

# Retention Project - Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Term 2 Summary  
2023/24

Steph Scott  
Retention and Insights  
Manager  
[s.e.scott@greenwich.ac.uk](mailto:s.e.scott@greenwich.ac.uk)

greenwich  
students'  
union

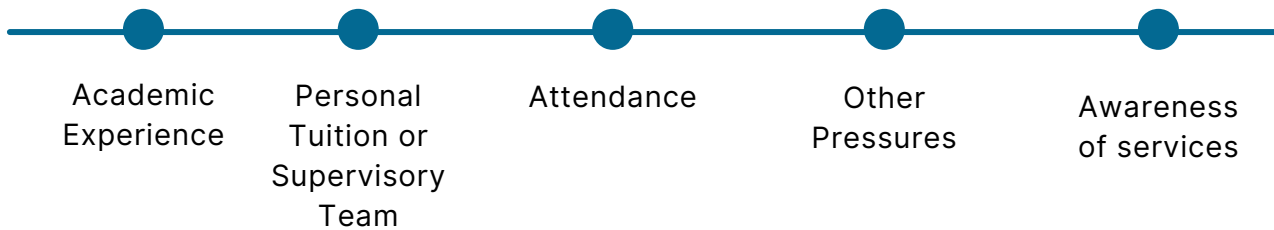
# Retention Project

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We prioritise calling students who are most at risk of being withdrawn due to nonattendance and students at risk of withdrawing or interrupting themselves.

- January starters
- Students not in attendance
- PGR students
- Students on courses with a large awarding gap

This term we changed our focus from the number of calls made to increasing the quality of the calls made. This meant that we made less calls, however callers were encouraged to spend more time with each student to delve into their experiences. As a result, we have more case studies throughout this report than in previous reports.

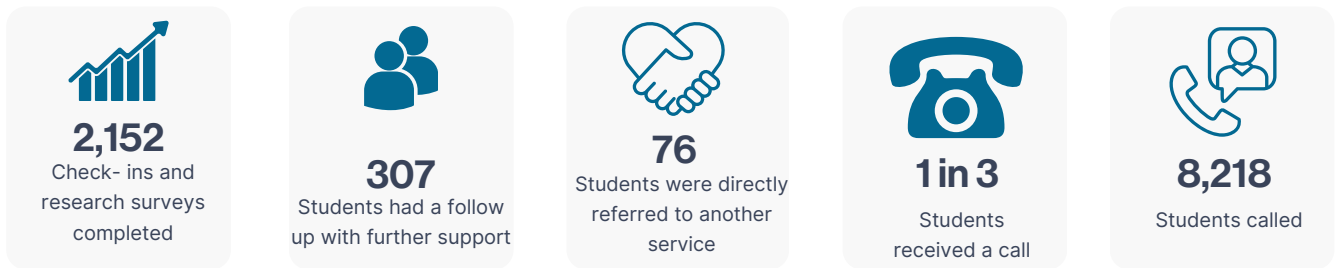
We also had some technical issues to work through this term. This means that some data has been lost regarding how many individual calls were made, and therefore We are very grateful to have had our computers replaced, which means that we are in an excellent position going forward to avoid any further technical problems.

'This term we have seen a higher number of students giving positive feedback about the phone calls from GSU, and wanting to follow up with GSU. We have seen improved feedback from Steph regarding the follow-up of these calls and this has alerted us to student issues we were otherwise unaware of.'

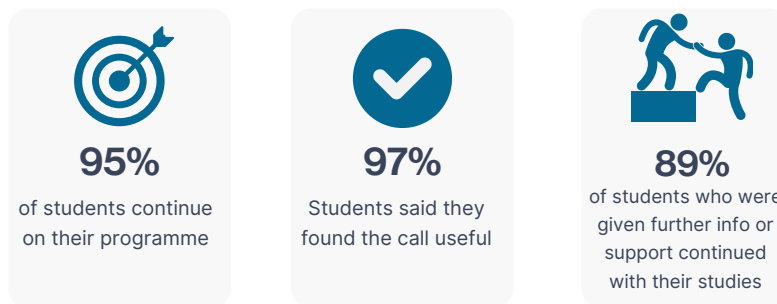
Feedback from a Retention and & Success Officer

