

gsu

# Check-in<sup>i</sup>

s e r v i c e

student-to-student support and information

Annual Report 24/25

reliable



scan to learn more

friendly

helpful

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

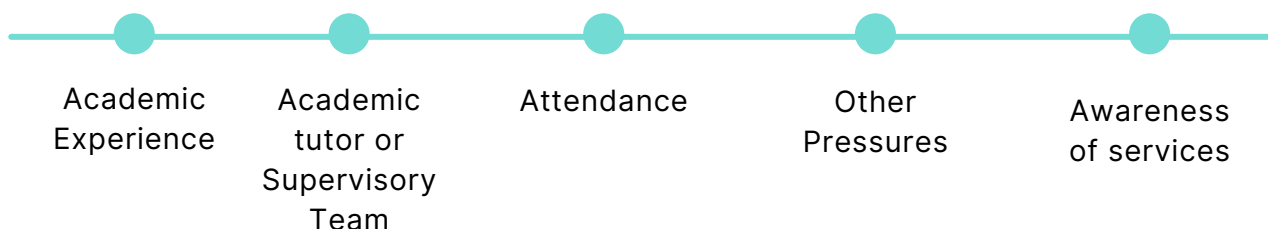
greenwich  
students'  
union

# 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 may be vulnerable to challenges throughout their studies, which could lead to withdrawal. We aim to 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

## Developments this year

Over 24/25 we made several developments to the service, to improve our service for University of Greenwich students. Firstly, we introduced some additional follow up calls for escalated students, to check in on student issues and try to ensure a solution for each individual. We also launched Avery Connect, where students are matched with another student who has similar interests to encourage connection and friendship.

There were some additional questions added to our calls, regarding the Wellbeing Service, to gather information for the Mental Health Charter, and for students in their final year, to find out more about their experiences before graduation.

A big development for the service was our rebrand in January - we're hoping to see increased brand recognition over the next academic year as a result of a stronger service identity. And finally, we have piloted our WhatsApp outreach, and contacted placement students via WhatsApp to increase our reach across the student population. You can find the report on this initial pilot at <https://www.greenwichsu.co.uk/gsuhub/wrproject/>.

This year, the Check-in Service reached over 3,200 students, supporting 397 with further interventions and helping retain over £400,000 in tuition income. 93% of students contacted remained on their programme. We saw continued high course satisfaction, excellent experiences with personal/academic tutors, and continuing challenges with financial stress, timetabling and placements.

# Executive Summary

## KPI overview



**3,244**

Check-ins completed



**28,468**

Calls Made



**397**

Students had a follow up with further support

## Our Impact



**93%**

of students continued on their programme



**97%**

of students said they found the call useful

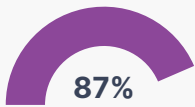


**80%**

of students who received follow up support continued with their studies

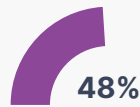
## What are students saying?

### Course Satisfaction



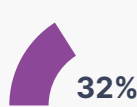
Felt positive about their programme

### Personal Tuition



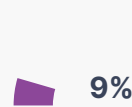
Have met their personal tutor

### Pressures



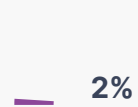
Of students reported difficulties outside of university

