



UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK

O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H

# Exit survey: Frequently Asked Questions for Students

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# Exit survey Frequently Asked Questions for Students - Contents

## General Questions about the UL Student Exit Survey 3

Q1	What is the exit survey? .....	3
Q2	What is the purpose of the exit survey? .....	3
Q3	What questions are asked in the survey? .....	3
Q4	What is the QSU's role in the exit survey.....	3
Q5	Are such exit surveys undertaken in other third-level institutions? .....	4
Q6	Are all students surveyed? .....	4
Q7	How do you decide on what students to invite to participate in the survey?.....	4
Q8	How many student invitations are sent for the exit survey annually? .....	4
Q9	Are research postgraduate students surveyed? .....	4
Q10	How will students be invited to participate in the exit survey? .....	4
Q11	Will I get a reminder to complete the survey? .....	4
Q12	When is the exit survey launched each year?.....	5
Q13	When does the exit survey close each year? .....	5
Q14	Why is the exit survey launched in March and closed in September? .....	5
Q15	I have ideas to improve the exit survey. Who do I talk to? .....	5
Q16	Will the exit survey process be reviewed?.....	5
	Analysis .....	5
Q17	What cohort of students does the exit survey refer to?.....	5
Q18	How is the data analysed? .....	5
Q19	How is the percentage satisfaction / "aggregate agree score" calculated? .....	6
Q20	Why is commentary "cleansed"/redacted?.....	6
Q21	Is commentary "cleansing" / redaction standard practice? .....	6
	Reporting .....	6
Q22	What is the minimum response threshold for reporting?.....	6
Q23	Are the exit survey results published? .....	7
Q24	What about Data Protection and GDPR? .....	7
Q25	Who has access to my responses? .....	7
Q26	What happens to the survey results? .....	7
Q27	Who sees the results and are they confidential? .....	7
Q28	I am a final year student that has not received an email to participate in the exit survey. What can I do? .....	8
Q29	I have completed the survey and I am worried that my responses will be linked to my name. Are my responses anonymous?.....	8
Q30	I don't want to take the survey, what can I do? Can I opt-out? .....	8
Q31	I am a student that is progressing to another programme (e.g. masters, degree programme) in UL next year; I am not leaving UL. Why am I asked to complete an exit survey? .....	8
Q32	I am a student that is undertaking a programme at UL, but will not be graduating from UL. Why am I receiving the exit survey? .....	9
Q33	I completed the exit survey last year when I graduated from my previous programme, why am I being asked to complete the exit survey again?.....	9
Q34	Where can I find out more about what personal data the university holds on me?.....	9
	Appendix A – Exit Survey instrument.....	10
	Revision History .....	16

## General Questions about the UL Student Exit Survey

### Q1 What is the exit survey?

The exit survey is an online student satisfaction survey, based on the UK's National Student Survey (NSS). The survey is circulated on an annual basis to all students registered on taught programmes that are expected to graduate in the current academic year. It is designed to provide graduating students with the opportunity to provide commentary and meaningful feedback on both their course and the broader university supports. The specific questions included in the survey are given at the end of this document.

### Q2 What is the purpose of the exit survey?

The exit survey provides feedback from students outlining what they liked about their time at UL and what they think could be improved. This feedback is aimed at course directors, course boards, heads of departments<sup>1</sup>, faculty deans, heads of support divisions and affiliates to assure and enhance the quality of a course and the broader university supports. The questions focus on the course as whole. At an institutional level, the use of a systematic exit survey helps us meet national and international quality obligations, and aggregate data can serve as a useful starting point for discussions during institutional, faculty and departmental quality reviews.

### Q3 What questions are asked in the survey?

This survey gives students the opportunity to reflect on their time at UL and give feedback on their unique student experiences. In addition to their overall satisfaction with UL and their course, students are asked how satisfied they are with each of the following areas:

- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment and Feedback
- Academic Support
- Course Organisation and Management
- Learning Resources
- Personal Development
- Work Placements

“Appendix A – Exit Survey instrument” lists all of the questions asked in the exit survey.

