

GSU Check-in Service - Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Term 1 Summary

2024/25

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

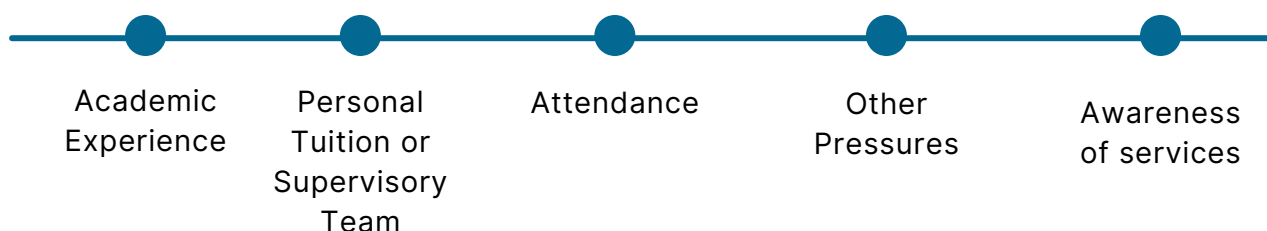
greenwich
students'
union

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We prioritise calling students who are most at risk of being withdrawn due to nonattendance and students at risk of withdrawing or interrupting themselves.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

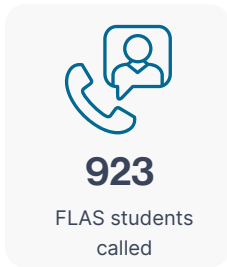
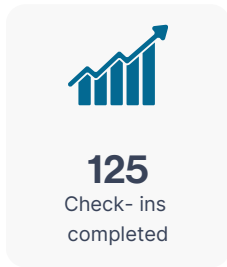
This term we introduced a few new questions, to see what students were thinking about the Wellbeing service, their student reps and their experiences of being in their final year of their studies.

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.

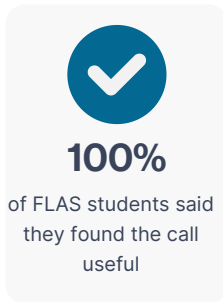
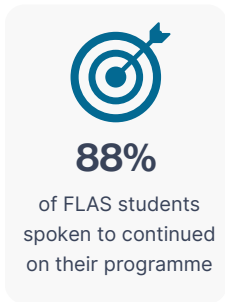
We also asked students if they were aware that the Greenwich Students' Union would be calling students before they received the call, and if so, where they heard about the calls. This is because we are relaunching the service with new branding and its new name, and we want to be able to track whether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

FLAS Summary

KPI overview

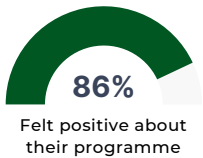


Our Impact

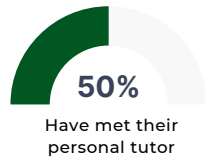


What are students saying?

