

Meeting of the Finance, Planning and Resources Committee

4.00 - 6.00 pm on Tuesday, 7 May 2019
in 1B16 - Technopark, SE1 6LN

Agenda

<i>No.</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
6.	Student recruitment and retention update	3 - 12	NL

Date of next meeting
4.00 pm on Tuesday, 2 July 2019

Members: Hilary McCallion (Chair), Jerry Cope, Michael Cutbill, Peter Fidler, Nelly Kibirige, Mee Ling Ng, Jenny Owen and David Phoenix

In attendance: Pat Bailey, Richard Flatman, Paul Ivey, Nicole Louis, James Stevenson, Ralph Sanders, Shân Wareing and Askari Jafri

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Agenda Item 6

	CONFIDENTIAL
Paper title:	Student Recruitment and Retention S1 2019/20
Board/Committee(s)	Finance, Planning & Resources Committee
Date of original meeting(s):	07 May 2019
Contributors:	Steven Brabenec, Director of Mktg.& Recruitment Jamie Jones, Head of Student Services Stuart Bannerman, Director of International Karen McLernon, Head of Performance Analysis
Executive Sponsor:	Nicole Louis, Chief Customer Officer
Purpose:	For information
Recommendation:	The committee is requested to note the paper

Executive Summary

Recruitment continues to perform strongly for S1 2019/20: our applications are growing faster than both the sector and our London competitors (5.5% versus 0.3% and 0.9% respectively). On average, the rate of application growth in Schools stands at 5-6% versus last year, with APS and BEA currently posting double-digit percentage growth of around 14% and 11% respectively. Positively, we've generated 1,800 applications over the past twelve weeks, which is an uplift of nearly 14% compared to the same period last year (which saw 1,600 applications come in between mid-January and mid-April).

Student withdrawals continue to see positive downward trends compared to prior year, both in the number of withdrawn and interrupted students and in associated lost income. At the end of March, 6% of students had withdrawn or interrupted their studies, compared to 9% at the same point in 2017/18. There were 377 fewer withdrawals and interruptions than in the previous year, largely as a result of a reduction in interruptions across all schools. YTD lost income of £3,724k represents 3.95% of total tuition fee income which is favourable to 4.47% at the same time last year.

YTD the overall total of enquiries through the Student Life Centre Helpdesk is down by 12.65% on prior year. Largely driven by a steep decline in both Fee and Employability enquiries.

Demand for mental health and wellbeing (MHW) services continues to trend upwards across all key aspects of support. The MHW team have offered students around 1,400 appoints compared to around 1,200 last year, an increase of 26%. We also continue to see an increase in the number of Safety Concern Responses managed by the team with a 50% increase in cases compared to last year. Finally, the number of students declaring a disability continues to trend up on prior year and +12%.

S1 – 2019/20: UGFT Sector - UCAS Application Trends

LSBU applications continue to outperform against our London Competitors and the sector (5.5% compared to 0.9% and 0.3% respectively).

- Application growth at LSBU is underpinned by strong domestic demand, with Home applications rising by 5.09% (or 750 applications) year-on-year. Our domestic performance becomes more positive considering that Home applications in the sector fell by 1% year-on-year (resulting in -20k fewer applications).
- In terms of international performance, both EU and OS applications have increase at LSBU (by 6.07% and 10.27% respectively), and to a combined total of 155 additional applications over the previous year.

We continue to monitor EU recruitment against the potential risks of Brexit. Our risk profile is broadly similar to previous months, with a 60/40 split between the domicile of our EU Firm Accepts. From 226 Firm Accepts, 140 are already domiciled in the UK, while 86 are domiciled in the EU or overseas.

April EU Domicile Update for UGFT

EU FA's (exc Study Abroad courses)	Total	UK based	Non-UK based
Firm Accepts	226	140 (or 61.9%)	86 (or 38.1%)

The UK Government have announced that EU students will pay the same fees as Home applicants for 2019-20 entry (but funding arrangements for future intakes beyond the next academic year remain unclear).

