



Amplifying Voices. Inspiring Progress.

Elevating Student Success through
Innovation in Higher Education

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Ulster University: Our Journey with Blue and MLY

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Context

- Largest University in Northern Ireland
- Approx 35K students – home and collaborative provision
- 3 different campus locations in NI – numerous locations globally
- 4 faculties



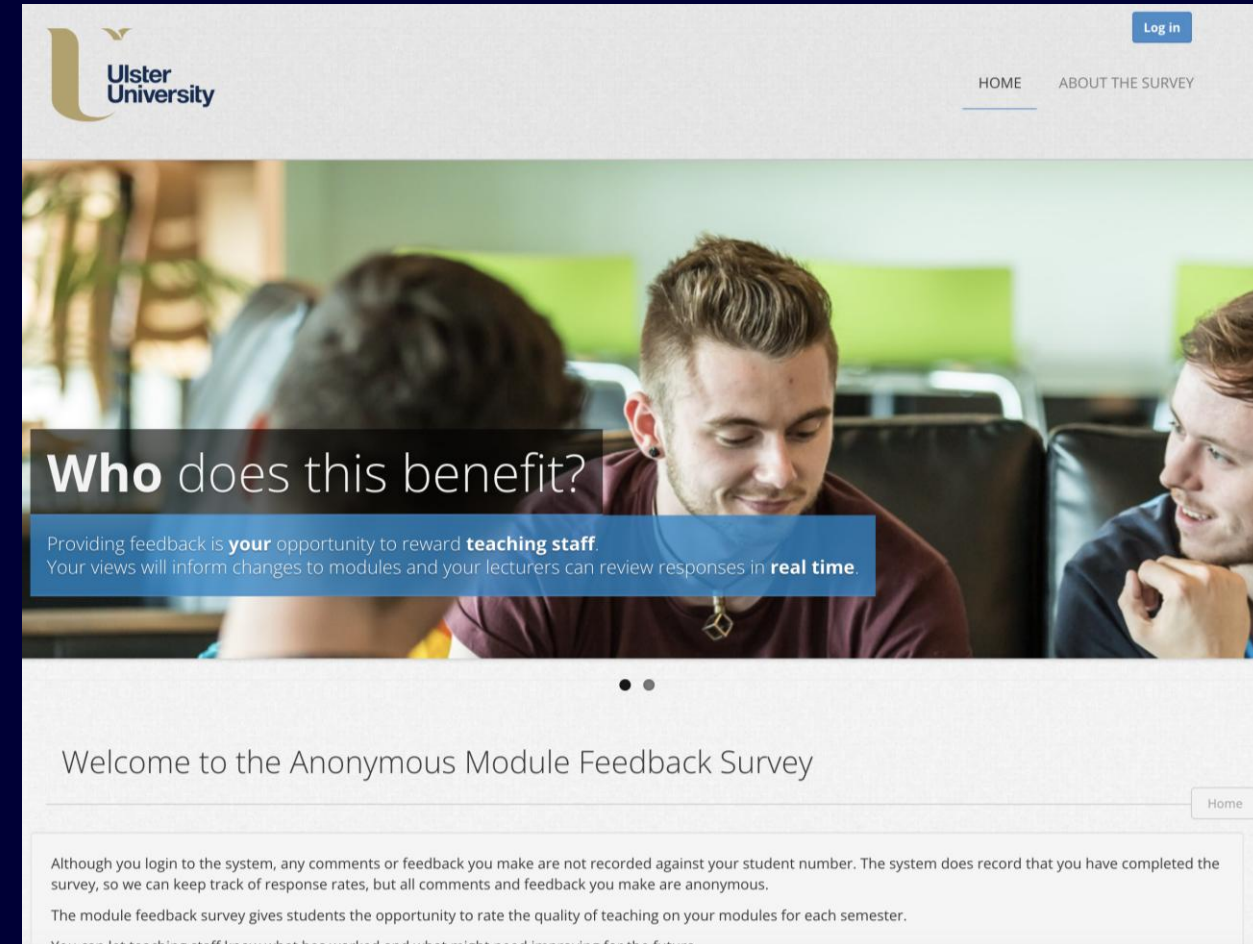
Context

- Moved from annual subject monitoring/revalidation to risk based continuous enhancement model
- Student Voice as one of the drivers for change
- QAA Review
- Links to strategy & values
- Project led by Learning Enhancement Team



