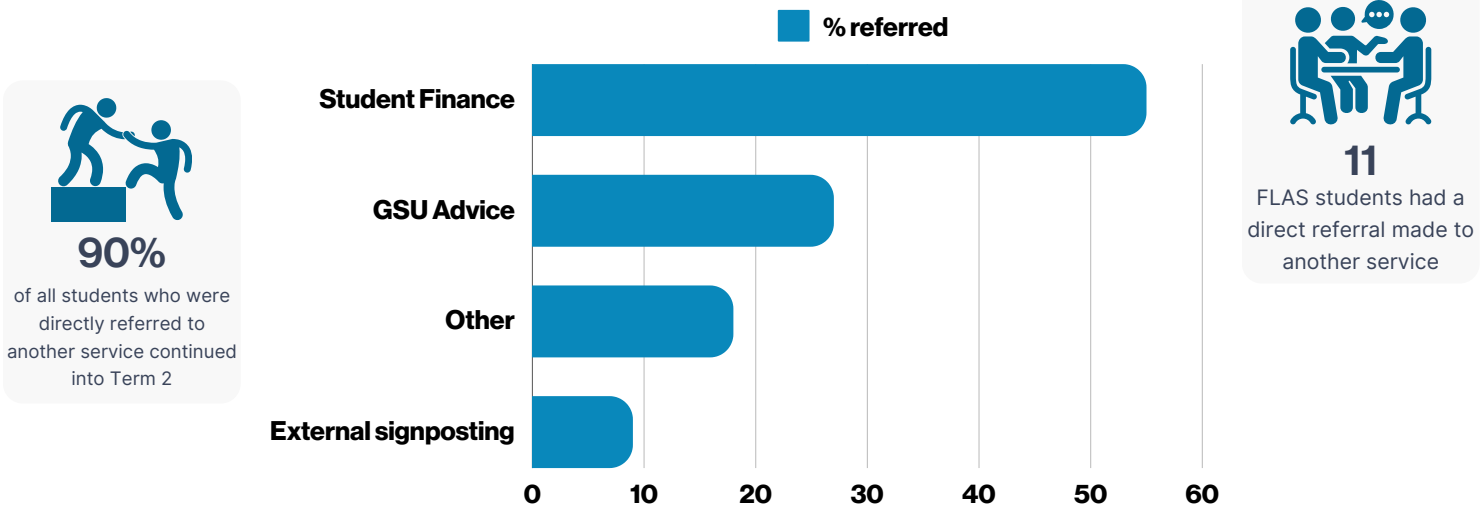


39

FLAS students had a follow up with further support

Direct Referrals to other services

11 FLAS 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.



In addition to those students who were directly referred for support, 28 students told us about financial concerns, social support, and course issues. We send these students additional information in support packs.



14

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



12

FLAS students told us they needed support with loneliness, and were sent a social support pack



3

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

The finance support pack includes information on access to cheaper food shopping, the free breakfasts and dinners provided by GSU on campus, university hardship funds and bursaries and budgeting tips.

The social support pack includes information on the Global English courses, Vygo (the peer mentoring app), GSU's buddy schemes, 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.

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 FLAS students called continue on their programme

Case Study

No FLAS students reported wanting to withdraw or interrupt this term, which is very positive!

Of all the FLAS students called, one student withdrew or was withdrawn and one is now on a interruption. They did not, at the time of the call, report any issues which would have impacted their continuation.

My personal tutor is great and the help and support that I get from my cohort is wonderful. Overall, I've had an extremely positive experience at the university!

PGT Law and Criminology student

Co-Curricular Experience

Loneliness

37 FLAS students we spoke to reported feeling lonely in Term 3 equating to 10% of respondents in the faculty, compared to 6% of all students which shows that FLAS students experience loneliness at a higher rate than students in other faculties.

Of these, the majority (37%) reported feeling lonely on a weekly basis. 78% of those who feel lonely are home students.

Cost of Living Concerns

9% of FLAS students were concerned about supporting themselves financially or paying their fees which is the same as the proportion of all students called. Of those FLAS students concerned about their finances and fees, 35% identified financial pressures affecting their studies, such as cost of living, commuting and travel or work commitments.