Applications across the UK by domicile

Apps	Domicile	2018	2019	% +/-	+/-
LSBU	Home	14.8 K	15.5 K	5.09%	753
	OS	0.8 K	0.9 K	10.27%	84
	EU	1.2 K	1.2 K	6.07%	70
Comp. Set	Home	94.0 K	94.3 K	0.39%	365
	OS	15.1 K	15.8 K	4.20%	635
	EU	10.6 K	10.7 K	1.00%	106
Sector	Home	2.10 M	2.08 M	-0.94%	-19.7 K
	OS	292.8 K	317.6 K	8.50%	24.9 K
	EU	204.7 K	207.0 K	1.13%	2.3 K

Applications across the UK

Total Apps	2018	2019	% +/-	+/-
LSBU	16.8 K	17.7 K	5.51%	0.9 K
Competitors	119.7 K	120.8 K	0.92%	1.1 K
Sector	2.60 M	2.61 M	0.29%	7.5 K

S1 – 2019/20: UGFT LSBU - School Application Trends

Applications at LSBU continue to grow beyond the Early UCAS Deadline. In the last twelve weeks we've received over 1.8k applications, which is up by 200 or 13.8% compared to the same twelve week period last year: an affirmation of our continuing marketing impact.

The majority of Schools have seen a year-on-year increase in applications, with APS and BEA in particular seeing double-digit percentage growth of 13.8% and 10.9% respectively. Applications at ENG are on par with last year, while ACI have seen an -8.1% fall overall (but this is heavily influenced by a number of course closures). Discussions between ACI and Marketing are taking place to implement changes to future recruitment strategy, with the aim of increasing applicant engagement in the admissions process and minimising non-attendance at interviews.

Based on current projections we expect to receive a total of 20k to 20.3k Main Cycle applications before Clearing starts in July. This would represent growth of +4% on the previous year (when we received 19.2k Main Cycle applications), and we are currently on track to achieve this.

Applications at LSBU

Applications	Year		Change versus Last Year	
	2018	2019	% +/-	+/-
LSBU-wide				
LSBU exc HSC	10.3 K	10.8 K	5.63%	▲ 0.6 K
LSBU	16.8 K	17.7 K	5.51%	▲ 0.9 K

Applications at LSBU by School

Applications	Year		Change versus Last Year	
	2018	2019	% +/-	+/-
Schools				
APS	1.5 K	1.7 K	13.80%	▲ 209
BEA	1.0 K	1.1 K	10.91%	▲ 105
BUS	2.6 K	2.8 K	9.42%	▲ 245
LSS	2.3 K	2.4 K	6.29%	▲ 144
HSC	6.5 K	6.8 K	5.07%	▲ 329
ENG	1.4 K	1.4 K	0.00%	▬ 0
ACI	1.5 K	1.4 K	-8.11%	▼ -125

S1 – 2019/20: UGFT LSBU - Offer-making and Conversion

LSBU has made 2,000 more offers compared to last year (with volume rising 19.7% from 10.3k to 12.3k). This is partly due to our growth in applications, but is also part of our strategy to recruit more students Pre-Clearing through earlier offer-making and conversion.

- While we have received a greater number of applications to process, we've already made offers to nearly 70% of our applicant body this year (an 8.3% increase on last year to date).
- Our faster turnaround from application to offer has driven improvements in conversion: Firm Accepts are up 45% from 915 to 1330. We continue to see growth in Insurance Accepts, which have increased 56% from 770 to 1210.
- The next major UCAS deadline is the 1st May "Reply Date", which requires offer-holders to choose their Firm/Insurance choices. Our student contact centre has been supporting conversion activity since February, and has now completed the initial outbound call-making campaign.

We will now concentrate on follow-up engagements with offer-holders who've requested them, and continue to contact those who we haven't been able to connect with so far. From 15th April we will also begin weekly SMS texting to prompt outstanding offer-holders to accept their offers in the lead up to their May deadline.

LSBU Home/EU/OS	2018	2019	% +/-	+/-
Total Applications	16.8 K	17.7 K	↑ 5.4%	↑ 0.9 K
▶ Offers	10.3 K	12.3 K	↑ 19.7%	↑ 2.0 K
▶ Firm Accepts	916	1329	↑ 45.1%	↑ 413
▶ Insurance Accepts	772	1211	↑ 56.9%	↑ 439
Offer-making Rate (Proportion of Applicants that have received an Offer)	61.3%	69.6%	+8.3%	
Conversion Rate (Proportion of Offers to FAs)	8.9%	10.8%	+1.9%	

Student Withdrawals and Interruptions Report at 31 March 2019

Positive trends compared to the prior year continue both in the number of withdrawn and interrupted students and in the associated lost income.

