



TRUST-EM Survey:
Frequently Asked Questions for Staff

20th March 2025



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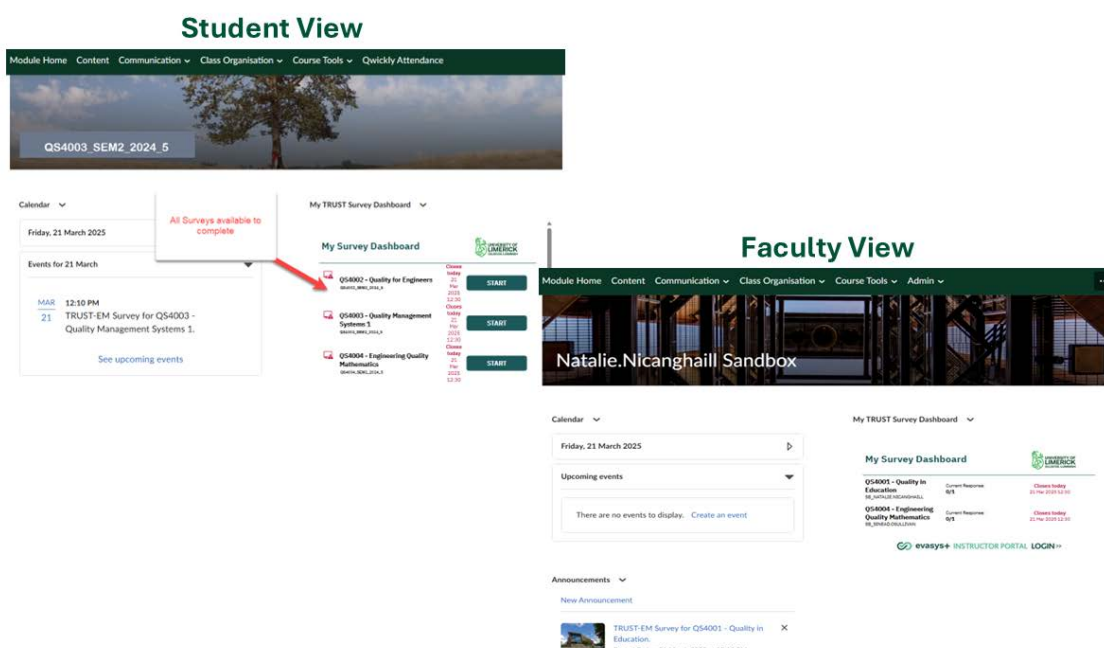
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General Questions about the UL TRUST-EM Survey

Q1 What is the TRUST-EM Survey?

The *Time to Reflect and Understand Students – Evaluation of Modules* (TRUST-EM) Survey is a short online survey, forming part of our institutional student feedback mechanism. It is run each time a taught module is offered and its content focuses on the module, its place in the curriculum, its learning environment, the student's assessment of their engagement with the module, and NOT on the teaching. It replaces UL's Module Satisfaction Survey (MSS).

TRUST surveys are distributed using [evasys](#), which is integrated with UL's virtual learning environment (VLE), Brightspace. As illustrated below, surveys are presented via widgets on the homepage. Participating students also receive one email at launch, containing links to all their current module surveys.



Q2 What is the purpose of the survey?

The purpose of the TRUST-EM survey is to serve as formal summative feedback on the student learning experience within a module. It also offers a module leader the opportunity to reflect and respond to this feedback, closing the feedback loop in a transparent and open manner. Systematically sharing reflections with students is a key element in the development of the module, programme and student learning experience.



At University-level, the aggregate survey data provides an evidence basis for assuring the quality of its modules. It also assists faculties, departments, course boards and professional service divisions in identifying actions to improve the student experience, the learning environment, programme design and delivery. The survey also acts as a data source for evidence-based quality reviews or professional and statutory body accreditation.

Q3 What questions are asked in the survey?

The questions have been developed by the University's Working Group on Institutional Feedback Mechanisms, a working group of the Quality Committee. These have been presented to and endorsed by ULTAC, Quality Committee, UNITE and Academic Council.

They are organised into four areas:

- Module
- Student Engagement
- Learning Environment
- Overall

[Appendix A](#) lists the questions asked in the survey.

Q4 When is the survey launched and how long does the process take?

The TRUST-EM survey will normally take place towards the end of a semester, launching in Week 10. The process will last five weeks, as outlined below:

- Weeks 10 – 12 **Survey Launch** - student access and real-time response rates.
- Week 13 **Survey Closure** - module leader reflection submissions.
- Week 14 – 15 **Survey Reporting**

Q5 Are all modules surveyed?