Commuting and travel came up as a consistent concern across all faculties. 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.

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.

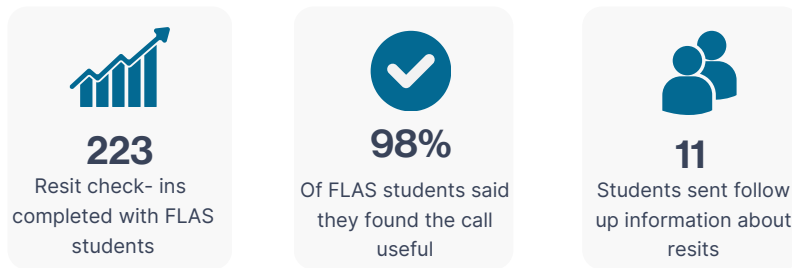


I didn't know I could access the careers team after graduation so the call was very useful!

3rd Year Law and Criminology student

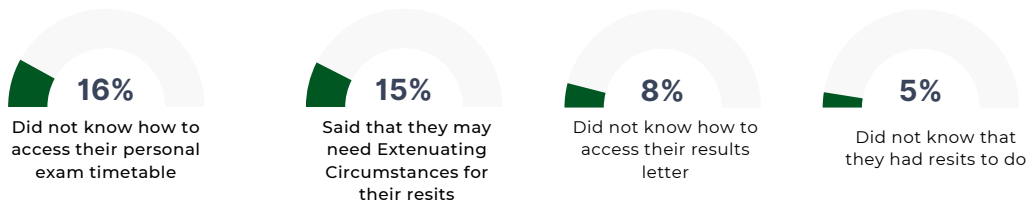
Analysis of Resit Calls

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.

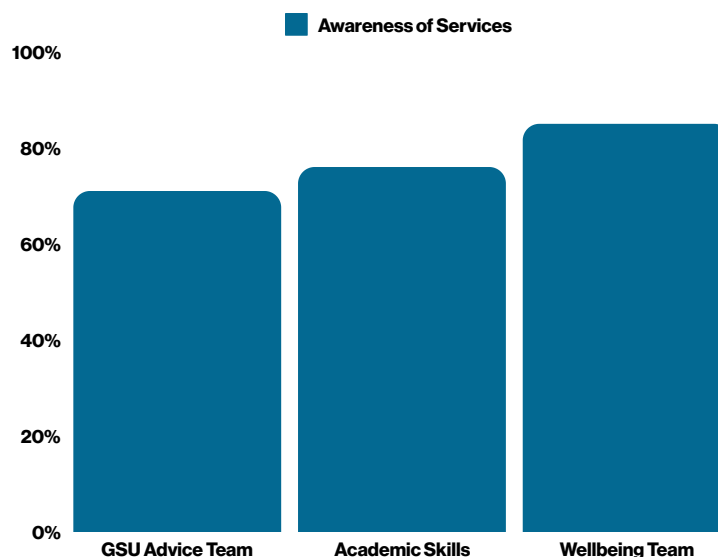


Support Service Awareness

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.

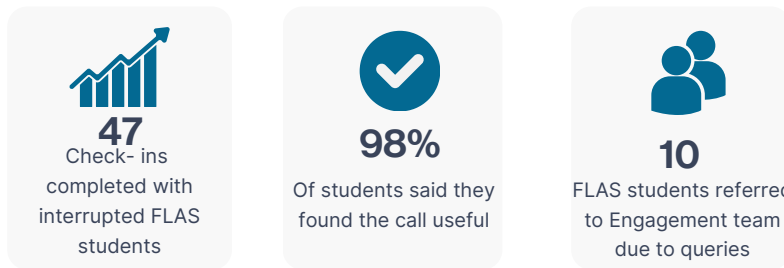
All students called were reminded about the support that these teams offer including resit specific support on offer, and many students commented at the end of the call regarding how useful it is to be given this information.

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.



