

# GSU Check-in Service - Faculty of Engineering and Science

Term 1 Summary

2024/25

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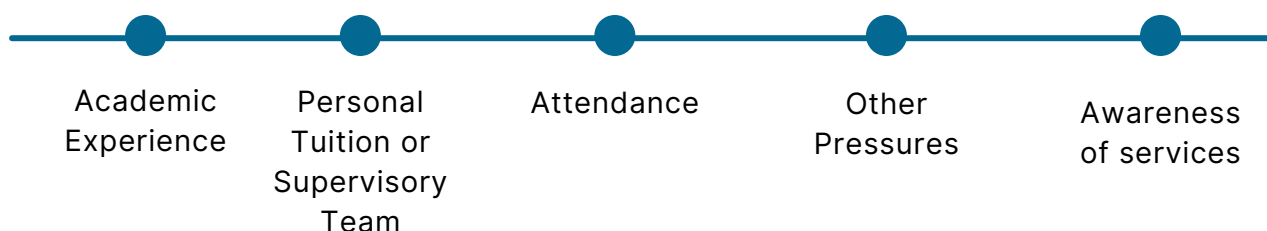
**greenwich  
students'  
union**

# The Check-in Service

## What is the Check-in Service?

The Check-in Service is run by Greenwich Students' Union, previously referred to as The Retention Project. It is a peer-to-peer wellbeing service, which aims to contact students who are vulnerable to withdrawing from their studies, and provide them with early intervention support to help them to stay at Greenwich and thrive.

Our student-staff reach out, primarily through phone calls at the moment, and lead students through a structured conversation. We make it clear we're calling from the SU, that we hold their confidentiality unless they consent for us to share information, or they disclose anything that breaches our confidentiality or safeguarding policies, and that students can be open with us about issues they are facing. We ask questions about the following things:



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

## How do we decide who to call?

We prioritise calling students who are most at risk of being withdrawn due to nonattendance and students at risk of withdrawing or interrupting themselves.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

- Returning Interrupted Students
- Repeating
- POLAR4 Q1
- First Year International
- Mature students for GSU research
- Students on programmes with high non-continuation rates or flagged as Red on the Performance Task Force
- Spanish students after the flooding
- Students spoken to in Welcome by GSU staff for the Talk To Every Student objective

## New questions we asked this term

This term we introduced a few new questions, to see what students were thinking about the Wellbeing service, their student reps and their experiences of being in their final year of their studies.

This term we also introduced follow up calls to students who were previously escalated. These are intended to check on the situation that the student initially disclosed, and to see if there is any further support needed to resolve issues.

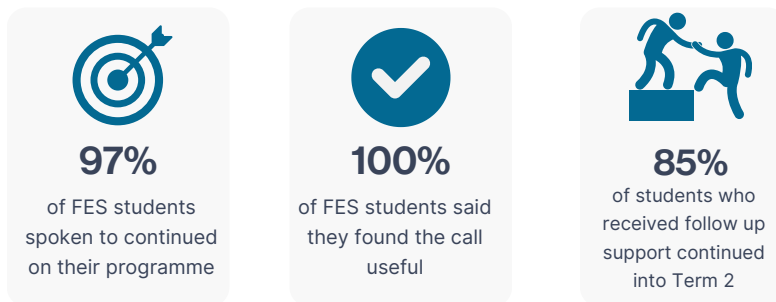
We also asked students if they were aware that the Greenwich Students' Union would be calling students before they received the call, and if so, where they heard about the calls. This is because we are relaunching the service with new branding and its new name, and we want to be able to track whether this has an impact on the visibility and knowledge of the service for students.