All taught¹ modules that are offered and have current student registrations are surveyed. In the case of block modules or those that fall outside Semester 1/Semester 2 delivery, an alternative schedule will be agreed with the head of unit.

¹ Modules currently out of scope include Co-op, teaching practice, placement, projects, thesis/dissertation etc.



Q6 What is a module leader?

A module leader is a member of faculty associated with each module in the SI database. Appointed by the relevant Head of Department/School (HoD), this individual typically contributes in part or in full to the delivery of the module and coordinates the associated administrative tasks (e.g., entering exam results). If a module is delivered by a single lecturer, this person is invariably the module leader. If several individuals deliver the module, one is usually appointed as the module leader. Whilst only the module leader can access the survey feedback reports on the evasys instructor portal, s/he can download/export a copy of the results from the instructor portal and share with colleagues collaborating on the delivery of that module.

Q7 How do I access this survey?

There are a number of ways module leaders can access the surveys when open:

- All surveys can be accessed in the [evasys Instructor Portal](#)
- At survey launch, you will receive a personalised email from TRUST-EM@ul.ie to your UL staff email account, with a link to the instructor portal.
- Survey widgets for each of your modules will appear on the homepage of your university virtual learning environment (VLE), Brightspace.

Both Brightspace and evasys are responsively web designed, hosting content that can be viewed comfortably, no matter what device you are using.

Q8 As module leader, what communication will I receive regarding the survey?

The following automated emails will be sent to participating faculty:

- Survey open
- Survey running - current response rate when survey is running (only if below 50% threshold).
- Survey close – results link and request to submit reflections.

Q9 What is the target response rate?

The target response rate is 50%. Results with a low response rate should be considered carefully and for small class sizes, the Head of Department and/or Faculty Dean will be expected to use their discretion to determine the reliability of the results in consultation with those who teach on the module.

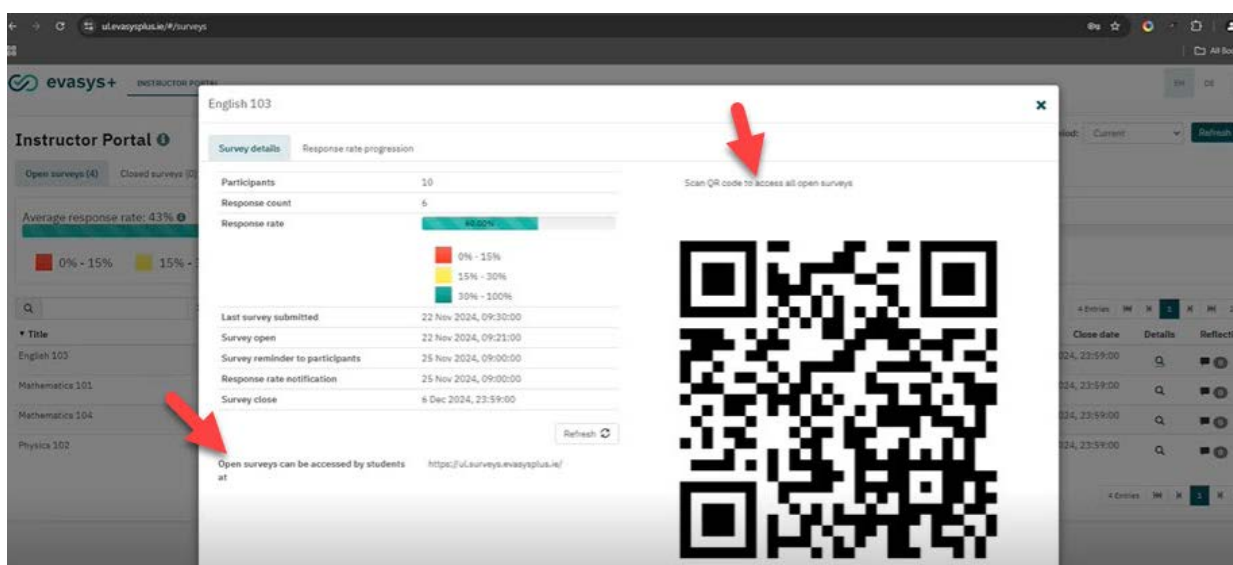
Q10 How can I assist in maximising the response rate for my modules?

Meaningful academic engagement in this process is arguably the greatest indicator of success. Please encourage your students to complete this survey, and if possible, grant them time in class to do so. The survey will only take around 2 mins. Students can begin a survey and return to edit or submit at a later stage, if the survey is still open.

Students are encouraged to offer constructive, respectful and fair feedback, so feel free to amplify this message in class, or at any other opportunity.