Surveys @ Ulster

- In-house survey system
- Developed and unchanged for 15+ years
- Poor engagement – 7 to 8%
- Launched in week 10/11 each semester
- 12 Likert scale and 2 free text questions
- No reporting beyond Head of School
- Qualitative comments not visible
- Time for refresh



Where we started

Student Voice Working Group

- All faculties, Student Union & main professional services included
- Reviewed current system
- Updated questions with student friendly language
- Identified all student surveys - over 100
- Investigated what other universities use - locally and internationally
- Created an ideal system wish list for us
- Regular slot to update Learning & Teaching Committee (buy-in)



Where we started

Explorance

- Attended Student Voice in London (April 2024)
- Many OTR chats!
- John & Chris came to Belfast - demo with working group
- System Requirements/ Data Processing Agreements – ISD
- Wanted BLUE and MLY
- Procurement - contract signed December 2024



Real Work Started!

Two Strands

- Implementation of the System
- Promotion to Staff and Students

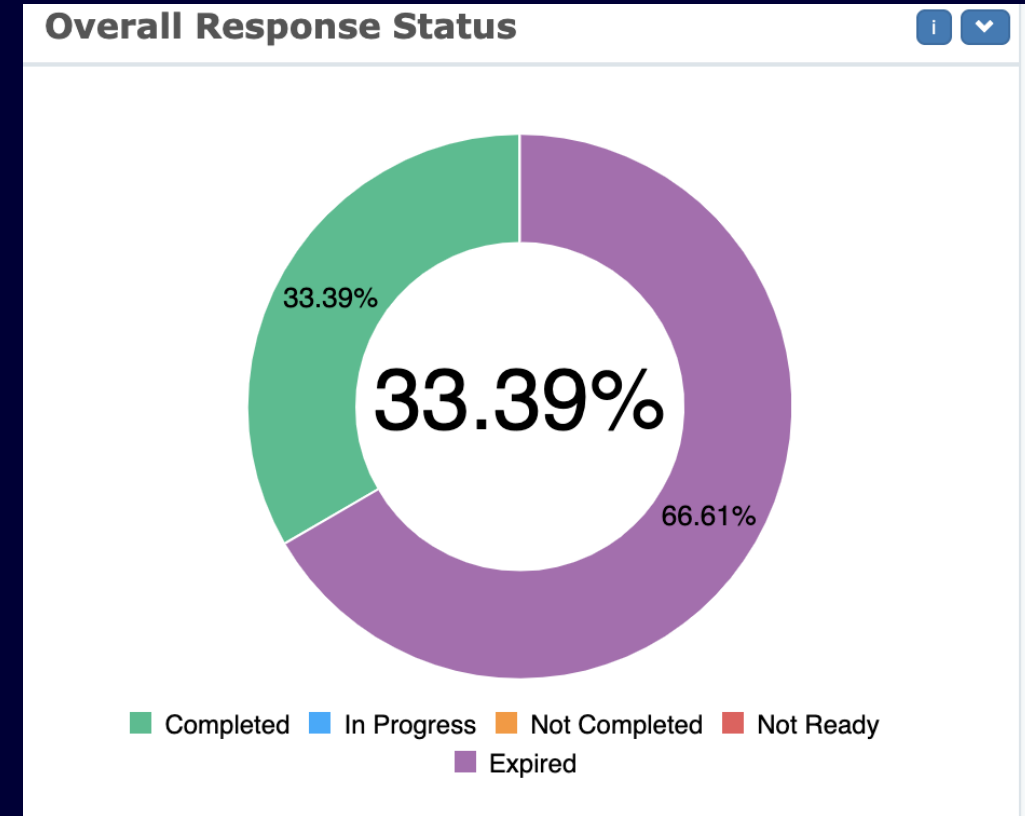


Implementation

- Required Digital Services & Banner Team
- SSO & Blackboard Learn Integration
- Data Clean Up
- Weekly meetings with Explorance – We ❤️ Batool!