Key figures as at March YTD are:

- 6% of students have withdrawn or interrupted their studies, compared to 9% at the same point in 2017/18.
- There were 377 fewer withdrawals and interruptions than in the previous year, largely as a result of a reduction in interruptions across all schools.
- YTD lost income of £3,724k represents 3.95% of total tuition fee income which is favourable to 4.47% at the same time last year.
- The full year lost income forecast of £4.88m is held in line with budget.

1. Student Losses 2018/19 YTD

Table 1: Withdrawn and Interrupted students as a proportion of Total students

Level of study	Year of programme	2017/18			2018/19	
		Total WD/INT	Mar WD/INT	Progression rate	Proportion non-progressors WD/INT	Mar WD/INT
First degree	1	13%	12%	70%	42%	8%
	2	7%	7%	81%	27%	6%
	3	5%	5%	-	-	3%
Other undergraduate	1	10%	10%	66%	41%	5%
	2	6%	6%	20%	7%	5%
	3	11%	11%	-	-	0%
Postgraduate (research)	1	11%	13%	80%	46%	6%
	2	11%	8%	85%	10%	11%
	3	8%	8%	-	-	8%
Postgraduate (taught)	1	9%	8%	56%	20%	7%
	2	6%	6%	17%	4%	3%
	3	19%	20%	-	-	10%
Total		9%	9%	65%	25%	6%

- The overall reduction in the proportion of withdrawn and interrupted students compared to the previous year has continued in March and now stands at 6% (prior year 9%).
- This positive trend is also seen for year 1 first degree students (8% withdrawn / interrupted vs 12% at the same point in 2017/18) who are the most significant group in terms of performance metrics and future income flows. The improvement is thought to be linked to the change in funding model for Health students. The Student Engagement team have categorised year 1 Health students to be at “very low risk” of dropping out, as they appear to be attending their classes and using LSBU online services regularly.
- The improvement in PG performance is thought to result from better flexibility around PG loan repayments, a higher level of employer sponsored PG / PT income and, anecdotally according to some schools, a stronger PG cohort in 2018/19.
- Note that last year, withdrawal and interruptions only accounted for 42% of the reasons for non-progression. Therefore, this improvement will not necessarily result in improved progression levels, though current signs are positive.