# FES Summary

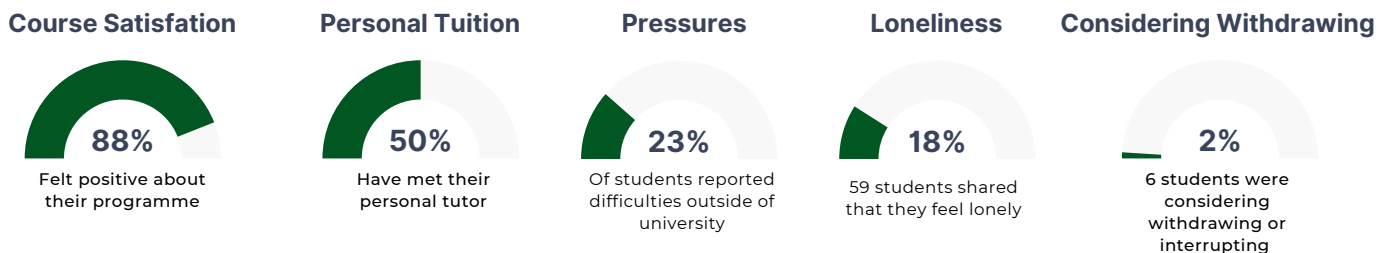
## KPI overview



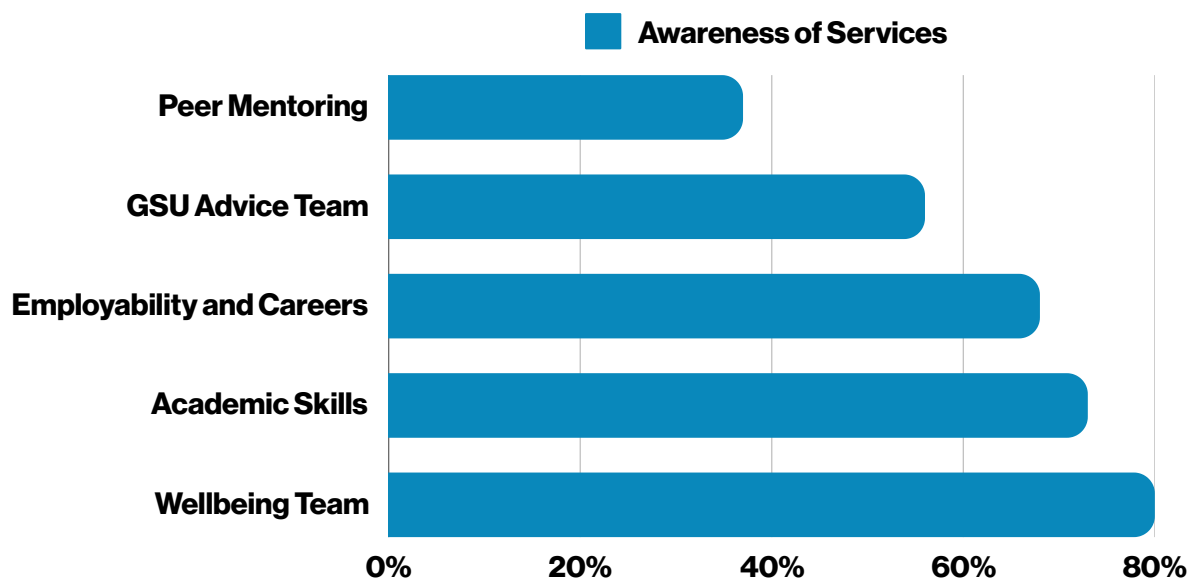
## Our Impact



## What are students saying?



## Support Service Awareness



# Term 1 Overview

This report gives a summary of the key findings, themes and recommendations from the Check-in service in term 1 of 2024/25 for the FES faculty.

## Who we called this term

- Returning Interrupted Students
- Repeating
- POLAR4 Q1
- First Year International
- Mature students for GSU research
- Students on programmes with high non-continuation rates or flagged as Red on the Performance Task Force
- Spanish students after the flooding
- Students spoken to in Welcome by GSU staff for the Talk To Every Student objective

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

### Spanish Student Check in

We called Spanish students after the floods, to check in and see if they needed any additional support. We spoke to 176 Spanish students - many of them commented on how grateful they were to hear from us and to know that someone was checking in. Students were directed to Wellbeing and the Hardship funds if needed.