### Loneliness



293 students feel lonely at least once a month

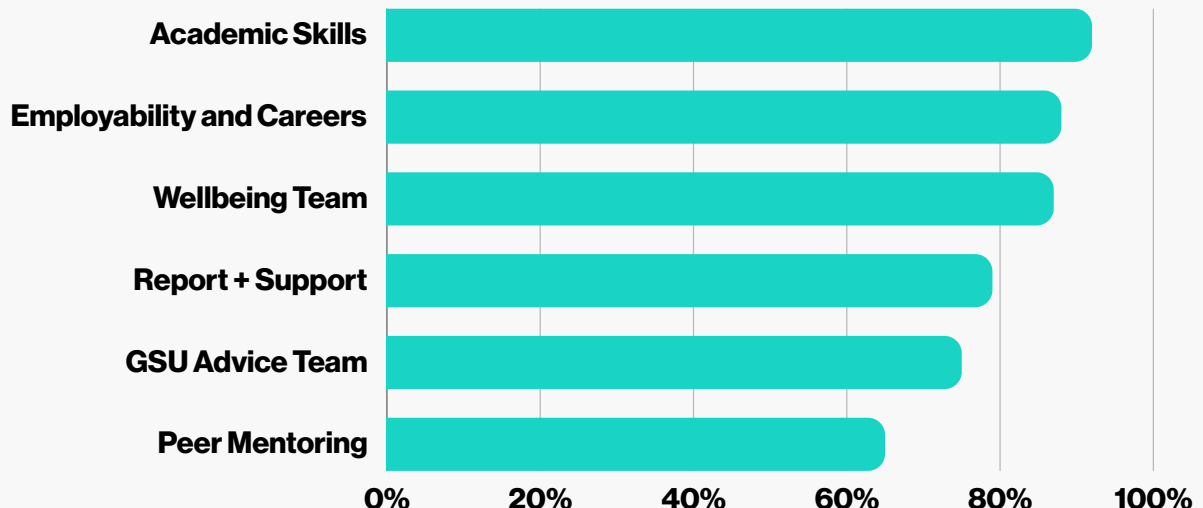
### Considering Withdrawing



69 students were considering withdrawing or interrupting

## Support Service Awareness

### Awareness of Services



# 2024-25 Data Overview

This report gives a summary of the key findings, themes and recommendations from the Check-in Service for the academic year 24/25.

## Who we reached out to this year

- Returning Interrupted Students
- Repeating Students
- POLAR4 Q1
- First Year International
- Mature students for GSU research
- New April Starters
- Students not in attendance
- PGT students
- Students on an interruption
- New January Starters
- 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
- Iranian students
- Indian and Pakistani students (via email)
- Select Nursing and Paramedic students on placement (via WhatsApp)
- All other students

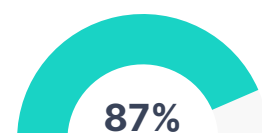
### Student case study

We spoke to one student who had been having a challenging year, and this had made her question her choice of degree. She was signposted to employability and to Wellbeing, but asked to be re-referred on a follow up call. This follow up involved a phone call and some additional support by text message. The student was signposted to Young Women's Trust career coaching and support to give her additional spaces to talk through her feelings and ensure she was making the right decision for her. The student was very grateful for the ability to reach out again, as her study year had felt very intense and in the summer she had more space to think about her options.

## Analysis of General Check In Calls

### Course Satisfaction

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



Felt positive about their programme

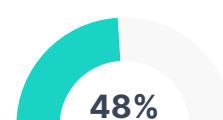
70% of students cited 'quality of teaching' as a positive aspect of their course, and this was the most frequently given response. The areas that drew the most negative responses over the year were timetabling and placement support. Overseas students also ranked greater course satisfaction (91%) than their home counterparts (80%).

**"The university's services are very good, and the library services are top-notch."**

PGT FEHHS Student

### Personal and Academic Tutoring

48% of all students know and have met their personal tutor and 32% know, but have 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.



Have met their personal tutor

We also asked those who had met their personal tutors how the experience had been for them. 91% said that meeting their personal tutor had been an overall good experience.

**"My tutor helped me with issues related to my disability, and I felt very supported."**

Second year FLAS student

# Co-Curricular Experience

## Loneliness

293 students we spoke to reported feeling lonely over the academic year equating to 9% of respondents, 3% more than last academic year.

Of these students, the majority (54%) reported feeling lonely sometimes and 18% said often. 42% attributed their loneliness to difficulty making friends, and 25% cited homesickness, struggling with the move and/or being away from home.

## Cost of Living Concerns

16% of students are concerned about supporting themselves financially or paying their fees. Of those students concerned about their finances and fees, 43% identified financial pressures affecting their studies, such as cost of living or work commitments.