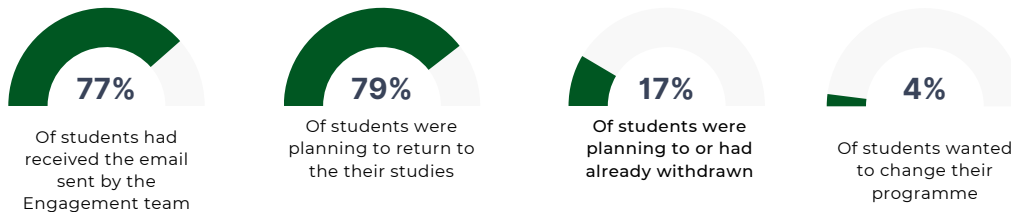
Analysis of Interrupted Students Calls

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.



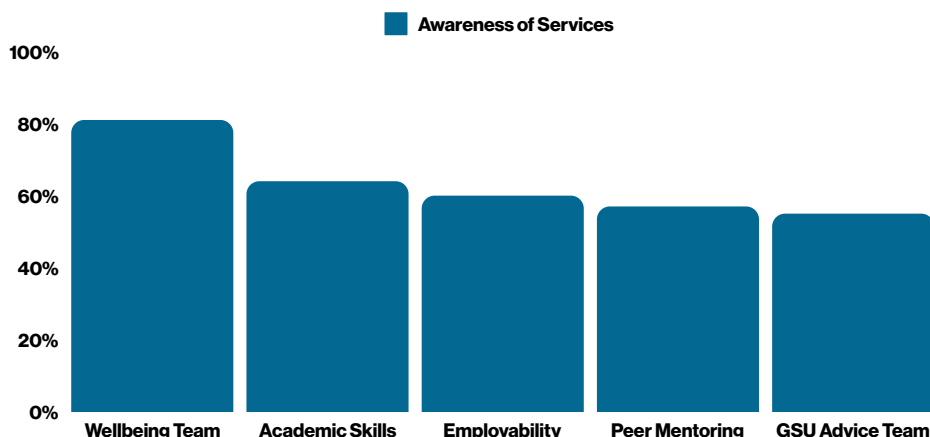
The majority of the follow up support needed by students was regarding how to defer their return further, how to communicate their withdrawal to the university and how to register for the coming term.

10 students were referred to the Engagement team for further support with their queries, 7 of these were regarding withdrawal, 2 were regarding deferral and 1 was a more complex query.

11 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.

Assessments and deadlines

The issue: Deadlines for assessments and exams are stacked together which causes a lot of stress or students feeling they have not been able to perform their best.

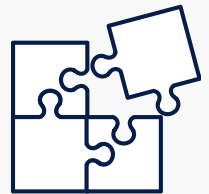


Students said: Several courses have deadlines and assessments concentrated within the same week. There was also mention of assessments feeling disorganised.

The Retention Project recommends: Coordination across the faculty and programmes to ensure that assessments are spread as evenly as possible across the assessment period, to ensure that students are able to perform to the best of their ability.

Loneliness

The issue: FLAS students reported feeling lonely at slightly higher rates than the overall student population, and the proportion who reported feeling lonely on a weekly basis was higher than some other faculties. FLAS students were also referred to Wellbeing at higher rates than students in other faculties.



Students said: The main reason for loneliness raised by students was difficulty making friends, either due to low contact time or small cohort sizes.

The Retention Project recommends: The faculty may want to consider how they can encourage connection and limit isolation within the faculty. GSU and the Retention Service can also consider whether there are additional ways that FLAS students can be supported to engage in social activity.

Temporary Illness Support

The issue: It is unclear where students should go to get support for ongoing illness which has not yet lasted for 12 months, and does not qualify as long-term therefore they cannot get support from the Wellbeing team.



Students said: Students report that they are unsure where to go to get support for ongoing but as yet short term illness such as hospitalisations lasting several months, surgery with an extended recovery time or undiagnosed long COVID.

The Retention Service recommends: Having a clear section on the university website, potentially in the Wellbeing section, as this is where students will look, that states the ways in which they can access support. Ensuring that tutors are equipped to support these students in the ways 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