## Analysis of General Check In Calls

### Course Satisfaction

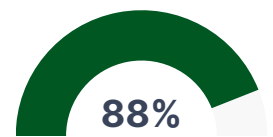
88% of FES students felt positively towards their course and only 2% negatively, with the remaining 10% offering a neutral response. This was in comparison to 88% of students feeling positively overall.

The area that drew the most negative response was 'timetabling', which is in line with previous reports from other cohorts. Overseas students also ranked greater course satisfaction (91%) than their home counterparts (81%).

### Personal Tutoring

50% of FES students knew and had met their personal tutor and 31% knew, but had not met them. This is lower than previous years, and may be due to the launch of the new framework, and how students understand the delegated responsibilities of the Academic tutors and Faculty Student Advisors.

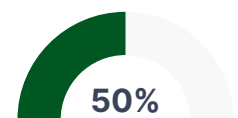
We also included a new question, asking those who had met their personal tutors how the experience had been for them. 94% said that meeting their personal tutor had been an overall good experience. We will be adjusting this question in future to ensure it is relevant for the new personal and academic tutoring framework.



Felt positive about their programme

**"It's great that the GSU is checking in on the students."**

PGT, Engineering overseas student



Have met their personal tutor

**"I've been really lucky to be in close contact with my personal tutor. I know lots of people don't know their personal tutor, but mine has been helping me for a long time now!"**

Third year home Science student

# Co-Curricular Experience

## Loneliness

59 FES students we spoke to reported feeling lonely in Term 1 equating to 18% of respondents, 11% more than this time last year. It is also a slightly higher percentage than the 16% of students overall reporting loneliness.

Of these students, the majority (63%) reported feeling lonely sometimes, as opposed to all the time, rarely or often. Students reporting loneliness were 70% overseas and 30% home students.

## Cost of Living Concerns

21% of FES students are concerned about supporting themselves financially or paying their fees, which is the same as 21% of students overall.

## 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.



60

FES students had a follow up with further support



13

FES students were sent personalised follow up support

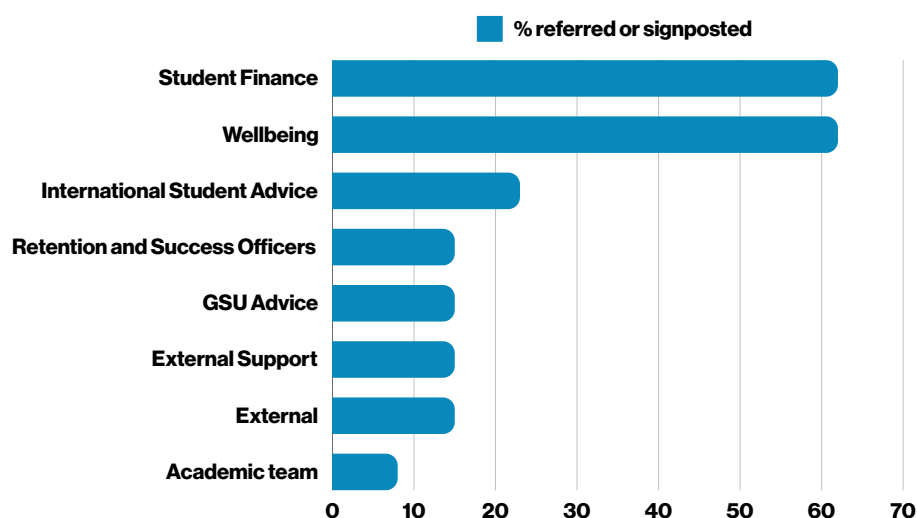
## Referrals to other services

13 students were sent personalised follow up support based on their specific circumstance. Some of this support includes direct referrals to other services, as well as more complex signposting and ensuring students have the information about support that they need.