## 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.



**397**

Students had a follow up with further support

## Referrals to other services

141 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.



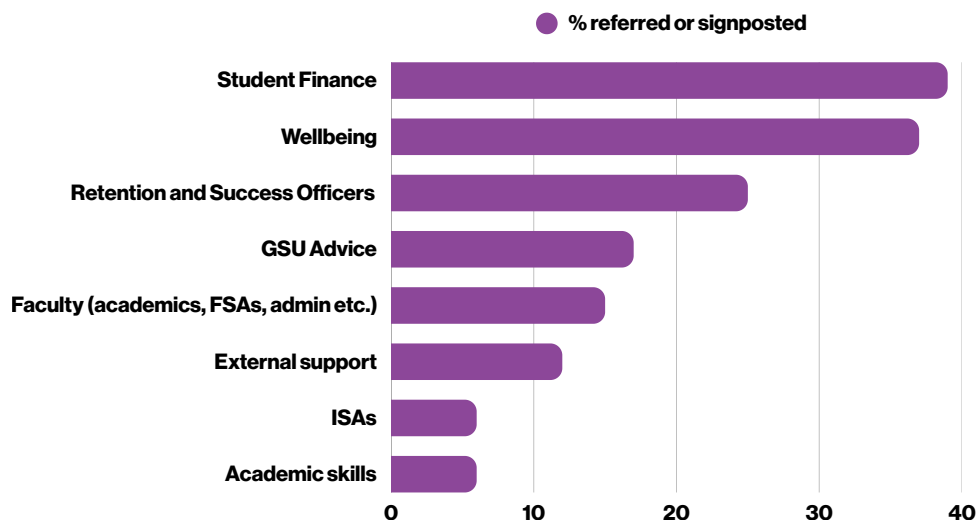
**141**

Students were sent personalised follow up support



**80%**

of students who received follow up support continued with their studies



As well as those students who were directly referred for support, 311 students told us about financial concerns, social support, and course issues. We sent these students additional information in support packs. 227 students received a finance support pack, 89 students received a social support pack and 63 received a course support pack.



# Wellbeing Service

Of the 3244 students spoken to 175 had used the Wellbeing services. Many students commented on how helpful, supportive and responsive the team had been when they used the service. Some students did suggest more follow ups after support, additional support for more complex mental health conditions and more staffing so students can access appointments quicker.

Of students who had heard of the Wellbeing Service but had not used it, the vast majority said they had not used the service because they had not needed to. Some students told us that they already had support in place, some felt too busy to concentrate on anything other than their studies and it was suggested that support in their native language would be useful.

## Final Year Students

1425 students that we spoke to were in their final year of their studies. 61% were feeling overall positive about life after graduation, 8% felt overall negative and 32% felt neutral. 900 students mentioned being worried about employment after they graduate, and 134 spoke about being worried about their finances.

## Programme Reps

50% of students knew who their programme reps were. Of those who knew who they were, 84% rated them a 4 or 5/5 for supporting students on their course. Students commented that reps were approachable and supportive, and were good at engaging the cohort and offering useful information.

## Follow Up Calls

122 students were called following a previous escalation, to check on the progress of their case and to see if any further support was needed. 53 of those calls were completed and of these students 39 were fully or partially satisfied with how their situation had been dealt with. 7 students were re-escalated to try and find a further solution to their issue.

Since introducing the follow up text to direct the students to the support emails, there were no students who reported that they did not remember being contacted for follow up support, which is a huge improvement and shows that this slight adjustment has had a positive impact. It also seems to have increased the satisfaction rates of the escalated students.

## Absences

1,033 students who completed the survey were called due to non-engagement across the faculties.



**227**

Business  
students



**144**

FEHHS  
students



**453**

FES  
students



**209**

FLAS  
Students

The most frequent reason for non attendance cited was due to illness (38%). Other significant and reoccurring reasons included - bereavement, family issues, problems with tuition fee payment and commuting issues.

# Continuation Rate

95% of all students called continued on their programme.