# University Summary

## KPI overview

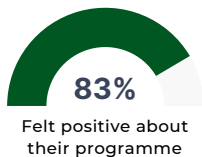


## Our Impact

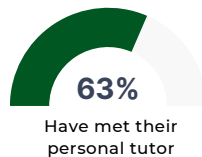


## What are students saying?

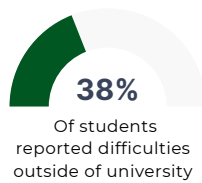
### Course Satisfaction



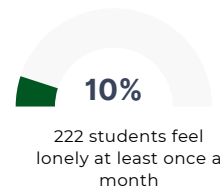
### Personal Tuition



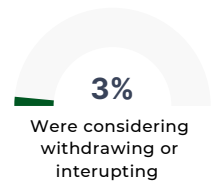
### Pressures



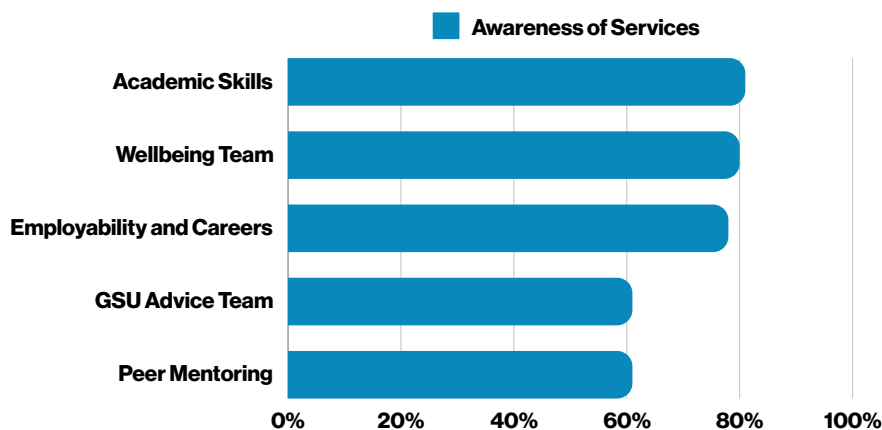
### Loneliness



### Considering Withdrawing

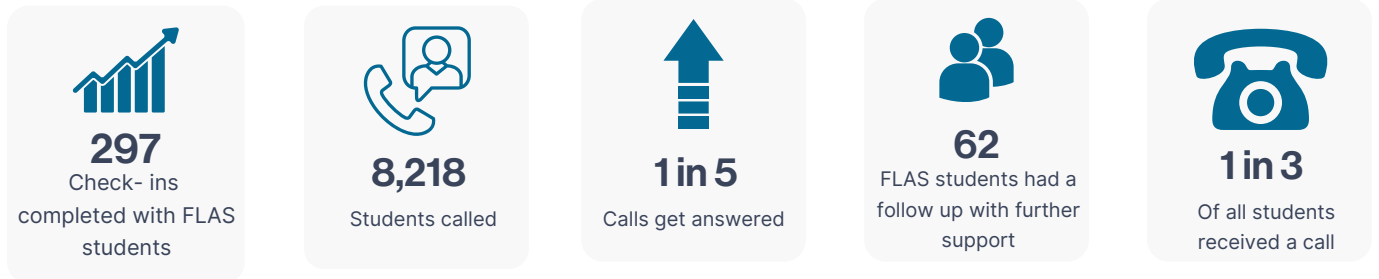


## Support Service Awareness

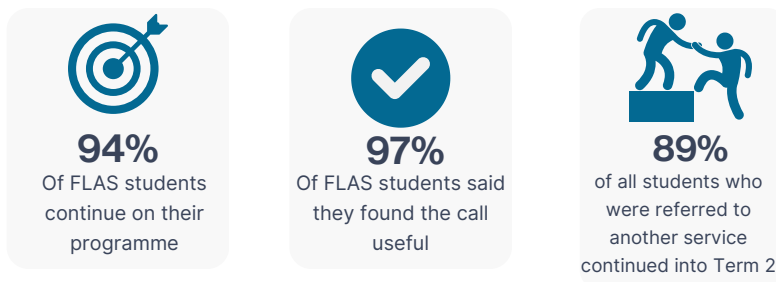


# Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science Summary

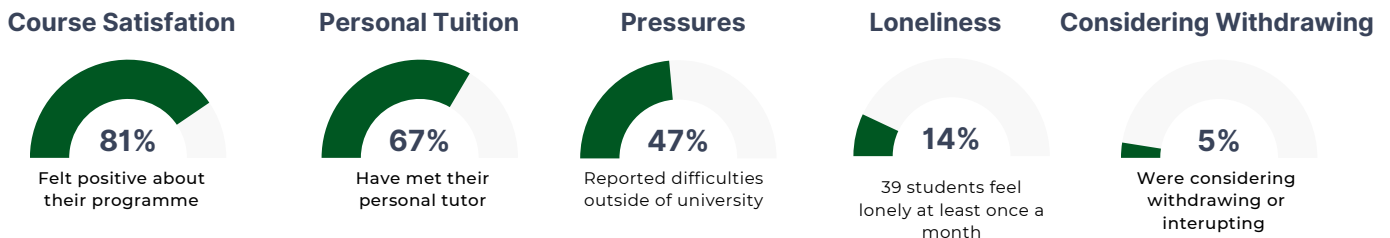
## KPI overview



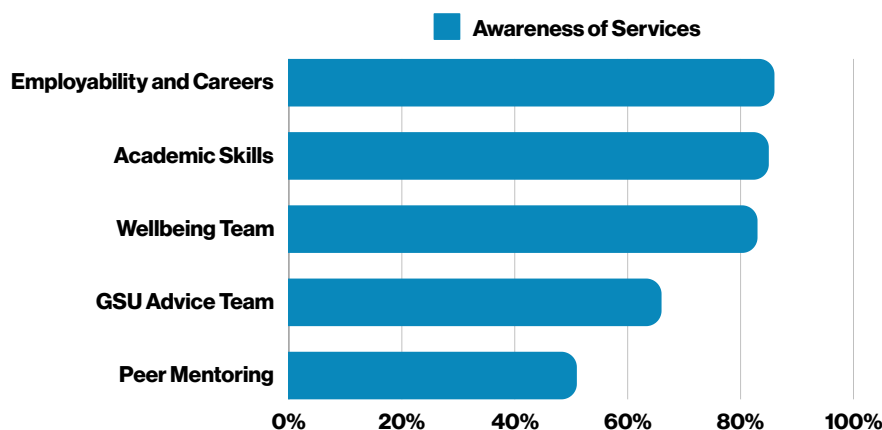
## Our Impact



## What are FLAS students saying?



## Support Service Awareness



# Term 2 Project Overview

This report gives a summary of the key findings, themes and recommendations from the Retention calling project in term 2 of 2023/24.

## Who we call

- January starters
- Students on courses with a large awarding gap
- Students not in attendance
- PGR students

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

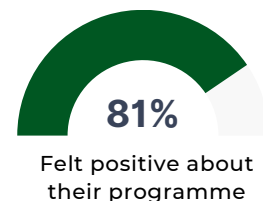
### Inclusivity Research Project

This term we partnered with the GSU Voice and Rep team to work on their inclusivity research project. Our calls called 281 individual students and completed 553 surveys regarding modules with a significant awarding gap. The Voice and Rep team have then included this data in their research for this project.

## Course Satisfaction

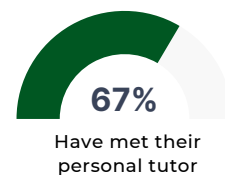
81% of FLAS students felt positively towards their course and only 2% negatively, with the remaining 16% offering a neutral response.

Overseas students also ranked greater course satisfaction (90%) than their home counterparts (80%).