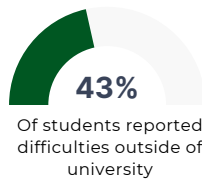
Course Satisfaction



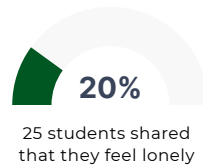
Personal Tuition



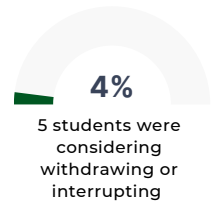
Pressures



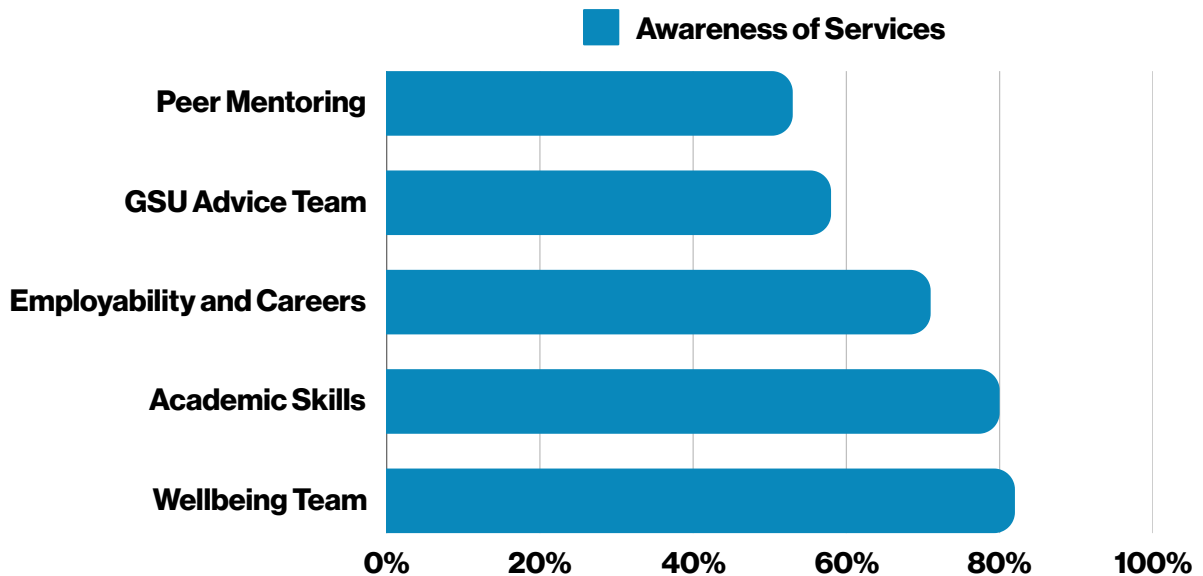
Loneliness



Considering Withdrawing



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 FLAS 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

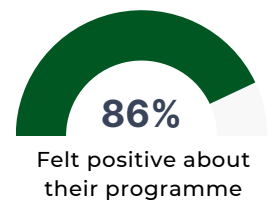
86% of FLAS students felt positively towards their course and only 1% negatively, with the remaining 13% offering a neutral response. This was in comparison to 88% of students feeling positively overall.

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 (93%) than their home counterparts (83%).

Personal Tutoring

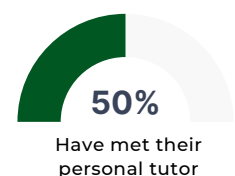
50% of FLAS students knew and had met their personal tutor and 21% knew, but had not met them. This is lower than previous years, and may be due to the launch of the new framework, and how students understand the delegated responsibilities of the Academic tutors and Faculty Student Advisors.

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.



“This call has been very helpful and I appreciate all the advice and support.”

First year home Stage and Screen student



“[My personal tutor is] very good at giving advice, very friendly and always there for you.”

First year home Law and Criminology student

Co-Curricular Experience

Loneliness

25 FLAS students we spoke to reported feeling lonely in Term 1 equating to 20% of respondents, 13% more than this time last year. It is also a higher percentage than the 16% of students overall reporting loneliness.

Of these students, the majority (76%) reported feeling lonely sometimes, as opposed to all the time, rarely or often. 32% of students who reported loneliness said this was due to difficulty making friends.

Cost of Living Concerns

23% of FLAS students are concerned about supporting themselves financially or paying their fees, which is slightly more than 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.

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.