This was fairly consistent across faculties with the highest continuation in FEHHS/BUS and the lowest in FLAS.



**95%**

Of students called continue on their programme

Faculty	Continuation %
Faculty of Education, Health and Human Science	96%
Greenwich Business School	96%
Faculty of Engineering and Science	95%
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science	93%

## Those considering withdrawing

68 students told us they were considering withdrawing or interrupting this term. 63 were home students, 5 were international students. 60 were UG students, 8 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.

Of those who suggested that they were considering it, no students withdrew, were withdrawn or interrupted their studies, and all have continued until the end of term.



**68**

Students told us they were considering withdrawing

**18**

students withdrew from their studies

**11**

students interrupted their studies

**38**

students are continuing with their studies

**Approx**

**£405,000**

of fee income retained this academic year\*

\* Combined retained student fees over all terms

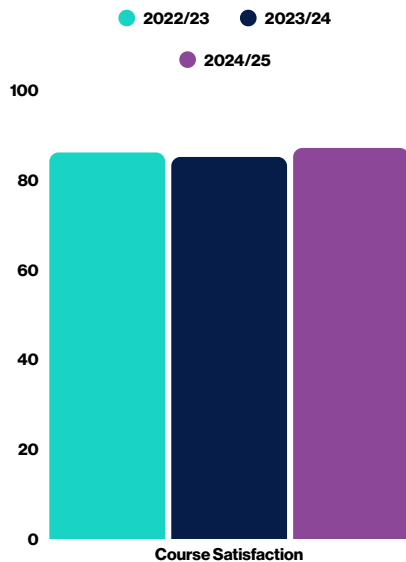
### Student case study

The caller who spoke to this student asked the supervisor on shift to call them back, as they believed that the student may benefit from further support and investigation. The student had been feeling very unheard by the university, and was being asked to attend a Fitness to Study due to mental health issues, which they had not received support for at the time of crisis. The supervisor spoke to the student for 40 minutes, signposted to GSU Advice for more information and support with the Fitness to Study procedure, as well as ensuring the student was in touch with health services. The student thanked us for listening - said that it has impacted their feelings regarding the situation to have the space to be heard and listened to.

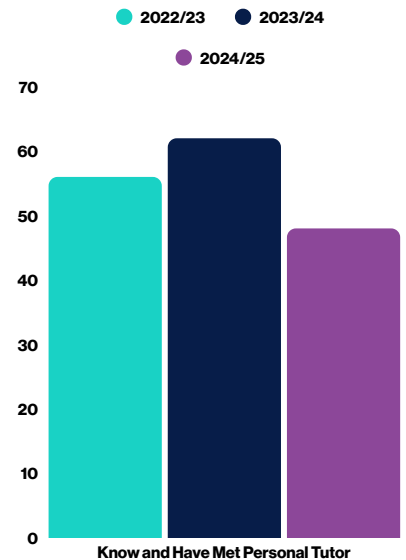
# 3 Year Comparison of Check In Calls

Over the years that the calling service has been running, the questions being asked have changed and adapted to the needs of students and the perceived pressures they may be facing. However, we do now have enough similar data to compare trends over three years in certain areas.