## Personal Tutoring

67% of FLAS students know and have met their personal tutor and 18% know of, but have not met them.



**"It has been wonderful and a very great learning experience"**

1st year Stage and Screen student

### Personal Tuition Feedback

The 15% of students who do not know who their personal tutor is are told on the call who they are.

GSU more generally has fed back on the personal tuition review being conducted across the university.

# 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.



62

FLAS students had a follow up with further support

## Direct Referrals to other services

15 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.



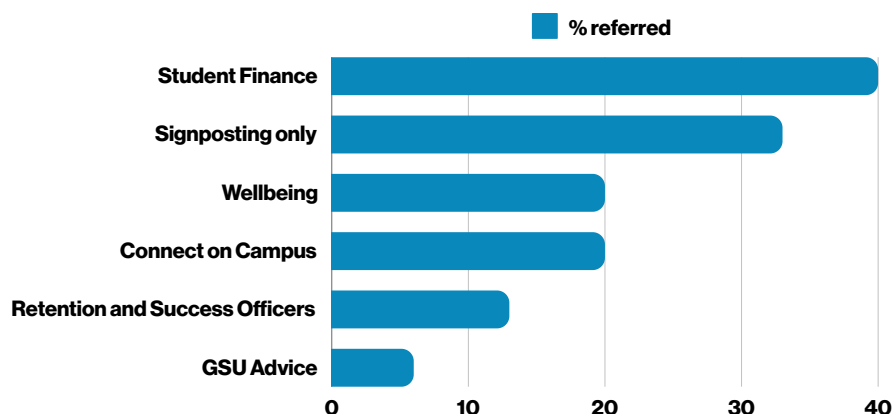
15

FLAS students had a direct referral made to another service



89%

of all students who were directly referred to another service continued into Term 2



In addition to those students who were directly referred for support, 47 students told us about financial concerns, social support, and course issues. We send these students additional information in support packs.



27

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



26

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



10

FLAS 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.

**So far reading [the financial support pack], it's really useful and I'll be applying for some financial help.**

FEHHS  
undergraduate  
student

## Absences

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

The most frequent reason for non attendance cited was due to illness (33%). Other significant and reoccurring reasons are family and personal circumstances (bereavement or caring), financial issues and registration issues.

## Continuation Rate

95% of all students called continued on their programme.