Your instructor portal also gives you the option of sharing your survey details with your students and encouraging completion. As illustrated below, clicking on the ‘**Details**’ column of the relevant open survey on your portal gives you some general survey and response rate data, a URL for the student portal plus a QR code. This code can be shared onscreen in class for students to scan and access the survey portal (please note that students will see all of their available surveys in the portal).

Title	Course ID	Questionnaire	Participants	Response rate	Open date	Close date	PDF Report	Word Report	CSV	HTML Report	Details
Economics 1	dempgc1_sum_a_2021test	MES_24-25	5	60% (3/5)	1 Nov 2024, 14:00:00	8 Nov 2024, 12:00:00					
Financial Mathematics 1	dempgc1_sum_c_2021test	MES_24-25	3	0% (0/3)	1 Nov 2024, 14:00:00	8 Nov 2024, 12:00:00					



The screenshot shows the 'English 103' survey details window. It includes a 'Survey details' tab and a 'Response rate progression' chart. The chart shows a response rate of 43% (5/10 participants). Below the chart, there is a table of survey events:

Event	Date/Time
Last survey submitted	22 Nov 2024, 09:30:00
Survey open	22 Nov 2024, 09:21:00
Survey reminder to participants	25 Nov 2024, 09:00:00
Response rate notification	25 Nov 2024, 09:00:00
Survey close	6 Dec 2024, 23:59:00

At the bottom, it provides a URL for students to access the survey: <https://ul-surveys.evasysplus.ie/at>. A large QR code is also displayed for students to scan.

Q11 Will my students receive reminders to complete the survey?

Yes, students will receive a reminder if they have not completed all their module surveys by a certain date.

Q12 What is being done to encourage students to provide fair and constructive feedback?

We ask students to be honest and constructive in their feedback and ‘not to be mean’ in all our communications with them – in their email invitation, at the beginning of each survey, in their Student FAQs on the QSU website and in the introduction on their student portal. We also tell students that their verbatim feedback will be shared with the lecturer.

The following guidelines are provided to students:

- **Be descriptive.** “The article by Smith was very confusing and I didn’t think it related well to the course material.”



- **Explain what you liked** about the class. “I really benefited from the hands-on activities because they helped me learn the material.”
- **Be respectful.** Honesty is important, but there’s no need to be mean. Speak your mind politely about the module’s strengths and weaknesses.
- **Be appropriate.** Focus on your opinions about the content of the module (the assignments, the in-class material) and not unrelated matters.
- **Offer suggestions**, for example “Could you please put less information on each PowerPoint slide and use a bigger font?”
- **Acknowledge.** If you enjoyed the class, let them know

The evasys software includes a feature to redact offensive language; however we cannot guarantee that all offensive terms will be captured.

Q13 What good practice recommendations can I follow in completing my module leader reflections?

The key purpose of your reflections is to provide an acknowledgement of your students’ feedback and the actions that may result.

- Focus on constructive comments and meaningful reflection with a student audience in mind.
- For quantitative questions, reference particularly high or low percentage agree results.
- Contextualise by referencing cohort size if it helps i.e., was it a majority opinion or mixed?
- Draw on qualitative results to back up quantitative results and summarise themes from the feedback. Don’t feel the need to respond to every free-text comment; pick out the main trends.
- Give the reflection on good practice as much emphasis as on areas for development and thank students for any positive feedback received.
- Acknowledge areas of student concern.
- Inform students of any improvements that will be made as a result of their feedback, where these are under your control.
- Be clear if there are issues where action is not possible, in a way that meets student expectations, and offer the reason behind this (e.g. regulatory requirements).
- Do outline where there are issues outside of your control that need to be discussed with colleagues first, or where you will raise it with the relevant committee. However – don’t play “the blame game”; it needs to be phrased positively.
- If you are concerned by any comments and need advice or support, please contact your HoD.

Further resources and support to assist teaching staff with considering and responding to feedback are available on UL’s [Centre for Transformative Learning \(CTL\) website](#).



Q14 What is the QSU's role in the survey?

The QSU is responsible solely for administering the survey instrument on behalf of the university, as well as managing the results data.

The QSU has no role in follow-up actions, which are a matter for individual course directors, course boards, heads of department and/or the academic line management system, as appropriate.

Q15 I have ideas to improve the survey. Who do I contact?

Please send your suggestions to us at TRUST-EM@ul.ie

Technical

Q16 What data source is used to populate the surveys?

The data source used to populate the surveys is the University's virtual learning environment, Brightspace. Module sites on Brightspace are automatically updated from SI with the data required for each survey: module, student and instructor(s) as defined below.

Modules: Brightspace module sites for the current semester that have student registrations.

