

Committee Minutes

Committee:	Marketing, Admissions and Retention
Date/Time:	6 th February 2025, 11:00am – 1:00pm
Chair/Members:	<p>Chair: Dr Cristiana Shepherd (Bm) (CS)</p> <p>Marketing/IT Designated member – Abdul Faheem Batti (Bm) (FB), Hamza Azeem (HA) (Alternate)</p> <p>Admissions Designated member - Ammar Anjum (Bm) (AAn)</p> <p>Retention Designated member – Linlu Wang (Bm) (LW)</p> <p>Teaching & Learning Designated member – Syed Fakhar Abbas (Bm) (SFA)</p> <p>Student Support Designated member – Samya Saeed (Bm) (SS)</p> <p>Placement Designated Member - Rubab Zahra (Ld) (RZ)</p> <p>Admin, HR & Campus Designated member – Saqib Ayub (M) (SA)</p> <p>Registrar and Controller Examinations Designated member – Ayhan Ahmed (Bm) (Aah)</p> <p>Student Representatives – Shoeb Choudhury (M) (SC), Andreea Nedelea (Ld) (AN)</p>
In attendance:	<p>Head of Quality Assurance for Collaborative Partnerships – Dr Sheku Kakay (Bm) (SK)</p> <p>Associate Dean, Head of Partnerships – Dr Robert Hyland (Bm)(RH)</p> <p>Associate Dean for Health & Social Care & Interim Associate Dean Business Management – Dr Maxine Pryce-Miller (Bm) (MPM)</p> <p>Marketing/IT member- Maimoonah Abbas (Bm) (MA)</p> <p>Clerk – Funmi Ekisola (FE)</p>

Actions shown in bold.

CS welcomed all to the meeting.

1. Conflicts of Interest

CS reminded the committee what type of conflicts may exist. No conflicts declared

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Syed Fakhar Abbas and Dr Maxine Pryce-Miller will be representing the Teaching & Learning team.

3. Protocols for the meeting

CS advised for all to focus on the business of the meeting and to direct all contributions through the chair. CS also informed the committee that it has been tasked by the Academic Board to ensure that its business is concluded within the 2 hours allocated for the meeting.

4. Members List

The Chair informed the committee members of the changes to the members list which had been circulated before the meeting. These changes are as follows:

1. Syed Farzam Bukhari will step down as the Registrar and Controller Examinations Designated member and the alternate for the chair, while AAH will step in his place
2. Linlu is now Retention's designated member

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2024 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were agreed as a correct record of that meeting.

6. Action Tracker

The meeting reviewed the Action Tracker, and noticed the RAG ratings of actions from the previous meeting.

AR36 - This is an action to review the disability/learning difficulty disclosure form and supporting slides for completeness and compliance with the SSS standard. This action is now closed and transferred to Student Support & Student Experience Committee for action.

AR50 – Retention team presented a QA, quality assurance department, approved Attendance Policy and, Retention Policy to the committee, the policies were approved.

AR51 - Admissions team was tasked with incorporating the amendments to the student application form as discussed at the previous meeting. The updated and QA approved form was submitted to the committee and approved.

AR52 - Student Support & Experience and Retention teams presented the disability support proposal to the committee as requested.

Student Support & Experience and Retention teams to ensure that the disability policy captures the collaboration between the teams and the proposed support.

AR53 - Was taken under agenda item 8.a.

AR54 - Action completed, marketing/IT have inserted QAA approved logo on SSS social media and the website.

AR55 - Action completed, strategy document for student ambassador nomination for open days was shared with the committee and approved.

AR56- Action completed, enhanced marketing strategy was shared.

AR57- Was taken under agenda item 8.b.

AR58- Was taken under agenda item 8.b.

AR59- Action completed, a report on how to enhance recruitment strategy for L7 and Leicester was shared and presented under 8.c

AR60- Was taken under agenda item 8.a.

AR61 Was taken under agenda item 8.d. and e.

AR62- The Retention team support process for suspended students returning to their studies was shared with the committee

AR63- was taken under agenda item 8.f. by AAH

7. Matters Arising

AR64 - QA to share with Admissions and Retention departments training sessions available for staff remains an open item since they were waiting for Yasmeen to provide a list of relevant training sessions..