These were broadly consistent across faculties with FEHHS had the highest continuation rate and the Business school had the lowest.

Faculty	Continuation %
Faculty of Education, Health and Human Science	98%
Greenwich Business School	93%
Faculty of Engineering and Science	96%
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science	94%



**94%**

Of FLAS students called continue on their programme

# Those considering withdrawing

15 FLAS students told us they were considering withdrawing or interrupting. Of these 15, 6 continued on their studies.

All were home students, 13 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.



**15**

FLAS students told us they were considering withdrawing

**5**

withdrew (or were withdrawn) or interrupted their studies

**4**

interrupted their studies

**6**

students continued on their studies

**£146,900**

of fee income retained in FLAS School this year\*



# Co-Curricular Experience

## Loneliness

43 FLAS students we spoke to reported feeling lonely in Term 2 equating to 11% of respondents in the faculty, compared to 10% of all students.

Of these, the majority (42%) reported feeling lonely on a weekly basis. 84% of those who feel lonely are home students.

## Cost of Living Concerns

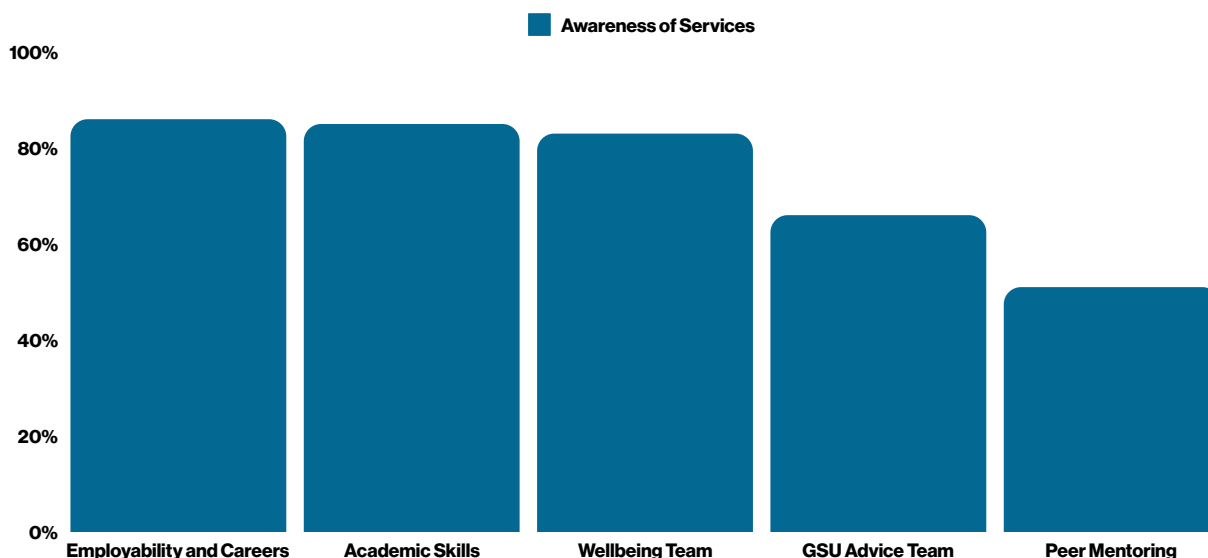
16% of FLAS students are concerned about supporting themselves financially or paying their fees which is slightly higher than 15% of all students called.

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.



**The call was so helpful - I am in my final year and I wish I'd had this information earlier in my studies.**

3rd year Law and Criminology student

# 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.

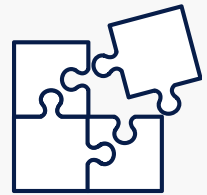


**Students said:** Timetables can be sporadic which result in frequent journeys to campus and difficulty with balancing other commitments. There have also been reports of last-minute timetable changes and overcrowded teaching spaces.

**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.

## 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. The Retention Project is relaunching a Greenwich and Avery Hill based peer support programme in Term 2, as well as working with the Engagement and Opportunities team in GSU to offer additional support for students who feel lonely to attend GSU activity.

## Work/Study balance

**The issue:** FES students were more likely to cite work/study balance as an additional pressure on their studies than other faculties.



**Students said:** They were struggling to find part-time work or struggling with attendance due to the financial need to work.

**The Retention Project recommends:** the faculty be aware that students in FES may require additional financial support, as well as support to access well paid part-time work. The faculty could publicise student job opportunities within the university to FES students.

# Term 3

In Term 3, we will be calling in a new priority order:

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

These calls will take place from the 7th May to 26th July.

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).

Full reports will be available soon on the GSU website:  
<https://www.greenwichsu.co.uk/gsuhub/wrproject/>

Any questions or specific data requests please contact Steph Scott, Retention and Insights manager on [s.e.scott@greenwich.ac.uk](mailto:s.e.scott@greenwich.ac.uk)