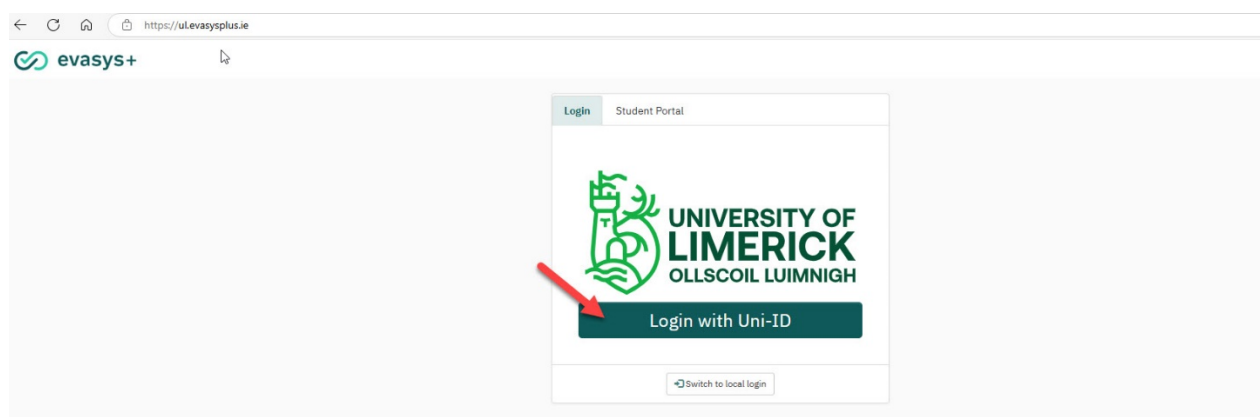
Students: Those enrolled on the modules above with the Brightspace role of "Learner".

Instructors: Those enrolled on the modules above with the Brightspace role of "Instructor".

Note: results will be available to the instructor (not Instructor Manually Added) via the instructor portal. Instructors are requested to share the report with any additional instructors.

Q17 How do I log into the evasys Instructor Portal?

As evasys is integrated with UL's VLE, Brightspace, it uses your university single sign-on (SSO) to log-in. Clicking on the [Instructor Portal](#) link on Brightspace, or within your launch email, you will be prompted to 'Login with Uni-ID' i.e. your usual institutional credentials (email address and password).



Q18 I can't log into the evasys Instructor Portal. What do I do?

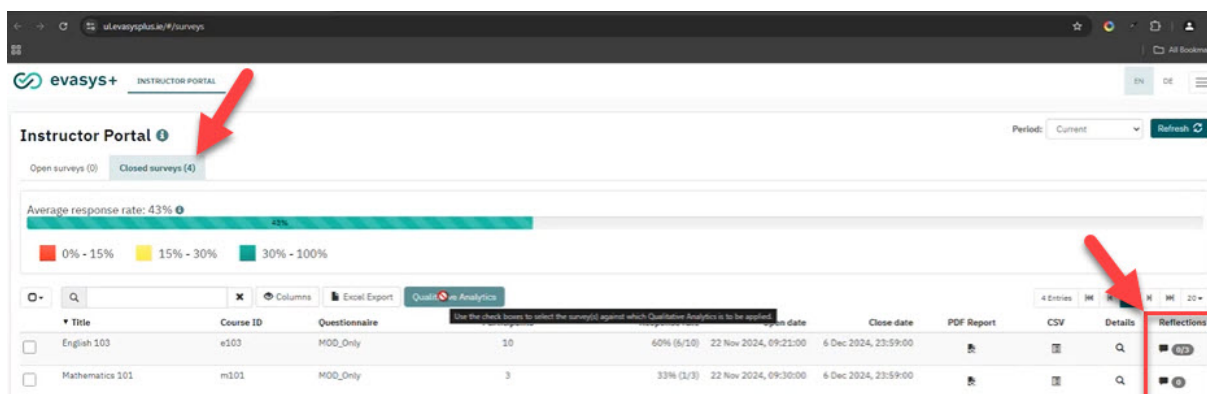
If you are having issues logging on to the [Instructor Portal](#) with your university single sign-on (SSO) please [log a call](#) with UL's ITD service desk.

Q19 How do I close the feedback loop by submitting my reflections?