Pilot

- Pilot with CEBE Faculty – 31st March
- 6063 Students (including partner students)
- 279 Modules
- 357 Staff
- Retained existing questions
- 33.39% engagement rate
- 9.03% engagement rate in old system



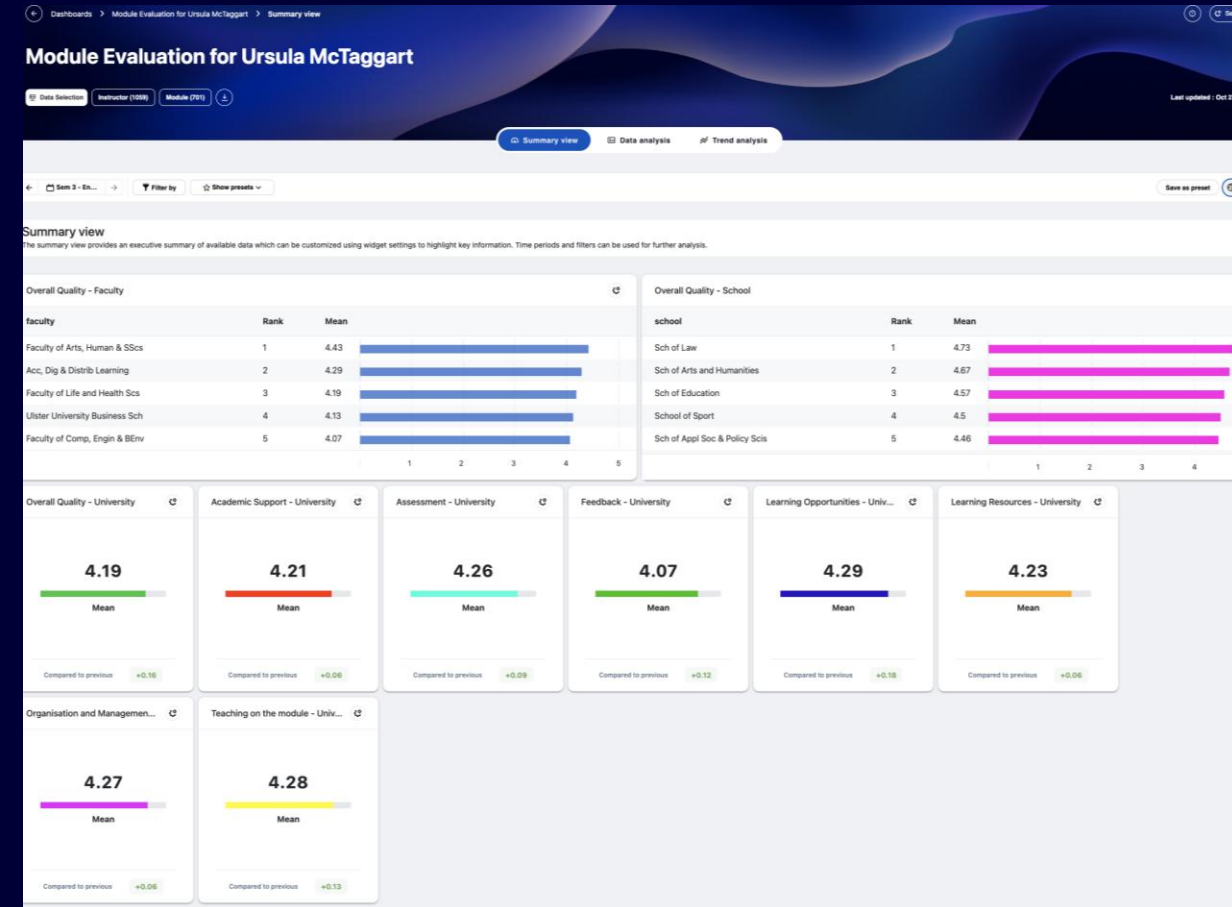
Pilot

Survey closed 2nd May - On 5th May we:

- Analysis reports to all teaching staff
- School Level & Faculty Level reports
- SLT - Aggregated reports
- Dashboard Access

MLY

- Analysed 9992 comments in minutes
- 5515 topic sentiments
- 3403 recommendations
 - 1374 -do more
 - 741 -start doing
- 30 alerts



Promotion to Staff

- Regular updates through L&T committees - no shocks!
- 27 presentations at Faculty L&T meetings and events
- Working group faculty rep presenting updates at local level
- Open invites to view demo & review survey questions
- Internal news articles
- Staff emails encouraging in-class completion
- Quick Guide Resources
- Thank you emails from PVC

Ulster University

Learning Enhancement

A Quick Guide to...

BOOSTING ENGAGEMENT WITH MODULE SURVEYS

Student voice is central to building a high-quality curriculum. When students feel heard, they are more likely to participate in shaping their education – leading to stronger engagement, satisfaction, and outcomes.

At Ulster, module surveys are delivered through the **Explorance Blue** system, which enables students to provide structured feedback on their learning experience. The system collects both quantitative data and open-text comments, offering valuable insight into what is working well and where improvements can be made.