33

FLAS students had a follow up with further support



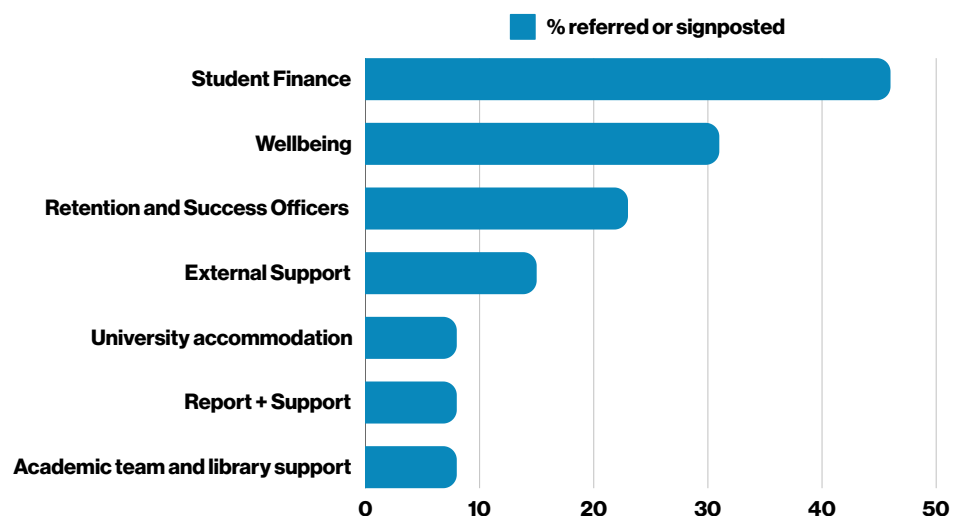
13

FLAS students were sent personalised follow up support



76%

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



In addition to those students who were directly referred for support, 20 FLAS students told us about financial concerns, social support, and course issues. We send these students additional information in support packs. 15 students received a finance support pack, 8 students received a social support pack and 3 received a course support pack.

Final Year Students

25 FLAS students that we spoke to were in their final year of their studies. 12 were feeling overall positive about life after graduation, 2 felt overall negative and 11 felt neutral. 6 students mentioned being worried about employment after they graduate. Several students mentioned that they felt confident about finding a graduate job, and a few mentioned feeling nervous about moving on from university.

Programme Reps

38% of students knew who their programme reps were. Of those who knew who they were, 94% rated them a 4 or 5/5 for supporting students on their course. Students commented that issues have been resolved, the reps were good listeners and attentive.

Absences

80 FLAS students who completed the survey were called due to non-engagement.

The most frequent reasons for non attendance cited was due to illness (29%) or personal/family circumstances, such as bereavement or childcare (25%). Other significant and reoccurring reasons are issues with registration and QR code issues.

Continuation Rate

88% of FLAS students who completed the survey continued on their programme. This is significantly less than the average across all programmes.



88%

Of FLAS students called continue on their programme

Those considering withdrawing

5 students told us they were considering withdrawing or interrupting this term. All 6 students were undergraduate, first year, 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 2 have continued on their programmes.



5

FLAS students told us they were considering withdrawing

2

students withdrew (or was withdrawn)

1

is interrupting their studies

2

students are continuing with their studies

Approx

£19,070

of fee income retained this term*

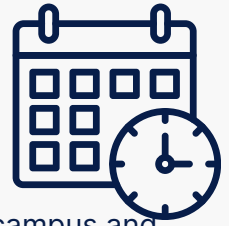
*2 x home UG

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.

Difficulties with SFE payments

The issue: We noticed this term that there were more issues with SFE payments than we have seen in previous years.

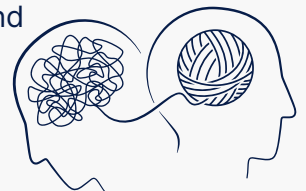


Students said: They had applied for SFE funding, and did not know why these payments were not granted. They were stressed due to the uncertainty.

The Check-in Service recommends: Ensure that there are accessible information sources regarding SFE and common SFE issues on the website. Where the issue is resolvable, for example is due to a January foundation year start, ensure this is communicated to students to alleviate distress and worry as soon as possible.

Higher reporting of loneliness and outside pressures

The issue: The Check-in Service has seen a higher reporting of loneliness and outside pressures from FLAS students. We do speak to less FLAS students than the other faculties due to the priority group demographics, so this may impact the rates of reporting.



Students said: They felt lonely and that they were experiencing additional pressures outside of university, including financial issues, caring responsibilities and mental/physical health issues.

The Check-in Service recommends: Considering more opportunities for connection at a faculty level and ensuring that academic staff know how and where to signpost students for additional support as and when needed.

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/gsuhub/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.