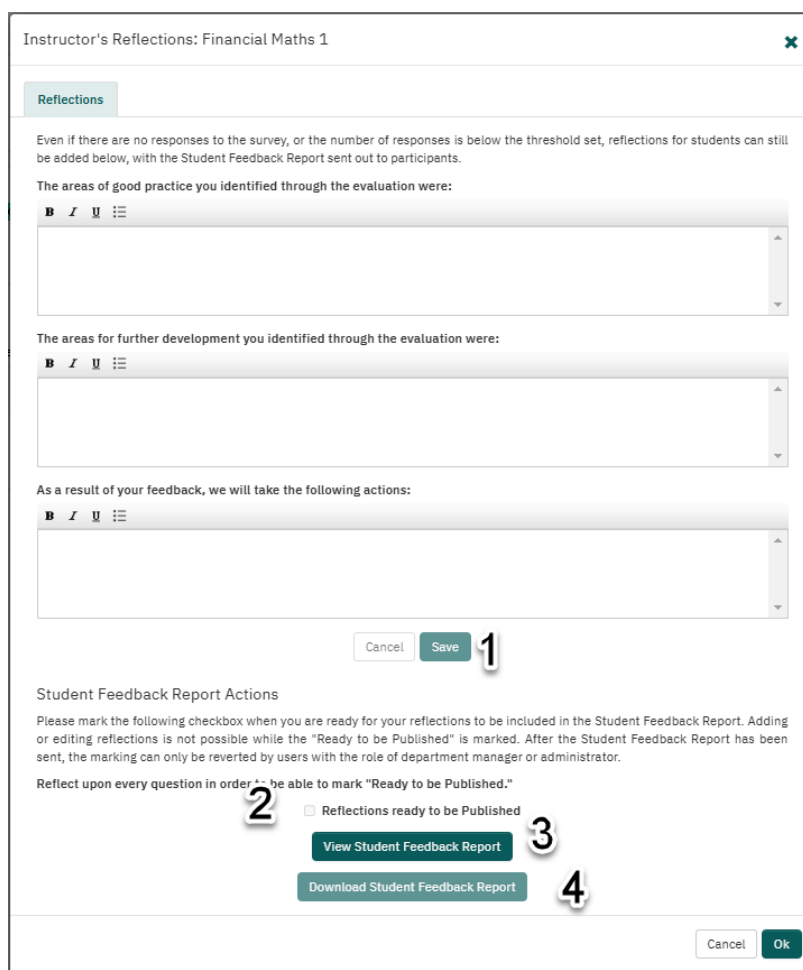
Once a TRUST-EM survey is **closed**, the module leader will be given the opportunity to reflect on the student feedback and consider areas that are working well, those that require improvement and actions that could be taken to enhance any areas identified as in need of improvement. Reflections will be formally captured on the evasys instructor portal and shared with students collectively.

Reflections can be completed regardless of the student response rate. This mutual engagement of giving feedback and providing reflections will strengthen the concept of TRUST between both students and those teaching them.

You can access the reflection for your survey on your evasys Instructor Portal homepage; each survey listed for you as module leader (under 'Closed surveys') has a reflection button/column on the right-hand-side, as highlighted below:



The instructor portal reflection (as below) has three text sections for completion:



The screenshot shows the 'Instructor's Reflections: Financial Maths 1' form. It has three main text sections for completion, each with a 'Save' button (labeled 1). The sections are: 'The areas of good practice you identified through the evaluation were:', 'The areas for further development you identified through the evaluation were:', and 'As a result of your feedback, we will take the following actions:'. Below these sections is a 'Student Feedback Report Actions' section with a checkbox 'Reflections ready to be Published' (labeled 2), a 'View Student Feedback Report' button (labeled 3), and a 'Download Student Feedback Report' button (labeled 4). The form also includes 'Cancel' and 'Ok' buttons at the bottom.

- **Figure 1:** Text can be entered against each heading, saved and returned to.
- **Figure 2:** Once you are happy, "Reflections ready to be Published" can be checked.

- **Figure 3:** At any point, you can view the report that the students will receive.
- **Figure 4:** Send the report to all students registered on the survey.

Q20 Which students on my module receive my reflection and the Student Feedback Report?

All current students in your module will receive an email with access to the Student Feedback Report² and your reflection, whether they have completed feedback or not. Disengaged or cynical students are more likely to engage with a TRUST-EM survey next time, if they see feedback loops closed, meaningful feedback valued and resulting action taken by the university and its staff.

Q21 Who has access to the survey data?

Only designated system administrators can access the survey data.

Q22 There is an error in my list of modules. Who do I contact?

As outlined in Q16, data is taken from the Brightspace module sites. Please ensure that you have the role of “**Instructor**” on all your relevant modules on Brightspace. If an error persists, please contact TRUST-EM@ul.ie with your module code, and we will investigate this for you.