## Academic life

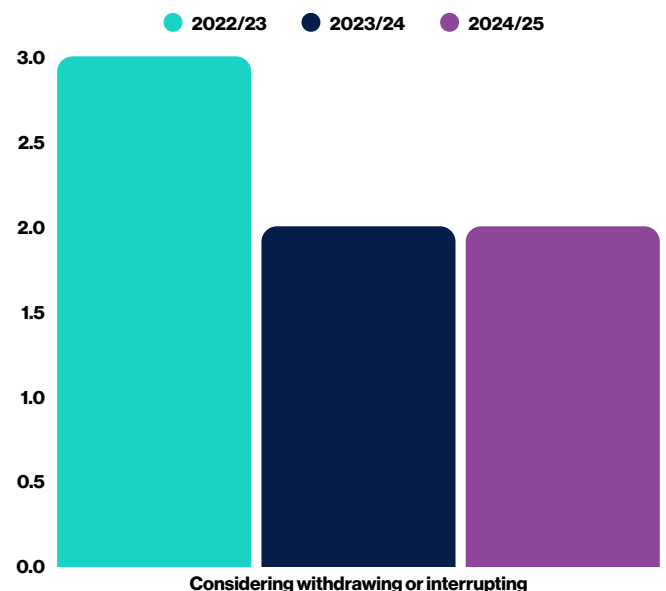
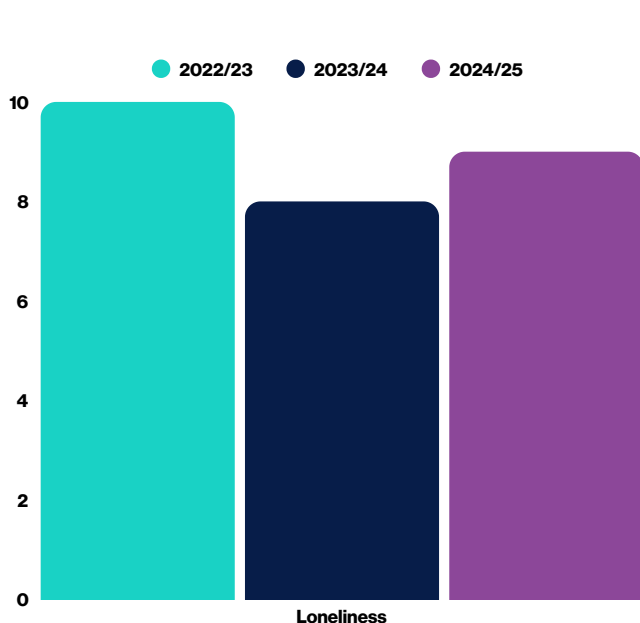


Course satisfaction has been very consistent over the last three years, with a very slight increase this academic year. In terms of students knowing and meeting their personal tutors, this has dropped this year - this may be due to the launch of the new framework, and how students understand the delegated responsibilities of the Academic tutors and Faculty Student Advisors. We will be changing our wording next year to try and capture all experiences.



## Co-curricular student experiences

Loneliness and financial concern has increased again this year, which aligns with the current economic situation and national trends that are being seen for students. As always, I believe this is something to keep an eye on, and consider the ways in which we can support those students. Loneliness and financial stress can be linked as socialising in London is often expensive, and working alongside studies can take a lot of time. Considering time and money efficient social offers can support our students to feel more connected. The numbers of students considering withdrawing or interrupting are consistently low, which is positive.





# Themes, Recommendations and GSU Actions

We are now highlighting overall themes alongside our more specific recommendations for the university. This allows us to see where interventions affect the trends that are coming through the calls.

We are also including an actions section which will track the actions of the Check-in Service team. This will demonstrate the practical actions taken by the team to support students and the university to seek resolutions to issues that are being raised.

## Themes

### Timetabling

As has been the case for many years, timetabling is often an area that students highlight as causing them difficulty. This includes large gaps in timetables, last minute changes and incorrect information on moodle. This often impacts student parents and those who have caring responsibilities, as well as commuter students as well.



We are aware of changes within the university that may impact timetabling, and will see if these changes are evident in the feedback received through our calls.

### Communication issues

Students have been talking about communication issues between themselves, academic staff and administrative/support staff within the university. This included asking for more in-person support, quicker responses and clear information.



### Overcrowding in lectures

Several students this year mentioned overcrowding in their lecture and teaching spaces. This impacted their ability to learn and meant that they felt less supported by the university in general.



### More practical and industry-related content

Several students this year fed back that they would appreciate more practical and industry-related experience on their course. This was alongside other students saying how excellent the industry-focused or practical elements of the course were, so it seems that this is variable based on the course, as well as what the student is expecting from their studies.



## Requests for more interactive learning

Another theme we have seen this year is students asking that their learning is more interactive, including more interaction within lectures, more interactive sections on moodle to support revision and better online resources in general.