AR 64 to be closed and moved to Administration, HR & Campus Management Committee which has jurisdiction over training for SSS non-academic staff so that they may widen the scope of a current action for HR to open a training register to include the training needs of the Admissions and Retention departments complete with a schedule of subject trainings, training slides, training date and the trainer.

8. Strategic Update

a. Marketing – Enhanced Social Media Strategy

HA presented a report of the performance of the department against the marketing strategy enhanced objectives:

1. Increased Social Media Engagement and Reach - this objective was met by over 10.2%
2. Optimization of Lead Generation Efforts - the objective of a 10% increase in leads was not met as lead numbers fell below expectation. The team provided insights on cause and have set a recalibrated course to achieve this objective.
3. Improved Lead Follow-up and Conversion - this objective was successfully met with a 60% increase in lead to enrolment conversion.
4. Develop Platform Specific Content Strategies - the objective of a 20% increase in TikTok leads was achieved.
5. Event Promotion - there has been an increase in event promotion over the quarter leading to an improved audience reach and interest.
6. Email Marketing Campaigns - there is a marked decrease when comparing September 2024 and January 2025 campaigns. The team have taken note of what worked as per content and what did not and will make improvements for the next intake.

The strategy is clear, and the parameters drawn out are specific and measurable. The committee will track the team's progress on a quarterly basis to ensure that the strategy meets its defined objectives.

IT to enhance marketing strategy in line with the discussions had with the chair and present again to the committee. This enhancement to include discussions had on implementing conversion-focused metrics for each platform (in addition to likes and shares), enhance engagement with other brands, use AI to fast track video editing (e.g., using Choppity), review presence on Trustpilot and enhance scores.

b. Marketing – Outreach Strategy

AAn delivered the Outreach Strategy of the marketing team on schools and colleges engagement function. The team attended a wide range of events in schools, colleges and sixth forms. Feedback from these events have been varied, some students embracing the idea of SSS while others decline involvement. RH informed the committee a more effective approach would be focusing on colleges with adult learners as these will find SSS more suitable to their lifestyle.

Recruitment from colleges and sixth forms will not only start getting results in August after A-Level results are released for the September intake.

AAn to share the relevant suggestions from the report with the relevant department heads.

c. Student Recruitment Performance

AAn presented the overall data capture report on the total number of students, applicants, enrolments, registrations and never starters for January 2025 intake (cohort 15).

SS asked why there is a gap between the number of students recruited and the number of students onboarded. AAn explained that SSS can only onboard the limited target set by Leeds Trinity University.

AAn also stated that there is a waiting list for students not offered admissions who can become students in subsequent cohorts. He also stated that the team have started achieving a higher percentage of students being offered admissions by LTU. This means that the quality of students recruited have improved.

When asked SA if there is alumni discount for level 7 students, AAn responded that LTU is yet to give feedback on it. However, there is a proposal in the works within SSS to offer alumni discounts to students.

The committee deliberated on the struggles of new students in settling down the first weeks of lectures. Consequently, the committee tasked some of its members to work to resolve this.

Admissions, Student Support & Experience teams and Academic Development Unit to create a help guide on how to navigate the first week of their studies.

d. Attendance and Retention

LW presented data on attendance, withdrawals and suspensions. Data showed that cohort 14 has a better attendance across all campuses than other cohorts. Withdrawal rate was higher within the transition between level 3 and level 4 compared with other levels. LW explained that rates are always higher between those levels hence some cohorts appear to have higher rates than others, due to which level they refer to. The committee agreed that something must be done to encourage level 4 students to continue with their studies.

Registrar's Office, Retention, Student Support & Experience and Academic Development Unit to determine activities that can be done to engage and encourage students to stay in learning and pass all modules during the break months between levels.

The chair asked for clarification on an ambiguity in the good practice on attendance report which is if students are contacted daily when they are not in class. LW responded that students are contacted on the days they have classes and that they also receive an autogenerated email on attendance once they miss at least one class in a week.

Complaints have been received from students about the retention team staff being rude to students and repeatedly contacting students that they are not in class when they are. Discussions were had on how students are our customers and must be listened to and treated with respect.