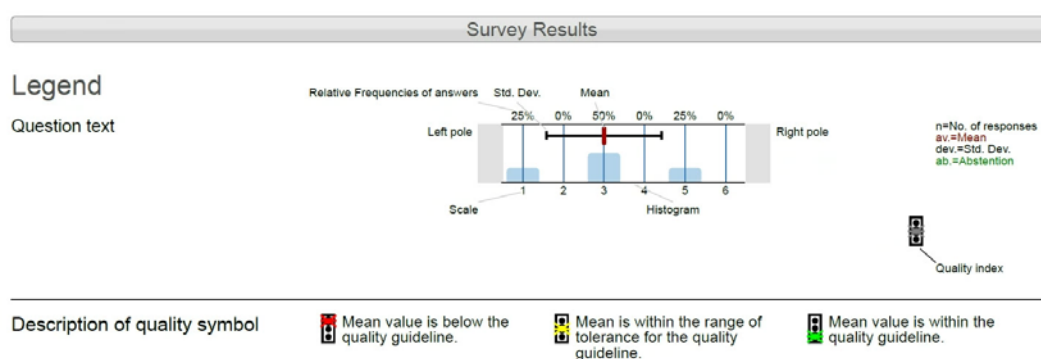
Reporting

Q23 Are the survey results published?

Yes. An institutional summary report will be published online [on the QSU website](#).

Q24 How are response quality thresholds communicated on the instructor portal?

Reports use a “traffic light” colour-coding system on the instructor portal.



The UL reporting parameters for our traffic light code are as follows:

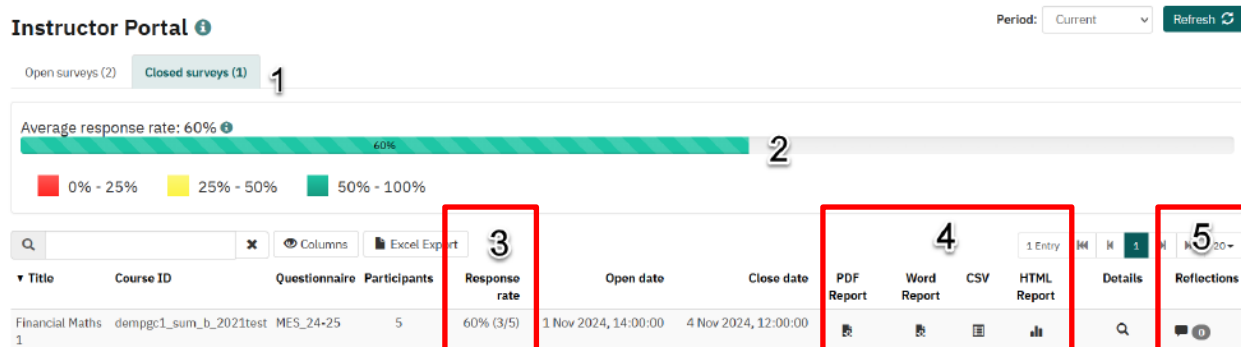
- **Red** if the average mean is below 3.5 (> below 60%) – below the quality guideline.
- **Amber** when the average is between 3.5-4.2 (> between 60% and 70%) – within the range of tolerance for the quality guideline.
- **Green** is shown when the average is above 4.2 (> more than 70%) – within the quality guideline.

² Containing responses to quantitative questions only.

The Head of Department will consider matters that may require action to improve the student experience in instances where results for modules or teaching are below the threshold of 3.5.

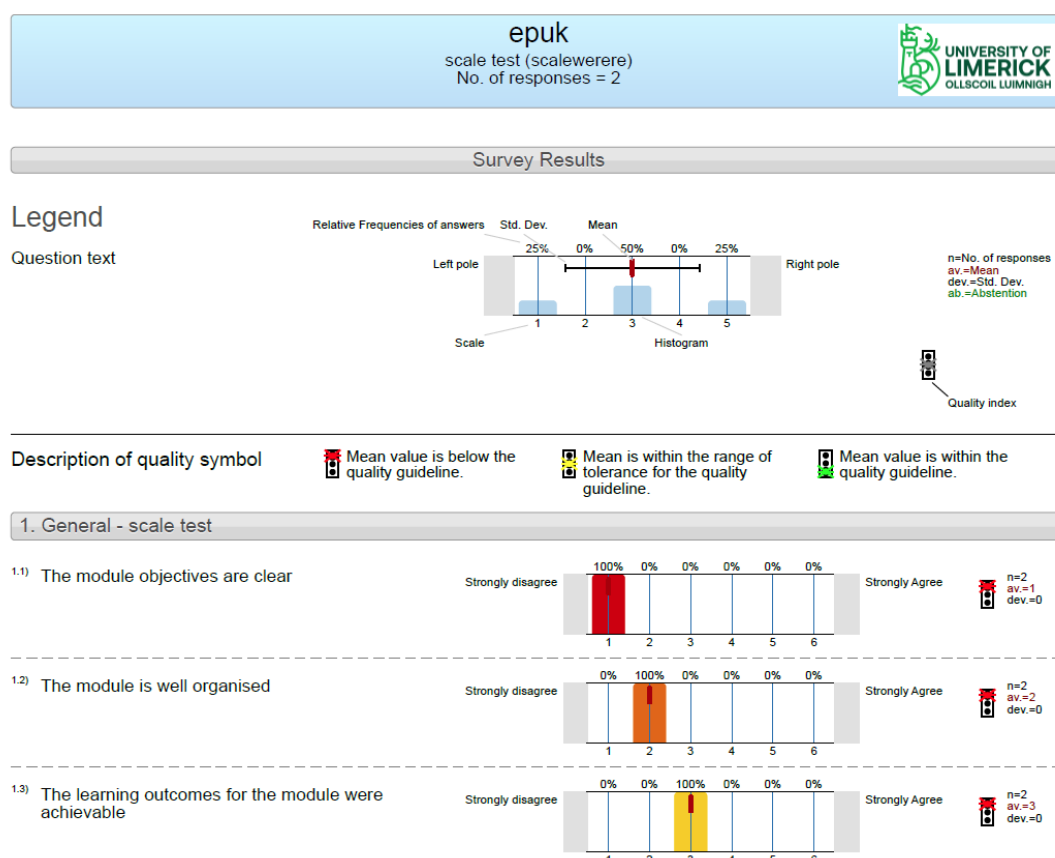
Q25 How do I access my module feedback report(s)?