Chart 1a: YTD Withdrawals vs previous year, absolute numbers

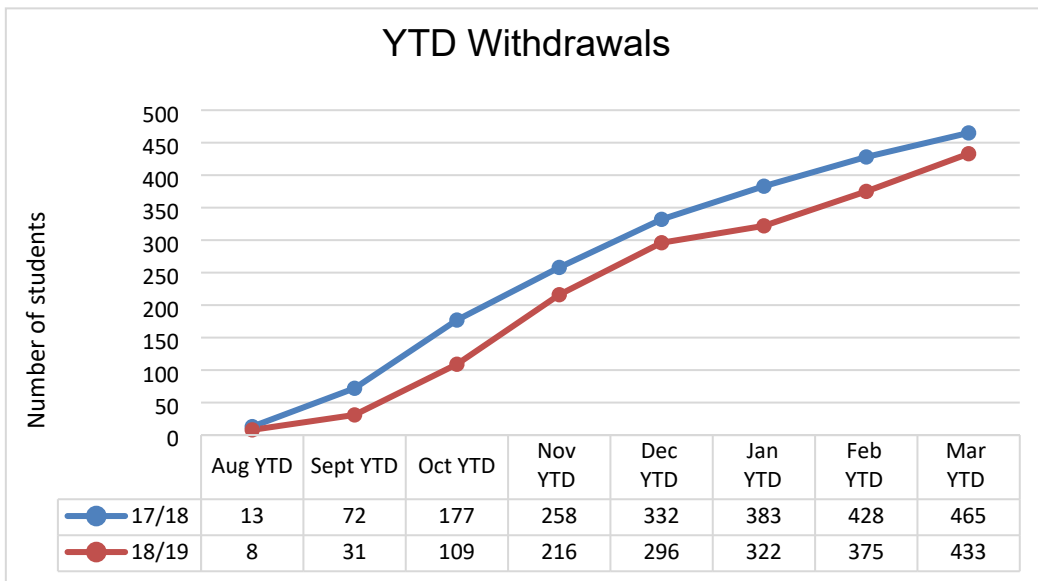
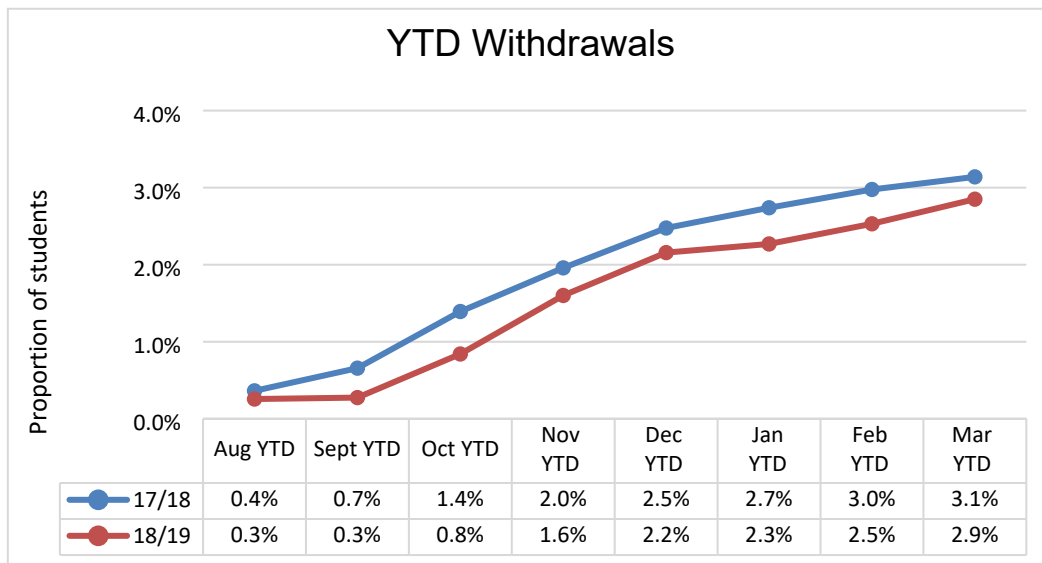


Chart 1b: YTD Withdrawals vs previous year as a proportion of Total students



- Withdrawal trends: the positive variance to 2017/18 has narrowed in March and now stands at 32 fewer withdrawals.
- Of the 58 students who withdrew in the month of March, 28 were year 1 first degree. The schools with the highest number of withdrawals in March were LSS, BEA and HSC.
- As at March YTD, withdrawals have decreased compared to the previous year in four Schools (BEA, BUS, ENG, HSC) and increased in three (APS, ACI, LSS).

Chart 2a: YTD Interruptions vs previous year, absolute numbers (inc. ESLEPs)