## Increased requests for financial support

This year we have seen an increase in students requesting more scholarships and bursaries, talking about difficulties balancing studying and working, asking for online classes due to commuting costs and talking about the expense of commuting in general. The cost of living has continued to increase and this is having an impact on our student community. It is important for us to be aware of this and to factor it into the ways that students are supported and plans for upcoming cohorts.



## Recommendations

### Placement support

**The issue:** Students across faculties have fed back that they are experiencing difficulties with their placements.



**Students said:** that they needed more support with finding placements, or they were not able to get the support they needed when things went wrong on their placements, or if the placement became unsuitable.

**The Check-in Service recommends:** For each course which has a placement element, there should be an easily accessible guide to placements - how to get support with finding a placement, where to go for support if encountering difficulties on the placement and the specific information for students who are disabled or have health issues. These should be accessible for support staff as well as students to ensure signposting is accurate.

### Career guidance

**The issue:** Students would like more guidance from the university regarding careers and post-graduation opportunities.



**Students said:** they were concerned about getting jobs after university and, although many had accessed employability support they did not feel confident.

**The Check-in Service recommends:** Term 3 is a key time for students who are graduating or finishing their dissertations. It would be a good opportunity to reach out to students and offer more online or 1-1 support for those who are feeling anxious about life after graduation.

## Mental health support for students post-withdrawal

**The issue:** After students have been withdrawn, either for non-engagement, non-payment or other issues, they are not able to access support from the Wellbeing team. This is often a time of high distress and impact on their mental health.



**Students said:** They were needing mental health support after being withdrawn, and particularly if they were appealing the decision.

**The Check-in Service recommends:** A three month grace period after withdrawal for students to access Wellbeing team support - this would be similar to the three month post-graduation period for student-staff jobs, and would cover the time it takes for a student to submit an appeal and receive the outcome.

## Support for student carers

**The issue:** Student carers are not offered any specific report from the university, and are at a much higher risk of dropping out, due to the specific pressures that carers face.



**Students said:** Student carers were concerned about how their caring responsibilities can conflict with their studies, including the emotional strain and needing extenuating circumstances extensions in certain circumstances.

**The Check-in Service recommends:** The university could begin to work towards the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support Accreditation, which aims to help universities move towards proactive support and increase student carer retention and opportunities for student carers.

## Ongoing actions for us

### Temporary illness signposting

**The issue:** It is unclear where students should go to get support for shorter term illness which lasts under 12 months, such as a planned surgery, broken bone or illness lasting a few weeks/months.



**The Check-in Service will:** Find out the support that is available to students through speaking with the university Wellbeing team and FSAs, and included this information on the GSU website.

### Diversifying Check-in comms channels

**The issue:** Some students are not seeing our follow up emails, are unable to answer the phone when called or do not answer calls from unknown numbers



**The Check-in Service will:** Diversify our methods of following up with students, including texting to direct to email support sent and move to the next stage of our WhatsApp outreach.

# 2025/26 Academic Year

That's a wrap for the 2024/25 academic year! It's always incredible to speak to students across the academic year, and to hear about the things that are important to them during their studies.

Over the summer we will be reviewing our work over the last year and planning for next year. This will include:

1. Planning next steps for the WhatsApp Outreach project
2. Developing our Avery Connect offer
3. Reviewing the questions we ask students
4. Participating in The Big Conversation across the academic year

## Do you have any questions?

If you have any questions about the service and our plans for next year, please do get in touch on [checkinservice@greenwich.ac.uk](mailto:checkinservice@greenwich.ac.uk)

## Academic staff shout outs!

This year we had a number of academic staff named as particularly good and supportive.

From FEHHS **Amal Elamin** and **Julia Morgan** were both named twice by students who said that their lectures and the support offered were excellent.

There were also three staff mentioned by their first names from the Natural Resources Institute from a student on the MSc AP Food Safety Programme - we were not given their last names unfortunately. These were recorded as **Elena, Brenda and Mithrania**.