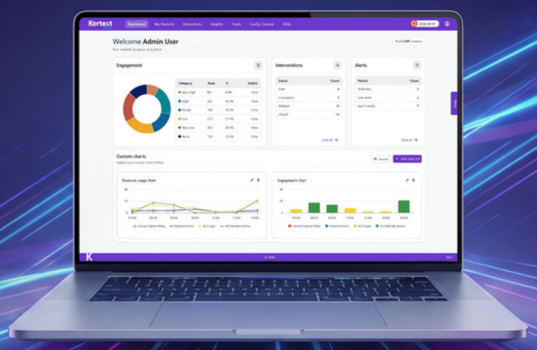
How St Mary's University reduced student attrition in one year with Kortext stream



Overview

- Reduced Year 1 undergraduate attrition by 2.9 percentage points.
- Increased foundation year retention by 5.8 percentage points.
- Helped close continuation gaps among identified student groups.
- Embedded in a proactive, institution-wide approach to student support.

About St Mary's University

St Mary's University is a higher education institution in Twickenham, London, with around 5,000 students. The university specialises in teacher education, sport science, health and the humanities. Founded in 1850, St Mary's has a long-standing commitment to supporting student success and widening participation.

This case study features insights from Professor Claire McLoughlin, Head of Academic Student Experience and Enhancement, and institutional sponsor for Kortext stream.

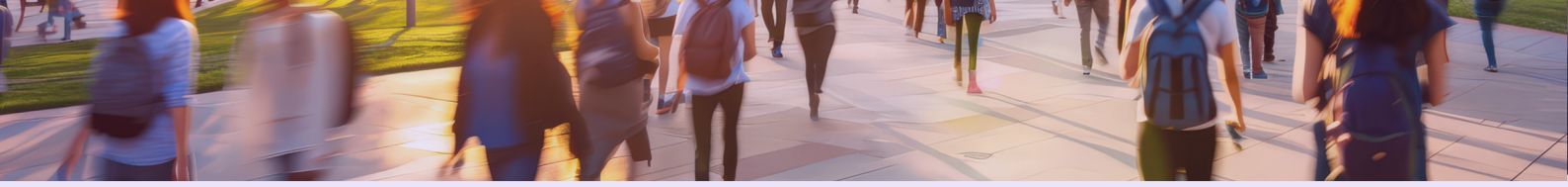
The challenge

The primary driver for the introduction of Kortext stream at St Mary's was to tackle student attrition by enabling more proactive student engagement, communication and intervention at scale.

In the early 2020s, student attrition at the university had risen, highlighting the need for a more coordinated approach to identifying and supporting students who may be at risk of withdrawal.

While St Mary's had previously used a Personal Tutoring Dashboard, the licence had expired and the decision was taken not to renew it.

As a result, the university had limited visibility of how students were engaging with their learning. Claire reports that many staff were 'desperate for something to get the data on their students', not only attendance data but also a place to record notes and view a student's wider profile.



> **No one was using the last one. I said to our senior leadership team that we've got to invest properly in a replacement for it to be a platform that we're using, otherwise we're just wasting money.'**
>
> **Professor Claire McLoughlin, Head of Academic Student Experience and Enhancement**

The approach

St Mary's purchased Kortext stream in 2024 and, following an initial project phase and pilot, launched the solution institution-wide for the 2025/26 academic year. Extensive staff training ahead of roll-out helped ensure strong adoption from the outset.

By launch, 94% of academic staff and Personal Tutors were trained, alongside professional services staff involved in pastoral support

Claire played a significant role in driving adoption, actively monitoring training and usage to reinforce stream's role in the university's wider student success strategy.

She also ensured the alignment of stream with the university's attendance monitoring and personal tutoring policies, creating a consistent approach to identifying and supporting students who may require further assistance. The platform was configured to support these processes, embedding stream into day-to-day practice.

As a result, staff have a clear understanding of how and when to use stream to support student engagement and outreach activities. This combination of relevant data, clear processes and shared student success goals has proved hugely valuable.

The impact

Within its first year of institution-wide use, Kortext stream has supported measurable improvements in retention, attrition and continuation outcomes.

- Year 1 undergraduate attrition for 2025/26 is 2.9 percentage points lower than at the same point in 2024/25.
- Foundation year retention for 2025/26 is 5.8 percentage points higher than at the same point in 2024/25.

St Mary's is also seeing positive progress in addressing continuation gaps among identified groups of students. Compared to the same point in 2024/25, attrition among Asian Level 4 students has reduced by 9.4 percentage points, while attrition among Black Level 4 students has fallen by 4.9 percentage points in 2025/26.

Reducing continuation gaps: 9.4 percentage point reduction in attrition among Asian Level 4 students

Feedback gathered from staff and students has also been positive:

- Staff and students value having key information accessible in one place.
- Students appreciate proactive outreach and earlier support from staff.
- Some students find it useful to compare their engagement with cohort averages.
- Students have reported easy access to stream via the MYSMU app.

Looking ahead

Having established stream as a core part of its student success strategy, St Mary's is now looking to expand how the platform supports staff and students.

Alongside the measurable improvements in retention and continuation outcomes, Claire highlights the value of working with a partner that listens to customer feedback and continues to evolve the platform in response to institutional needs.

> **'We're excited that our suggestions for enhancing stream are now coming to fruition. We're looking forward to easier communications and booking meetings with students from within stream and to having the ability to upload learning support details to a student record.'**
>
> **Professor Claire McLoughlin, Head of Academic Student Experience and Enhancement**

These enhancements will reinforce stream as a 'one-stop shop' for Personal Tutors and strengthen St Mary's 'no wrong door to support' approach to student success.

> **'St Mary's purchased stream to provide staff with all the information around a student so that they can see them holistically, know when they are thriving, struggling or dropping off. Without this full picture, those students will get lost. It's our responsibility to help them achieve their best and come out with a degree and flourish in their careers going forward.'**
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> **Professor Claire McLoughlin, Head of Academic Student Experience and Enhancement**