### Q4 What is the QSU's role in the exit survey

The QSU is responsible solely for administering the survey instrument on behalf of the university, as well as generating and distributing the resultant exit survey reports. The QSU also publishes institutional level summaries for previous years on its website (<http://www.ul.ie/quality/student-exit-survey>). The QSU has no role in follow-up actions, which are a matter for individual course directors, course boards, heads of department

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<sup>1</sup> In these FAQs, reference to departments includes schools and reference to heads of department includes heads of school.

and/or the academic line management system, as appropriate.

**Q5 Are such exit surveys undertaken in other third-level institutions?**

Yes. Systematic surveys designed to gather student opinion on courses and teaching are a growing feature of university life, both nationally and internationally.

**Q6 Are all students surveyed?**

Only final year students that are due to graduate in the academic year that the exit survey is running are surveyed. The survey only includes students registered on taught programmes. Research postgraduate students are not included in this survey; these are surveyed by the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.

**Q7 How do you decide on what students to invite to participate in the survey?**

Student Academic Administration provide the Quality Support Unit with a “prospective graduate list” of students that are due to graduate in the relevant academic year (taught programmes only). This list is used to generate the list of student invitations to participate in the exit survey. In any given semester, this typically equates to approximately 5,000 students (a combination of both bachelor’s and non-bachelor’s) receiving invitations to participate in the survey.

**Q8 How many student invitations are sent for the exit survey annually?**

In any given semester, approximately 5,000 students (a combination of both bachelor’s and non-bachelor’s) receive invitations to participate in the survey. The “prospective graduate list” that Student Academic Administration provide to the Quality Support Unit is used to identify the appropriate students to include.

**Q9 Are research postgraduate students surveyed?**

No, research postgraduate students are not included in this survey; these are surveyed by the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.

**Q10 How will students be invited to participate in the exit survey?**

Students will receive a personalised email from [exitsurvey@ul.ie](mailto:exitsurvey@ul.ie) to the UL student email account, asking them to participate in the UL Exit Survey. The unique link for each student to complete the survey will be included in this email, along with some information in relation to the exit survey and a list of FAQs.

**Q11 Will I get a reminder to complete the survey?**

The survey tool is set up to send out an automated reminder email only to those who have not completed the survey by a certain date. A course director may also request to have a “targeted” reminder sent to their class. This may be useful in cases where e.g. students are being invited on campus to meet with external examiners, or in cases where the course director would like to encourage students to complete the survey and would like them to have easy access to a survey invitation.

**Q12 When is the exit survey launched each year?**

The exit survey is launched in the spring semester annually, usually around week 7 (mid-March).

**Q13 When does the exit survey close each year?**

The exit survey usually closes in mid-September. This gives students the opportunity to complete the exit survey at any stage before the September graduation and a few weeks after it. Also, some student e.g. students on non-bachelor's programmes that are one year long to complete the survey closer to the end of their studies.

**Q14 Why is the exit survey launched in March and closed in September?**

The exit survey has been running in UL since 2009. This timeframe is aimed to suit the majority of students that will be graduating in the academic year. Students that are not due to complete their studies until late in the year are encouraged to complete the survey as late as possible in the year. From our experience, some student prefer the opportunity to give feedback when they have completed all aspects of their programme, including final exams and even after they have graduated. A closing date of mid-September facilitates students that wish to complete the survey after graduation.

**Q15 I have ideas to improve the exit survey. Who do I talk to?**

Please send your suggestions to [exit\\_survey@ul.ie](mailto:exit_survey@ul.ie).

**Q16 Will the exit survey process be reviewed?**

As process owner, instigation of a review will be at the behest of the VPAA&SE.