Your module feedback report(s) can be accessed on your evasys Instructor Portal;



- **Figure 1:** Click on 'Closed Surveys' – the default is 'Open Surveys'.
- **Figure 2:** Shows the average response rate across all your surveys for that survey period (i.e. 24 – 25 Sem 1/Autumn 2024/25).
- **Figure 3:** Shows response rates for each survey.
- **Figure 4:** Access the Feedback Reports containing aggregated quantitative and free-text responses in a variety of formats (presentations differ).
- **Figure 5:** Click on the Reflections icon to access reflections entry.

The **PDF module report** looks like this:



Q26 Who sees the results and are they confidential?

The results for any one module are made available to (a) the module leader (b) the relevant Head of Department and (c) the relevant Faculty Dean. The results for any one module are confidential to this group of individuals.

Aggregate reports are provided as follows:

Role	Aggregate level	Course/programme	Department	Faculty	Institutional
Individual Lecturer	✓				
Head of Dept	✓		✓		
Dean	✓		✓	✓	✓
Course Director	✓				
Head of Division/Service ³	✓		✓	✓	✓
ULTAC				✓	✓
FLTAC				✓	
Quality Committee	✓		✓	✓	✓
Academic Council	✓		✓	✓	✓
Executive Committee	✓		✓	✓	✓

³ Where analysis of aggregate data indicates information for a particular service.



There are occasions when aggregate data is required to be shared with external stakeholders such as accreditation bodies, quality review/accreditation panels or similar. Designated system administrators can access the raw data to manage the survey process and reporting.

Q27 How are the survey results accessed and how are they used?

Access to results will be provided via the instructor portal and will be determined by role, i.e. HoD, Faculty Dean etc. *(Please see Q25 for instructions on accessing your module feedback report on the evasys instructor portal).*

Survey results may be used for reporting purposes at programme, department, faculty or university level. Examples of such reports include the summary institutional-level report [produced by the QSU](#), the Executive Committee report and reports that individual departments may wish to include in, for example, their quality review self-assessment report.

Q28 I am not the module leader but I do teach on the module and wish to access the TRUST-EM survey feedback reports. Who do I contact?

Contact the module leader. Even if you are an 'Instructor Manually Added' on Brightspace, you will not be able to access the results on the evasys instructor portal; only the module leader as listed on SI when the TRUST-EM survey is launched can access the results. Module leaders are requested to share the report with any additional faculty who may also be involved in the delivery of the module.

Q29 I am a module leader and I want to give another lecturer who teaches on the module access to the TRUST-EM survey feedback reports. How do I do this?

Please share the results with any colleagues who may also be involved in the delivery of the module as appropriate. Whilst only the module leader that is listed on SI when the survey is launched can access the reports on the evasys instructor portal, s/he can download/export a copy of the results from the instructor portal and share with colleagues.

Q30 I'm a module leader whose results are disappointing. Although I'm only one of several faculty delivering the module, the results are linked to my name. Is this fair?

The TRUST-EM results are sent to the module leader in their capacity as an administrative contact point for the module. It is not valid for any party to automatically assume that the student feedback reflects one way or the other on the module leader. The exact involvement of the module leader will be understood locally by the team delivering the module and by the HoD.