This guide provides practical steps to help staff champion student voice and improve response rates for module surveys – ensuring that feedback is not only collected but acted upon in meaningful ways.

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Why Student Voice Matters

- **Enhances teaching:** Feedback identifies what's working in a module and what could improve.
- **Builds trust:** Students feel valued when their views are acknowledged and acted upon.
- **Improves outcomes:** Student voice supports motivation, belonging, and academic success.
- **Informs curriculum:** Feedback can help shape more relevant, inclusive learning experiences.

Listening is important—but showing students what you've done with their feedback is even more powerful.

What Can You Do?

- Make student feedback part of your programme/module continuous enhancement cycle.
- Encourage ongoing dialogue, not just one-off surveys.
- Collaborate with student reps to promote a shared responsibility for enhancing the module
- Work with your Learning Enhancement Faculty Team to explore strategies that suit your teaching context

Survey Schedule

Students will be prompted to complete a Mid-Module Survey in Week 6 of the semester and an End of Module Survey in Week 11 of the semester. They will receive an email inviting them to participate and they will see a pop up on screen every time they log into Blackboard.

Reflective Prompts for Staff

- Have I clearly explained the purpose of feedback to students?
- Am I showing students how their feedback leads to change?
- Do I provide regular opportunities for students to share their views?

Check out our website for more resources and toolkits, or ask your Learning Enhancement Faculty team for more information.
This guide was created by Ursula McTaggart, Centre for Quality Enhancement, Learning Enhancement Directorate.

Top Tips to Increase Engagement

Talk About the Survey Early – Start at Induction!
Introducing the survey during module induction sets the tone for an open and inclusive learning culture. Here's how:

- Include a slide in your induction presentation explaining what the survey is, when it happens, and why it matters.
- Share examples of past changes you've made based on student feedback.
- Explain the feedback cycle and how you plan to close the loop.
- Reassure students that feedback is anonymous and welcome.
- Invite student reps to speak about the impact of feedback and their role in communicating student views.

“Last year students asked for more guidance on assessments, so we added an additional assessment briefing video and a live Q&A session.”

Make Time in Class

- You will be notified via email when the survey is open to students.
- Set aside 5–10 minutes for students to complete the survey during a timetabled class.
- Encourage students to use their phones or laptops to access the link.
- Add the QR code sent via email to your slide deck.
- Let them know their voice matters and their responses help improve the module.

Promote It More Than Once

- Use class time, Blackboard announcements or emails to remind students that the survey is open.
- Ask course reps or peer mentors to help spread the word.

Be Honest and Encouraging

- Invite constructive criticism and remind students of the value of both positive and negative feedback.
- Avoid framing the survey as a formality - highlight real impact.

Communicate the Impact

- Use “You Said, We Did” visuals in lectures, or via announcements on Blackboard.
- Acknowledge what can't be changed and explain why.
- Reinforce positive feedback as well as areas for improvement.

www.ulster.ac.uk/learningenhancement

Promotion to Students

- Digital Screens
- Portal Banners
- Social media campaigns
- Email invites and reminders to participate
- QR codes to use in class
- Incentive Vouchers
- Focus on importance of feedback
- SU - Professional Language



The graphic features a photograph of two female students sitting at a desk, working on laptops. The student in the foreground is wearing glasses and a grey hoodie, while the student in the background is wearing a brown scarf. They are both smiling and looking at their screens. Overlaid on the left side of the image are three blue speech bubbles containing the text 'HAVE YOUR SAY' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. In the top right corner of the image, the Ulster University logo is visible. At the bottom left, a blue rectangular box contains the text 'Module Survey Feedback' in white. At the bottom right, another blue rectangular box contains the URL 'ulster.ac.uk/haveyoursay' in white.

**HAVE
YOUR
SAY**

Ulster
University

**Module Survey
Feedback**

ulster.ac.uk/haveyoursay

Staff/Student –Question Co-Design Workshop

Mid-Module Survey

Qualitative Questions

- Please list two or three things that are working well (stuff you do not want to change).
- Please tell me two or three things that are not working. If possible, suggest how I can change them.

Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

- So far, I am clear about what is expected of me in this module.
- I understand what I need to do to succeed in upcoming assessments.
- The sessions so far have been well organised and appropriately paced.
- I feel included in this module and have had appropriate opportunities to interact with others.
- I can easily access the learning materials I need on Blackboard.
- I know where to go if I need academic support.
- I know where to go if I need wellbeing support.

Staff/Student –Question Co-Design Workshop

End-Module Survey

Qualitative Questions

- What worked well for you in this module?
- What, if anything, would have improved your experience of this module?

Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

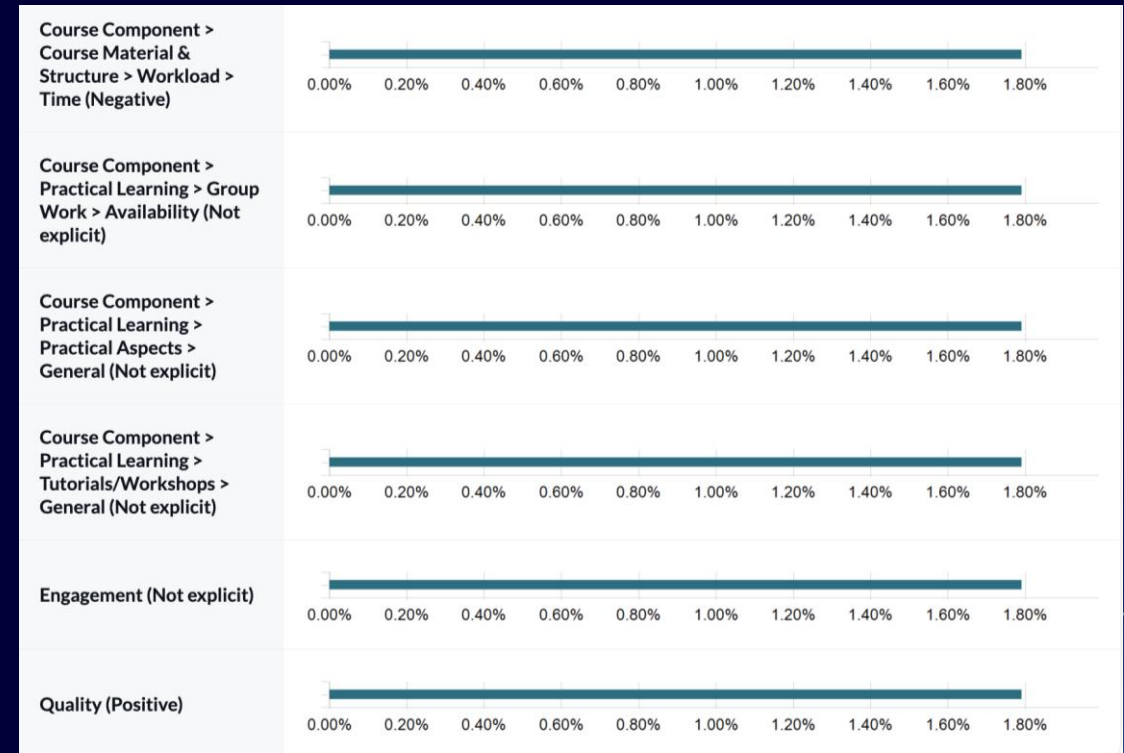
- The module content was clearly explained and supported my learning.
- This module gave me opportunities to explore ideas and apply my learning.
- I understood what was expected in the assessments, and it gave me a chance to demonstrate my learning.
- I was given useful and timely feedback that helped me understand how to improve.
- I felt supported in my learning and knew where to go if I needed help.
- The module was well organised, and information was communicated clearly.
- The learning resources for this module were accessible and supported my progress.
- Student views were listened to and valued during this module.
- I am satisfied with the overall quality of this module.

Semester 3

- 402 - Semester 3 and Semester 2 & 3 Modules
- All four faculties
- 11697 invites
- 3545 Qualitative comments
- 22.96% Engagement Rate - 6.50% in 23/24
- Added MLY to Blue reports

Semester 1 – Mid-Module

- 266 - Semester 1 Module – CEBE Faculty
- 5045 students
- 6656 Qualitative comments
- 28.92% Engagement Rate
- 50 modules – 50%+ engagement rate



Content > Helpfulness
Group Work > Availability
Course in General > Structuredness
Practical Aspects > General
Course in General > Engagement
Engagement > Quantity
Tutorials/Workshops > General

What do we do with the data?

- CAQE - Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement
- Programme level data interrogated:
Progression, non-continuation, Award, NSS, PTES RAR's, WP
- Compared against University data indicators
- High failing modules - module level feedback
- Analysed 87,642 MLY Comments
- MLY themes inform Learning Enhancement action plans – Group Work, Assessment & Feedback



Challenges

- Data accuracy
- Manual data feeds
- Programme level data
- Block teaching
- Trade union resistance
- Resource to manage the system



Thank you for listening

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