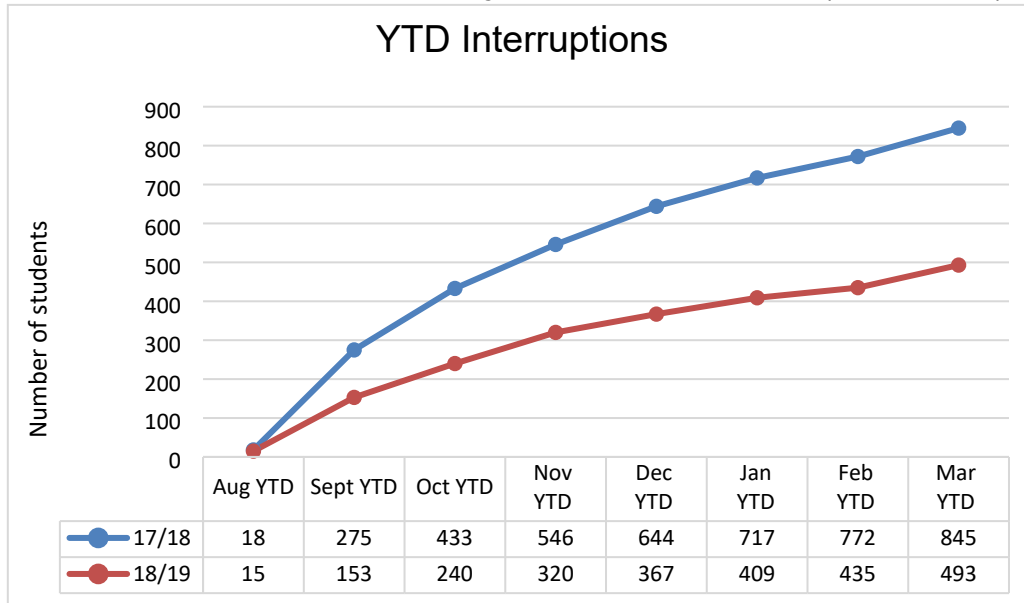
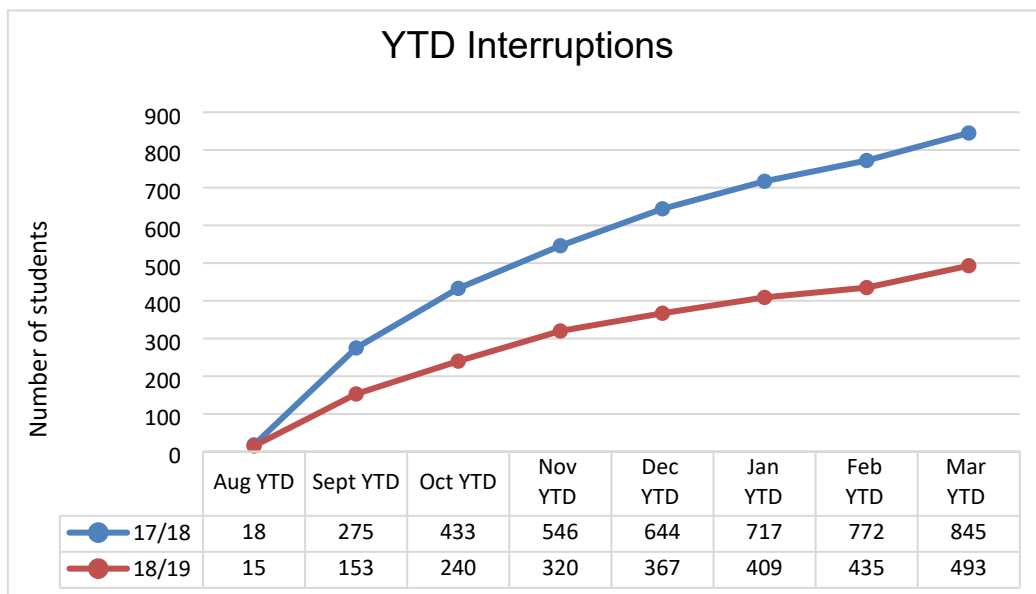


Chart 2b: YTD Interruptions vs previous year as a proportion of Total students (inc. ESLEPs)



- Interruptions trends: the positive variance to 2017/18 continued in March and now stands at 351 fewer interruptions, of which 158 are in relation to students who are taking a year out and have not re-enrolled for the current academic year (ESLEPs).
- The number of students that interrupted decreased across all schools in 2018/19 YTD compared to the previous year. School of Engineering saw the highest % change (58%) compared to the other schools.

Student Service Report at 31 March 2019

The overall total of enquiries, for the Student Life Centre Helpdesk is down by 12.65% year on year in the period in question. The major reason for this is the steep decline in both Fee and Employability enquiries.

	01/08/2017 to 31/03/2018	01/08/2018 to 31/03/2019
Administration	1561	1384
Fees	3084	1816
Employability	2337	1115
Estates	134	106
Advice	3282	3570
International	422	340
Library	136	200
Other	1103	714
Skills	31	28
Registry	59	59
SU	134	123
Student Life	6030	5721
Wellbeing	6111	6505
Total	24424	21681

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Number of MHWB appointments offered			
	01/08/2017 - 31/03/2018	01/08/2018 - 31/03/2019	% change
August	54	100	+85%
September	80	109	+36%
October	190	229	+20.5%
November	202	235	+16.5%
December	136	173	+27%
January	141	178	+26%
February	163	195	+19.5%
March	155	196	+26.5%
Total	1,121	1,415	+ 26%

Safety Concern Response

	01/08/2017 - 31/03/2018	01/08/2018 - 31/03/2019	% change
Total cases	81	122	+ 50.5%

Students declaring a disability to LSBU

	01/08/2017 to 31/03/2018	01/08/2018 to 31/03/2019	% change
Total no of students	2222	2482	+ 12%

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