Q31 I'm a module leader whose TRUST-EM results were poor, due to facilities issues not under my control, yet the disappointing results are linked to my name. Is this fair?

The TRUST-EM questions are designed to capture feedback on the student learning experience within a module as a whole, rather than with module delivery in isolation. It is not valid for any party to interpret feedback on elements of the module that are outside the control of the lecturer as reflecting on the lecturer. HoDs are requested to pass on feedback pertaining to such aspects (e.g. scheduling, facilities, resource issues etc.) to the appropriate UL unit.

Q32 Any advice for module leaders on interpreting and following up on TRUST-EM results?

TRUST-EM results for a module should not be considered as an end point but rather as a starting point in terms of reflecting upon, evaluating and enhancing the quality of a module.

When interpreting the results, the absolute number of respondents and the percentage response rate achieved should be considered. Of course, it would be unsafe to assume that a handful of responses could be considered a reliable indicator of overall student satisfaction levels within a large class. However, it would be equally inappropriate to automatically dismiss survey feedback on the basis of a low response rate. As outlined in Q17 above, you can share reflections on the feedback received with the students enrolled on the module. Whatever the response rate/respondent numbers recorded, following up with students can only help clarify their feedback and, in turn, allow you to respond to that feedback. You might also find it useful to talk to your HoD or a trusted colleague, or to contact [UL's Centre for Transformative Learning \(CTL\)](#) for advice or support.

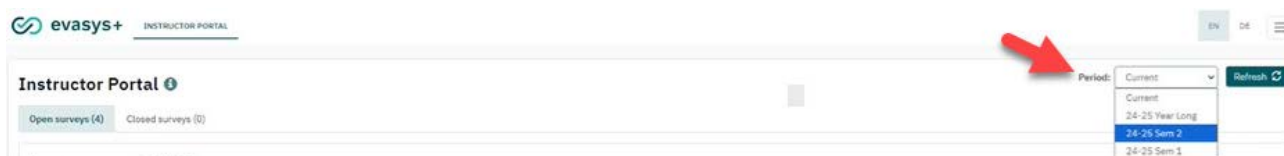
Q33 Any advice for HoDs in relation to interpreting and following up on TRUST-EM results?

With local knowledge of the module's context and delivery, you, as HoD, are best placed to determine what follow-up action is appropriate. Where student feedback suggests a significant degree of dissatisfaction, you should immediately discuss this with the relevant faculty member(s). If faculty themselves have not initiated an exploratory discussion with the students, it is appropriate that you request that they do so. Depending on the circumstances, you may feel it appropriate to explore the issues independently. In consultation with relevant academic staff, you may wish to avail of assistance from UL's CTL, course directors or course boards, the faculty Dean or the faculty Assistant Dean Academic Affairs. Finally, you are asked to pass on TRUST-EM feedback pertaining to aspects of a module outside of your control (e.g. scheduling, facilities, resource issues etc.) to the appropriate UL unit.



Q34 How do I access historical TRUST-EM feedback reports for my modules?

Your instructor portal allows you to view and download current and historical data for your module(s). At the top right-hand-side corner of your evasys instructor portal homepage, there is a 'Period' dropdown menu, which allows you to access current and historical survey data.



Q35 What about Data Protection and GDPR?

All data is processed in accordance with the University's [Data Protection Policy](#) and our [Student Privacy Notice](#).

[Further information on Data Protection at UL](#)

Q36 Can I include TRUST-EM feedback reports as part of my CV, academic portfolio or promotion application?

Yes, you may include TRUST-EM survey data in material such as your CV, portfolio or progression application to illustrate how student feedback directed reflection and positive change.



Appendix A – TRUST-EM Survey

Module Theme

1. The module objectives are clear

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

2. The module is well organised

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

3. The learning outcomes for the module are achievable.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

4. This module is relevant to my overall programme of study.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied



Learning Environment and Resources Theme

1. The study materials were useful in helping me to learn.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

2. Classroom Facilities are appropriate [note this may be lab, work learning environment etc.]

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

Student Engagement Theme

1. I have worked hard to succeed in this module.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

2. I submitted all necessary coursework on time.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

3. I did all I could to contribute to my learning within this module.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

4. I attended most or all the required contact hours for this module (both online and on-campus)

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

Overall Experience Theme

1. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience on this module.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

2. I have learned a lot during this module.

- 1= Very dissatisfied
- 2= Dissatisfied
- 3= Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4= Somewhat Satisfied
- 5= Satisfied
- 6= Very satisfied

3. What worked well in this module? (open question)

4. What could be improved? (open question)



Revision History

Rev. no.	Date	Approved by	Details of changes
1	20 th March 2025	Director of Quality	Initial release document