90%

of Business students who received follow up support continued with their studies into Term 2



In addition to those students who were directly referred for support, 47 FES students told us about financial concerns, social support, and course issues. We send these students additional information in support packs. 32 students received a finance support pack, 17 students received a social support pack and 6 received a course support pack.

# Final Year Students

131 FES students that we spoke to were in their final year of their studies. 66 were feeling overall positive about life after graduation, 17 felt overall negative and 48 felt neutral. 49 students mentioned being worried about employment after they graduate. Several students mentioned that they felt excited about life after graduation and were looking forward to gaining experience in their chosen fields.

# Programme Reps

47% of students knew who their programme reps were. Of those who knew who they were, 73% rated them a 4 or 5/5 for supporting students on their course. Students commented that issues have been resolved, the reps were helpful, had good communication and supportive.

# Absences

171 FES students who completed the survey were called due to non-engagement.

The most frequent reason for non attendance cited was due to illness (37%). Other significant and reoccurring reasons are personal or family circumstances, such as bereavement or childcare, issues with registration and QR code issues.

# Continuation Rate

97% of FES students who completed the survey continued on their programme. This is roughly the average across all faculties.



**97%**

Of FES students called continue on their programme

# Those considering withdrawing

6 students told us they were considering withdrawing or interrupting this term. All 6 students were undergraduate home 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.

Of those who suggested that they were considering it, 2 students withdrew or were withdrawn and 1 is interrupting their studies. The remaining 3 have continued on their programmes.



**6**

FES students told us they were considering withdrawing

**2**

students withdrew (or was withdrawn)

**1**

Is interrupting their studies

**3**

students are continuing with their studies

**Approx  
£28,605**

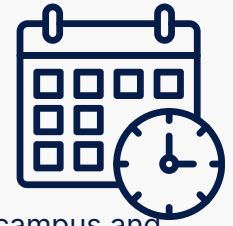
of fee income retained this term\*

\*3 x home UG

# 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 for several years and there are clear issues and barriers to resolving them.

**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 Check-in Service 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.

## Poor WiFi in some areas of campus



**The issue:** Poor WiFi connection affects some areas of both Medway and Greenwich campuses and has an impact on students.

**Students said:** They were frustrated by the poor WiFi in some areas of campus, they also said this was having an impact on attendance recording as well as on campus studying.

**The Check-in Service recommends:** A review of connectivity on campus, as well as alternative provision for recording attendance, to ensure that students are not negatively impacted by any unavoidable WiFi issues.

## Overcrowding in lecture halls



**The issue:** Some lectures are overcrowded with students sitting in the stairways or on the floor.

**Students said:** They felt frustrated that lectures were not booked in appropriate spaces and that they felt this reflected a lack of care or value placed on the students, when paying high fees for their courses.

**The Check-in Service recommends:** As with the timetabling, we understand that finding lecture spaces is difficult due to limited large lecture halls. However, as much as is possible, lectures should be held in spaces that accommodate all students to ensure they have a good learning environment.

# Term 2 2024/25

In the coming term we have lots of exciting developments regarding our strategy and objectives. In Term 2 our priority order will be:

1. New January Starters
2. Students not in attendance
3. Students on placement
4. All other students

We will be calling between 27th January to 3rd April.

As well as this, in Term 2 we are launching our brand refresh which will increase the visibility of the service across both students and staff. You can see the new branding on our website here: <https://www.greenwichsu.co.uk/gsub/wrproject/>

We will also be moving forward with our research into WhatsApp outreach, which will reach many more students and give us a new angle for reaching students.

As before, we will be reactive to any local or global events that may make students vulnerable to disengagement from their studies and will prioritise checking in with them where needed.

## **Want to make a referral?**

We will also check in with any students that staff have concerns for. Staff can refer a student for a check in call via email at [gsu-retention@greenwich.ac.uk](mailto:gsu-retention@greenwich.ac.uk).