Retention team to review automated messages, emails and texts being sent to students to identify what needs to be changed within the system or people involved in the process (e.g., lecturers), e.g. wordings, timing.

Retention team to devise a plan to address students' complaints on the team's communication skills and customer service. The team is to collaborate with other teams on this (e.g., HR for trainings) and encourage students to proactively communicate their absences.

e. CRM Audit.

Quality checks on CRM for cohorts 13, 14 and 15 revealed several inaccuracies from the Admissions and Retention teams. AAH will share the audit file with the relevant teams to amend these.

AAH will share a comprehensive audit report with Admissions and Retention teams.

9. Student Representation

There was no student representative at the meeting to give a report at the meeting.

10. Matters to report to Quality Assurance Committee

1. The meeting lasted exactly two hours as requested during the last QA committee meeting. However, with student attendees, it would have slightly overrun. Reviewing the recording reveals that the time was spent on productive discussions to enhance departmental performance. Notably, this is the only committee covering three departments in dept which has led to significant improvements rather than just sections of three departments. While the MAR committee still suggests a slightly longer timeslot could be beneficial, they respect the QA chair's decision.
2. The Marketing team exceeded most of their targets, except the number of leads generated. However, they increased the conversion of leads to enrolments. The committee agreed with the department's suggestions to improve their performance for the next quarter and added a few more, e.g., use of AI to expedite video editing, engage more with other brands, deeper analysis of the ROI.
3. The admissions team met their targets, except for L7 and UG Leicester which were quite low. The committee agreed with the suggestions to improve recruitment for the next intake and put forward suggestions to enhance this, e.g., share feedback from outreach with other teams, develop further support for new entrants.
4. The retention team also met most of their targets with some fluctuations with withdrawals and attendance per cohort. The committee discussed some informal complaints made against the team and suggested interdepartmental work to address

these and enhance student retention, such as a plan of support for the break term between levels.

11. Annual Report form the Chair to the Academic Board

Not for this meeting

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business discussed at the meeting.

Date of next meeting

There being no further business, the meeting closed at exactly 1.00 pm.

The date of the next meeting is 8th May 2025 at 11.00 am – 1.00 pm, Birmingham Campus, hybrid.

Action Table

Number	Action	Responsible	Deadline
AR65	Student Support & Experience and Retention teams to ensure that the disability policy captures the collaboration between the teams and the proposed support.	SS and LW	
AR66	AR 64 to be closed and moved to Administration, HR & Campus Management Committee which has jurisdiction over training for SSS non-academic so that they may widen the scope of a current action for HR to open a training register to include the training needs of Admissions and Retention departments complete with a schedule of subject trainings, training slides, training date and the trainer	FE	
AR67	IT to enhance marketing strategy in line with the discussions had with the chair and present again to the committee. This enhancement to include discussions had on implementing conversion-focused metrics for each platform (in addition to likes and shares), enhance engagement with other brands, use AI to fast track video editing (e.g., using Choppity), review presence on Trustpilot and enhance scores	HA	
AR68	Admissions to share the relevant suggestions from the report with the relevant department heads.	AAn	
AR69	Admissions, Student Support & Experience teams and Academic Development Unit to create a help guide on how to navigate the first week of their studies.	AAn/SS/AJMPM (ADU)	

AR70	Registrar's Office, Retention, Student Support & Experience and Academic Development Unit to determine activities that can be done to engage and encourage students to stay in learning and pass all modules during the break months between levels.	AAh/LW/SS/MPM (ADU)	
AR71	Retention team to review automated messages, emails and texts being sent to students to identify what needs to be changed within the system or people involved in the process (e.g., lecturers), e.g. wordings, timing.	LW	
AR72	Retention team to devise a plan to address students' complaints on the team's communication skills and customer service. The team is to collaborate with other teams on this (e.g., HR for trainings) and encourage students to proactively communicate their absences.	LW	
AR73	Submit CRM audit report for cohorts 13, 14 and 15 with Admissions and Retention teams.	AAh	Completed, CRM audit report added to Agenda & Meeting Papers folder for the next meeting.