## Analysis

**Q17 What cohort of students does the exit survey refer to?**

The exit survey year refers to the graduating academic year of the student. E.g. Exit survey 2018 refers to the students that are due to graduate in the academic year 2017/8.

**Q18 How is the data analysed?**

In the first instance, the data is anonymised and no student name is ever linked to the data provided in standard reports. The quantitative data is analysed in Excel using prescribed reporting templates. The Quality Support Unit (QSU) reviews qualitative commentary from surveys as part of the standard survey reporting process. Some commentary may be redacted or anonymised as deemed necessary prior to standard report distribution. The following standard reports are then generated and circulated as listed below:

Report type	Circulation
University level report	Executive Committee / Academic Council
Institutional summary for the web	Public / online
Department reports	HoD and faculty dean

Programme reports	Course director/board and HoD
Support Department reports	Head of unit and line leader

**Q19 How is the percentage satisfaction / “aggregate agree score” calculated?**

The "aggregate agree score", as used in the NSS, is the sum of the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses, divided by the total number of valid responses for each question. The number of valid responses is the total number of responses less the "n/a" (not applicable) responses. A sample calculation is given below:

Let’s say that 100 students respond to a question with the following response distribution:

strongly agree	50
agree	20
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	15
n/a	5

The "aggregate agree score" or percentage satisfaction is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{sum of strongly agree and agree}}{\text{Total-n/a}} = \frac{(50+20)}{(100-5)} = 74\%$$

**Q20 Why is commentary “cleansed”/redacted?**

The Quality Support Unit (QSU) reviews qualitative commentary from surveys as part of the standard survey reporting process. Some commentary may be redacted or anonymised as deemed necessary prior to standard report distribution, in accordance with the process outlined in the *Process for Redacting Qualitative Responses in QSU Surveys* document. The aim of redaction or anonymization of standard reports is to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the survey as a quality assurance and enhancement instrument by preventing the publication of potentially false negative statements in relation to individuals. Profanities are also removed during this process.

**Q21 Is commentary “cleansing” / redaction standard practice?**

Yes, both the UK’s NSS (on which the exit survey is based) and ISSE (Irish Survey of Student Engagement) have policies of anonymising and cleansing commentary prior to releasing the data to institutions.

## Reporting

**Q22 What is the minimum response threshold for reporting?**

The minimum response threshold is *at least ten responses and at least 20% response rate*. In cases where this minimum response rate is not met, the standard report that is generated for the programme/department is a “comment only” report. This report does not contain any graphs, but contains any comments made by students.

**Q23 Are the exit survey results published?**

An institutional summary report is published online annually on the QSU website (<http://www.ul.ie/quality/student-exit-survey>). See Q18 and Q25 for further information in relation to the circulation of reports.

**Q24 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 is available at: [www.ul.ie/dataprotection](http://www.ul.ie/dataprotection).

**Q25 Who has access to my responses?**

The survey is administered by the university's Quality Support Unit (QSU). Only QSU staff can access the submitted survey results and can, under exceptional circumstances, unmask the identity of an individual respondent. This is done only if the Director of Quality deems it necessary to follow up on a serious issue relating to, for example, student welfare. When the survey is complete, the QSU compiles the responses into a series of standard reports for broader circulation and follow-up action (see Q25 *What happens to the survey results?* below). These standard reports are fully anonymised and no student name is ever linked to the data provided in these reports.

**Q26 What happens to the survey results?**

Once the survey closes, QSU staff download the results into different standard reports. These standard reports are fully anonymised and student names are not linked to these reports. The following reports are generated:

- An overall aggregate report is provided to UL senior management (including the president, vice presidents and deans).
- A public report is published on the [Student Surveys](#) page of the QSU website.
- Heads of department receive detailed reports relevant to all the programmes run by their department.
- Course directors receive detailed reports relevant to the specific programme they manage.
- Reports are generated for heads of support divisions/units based on commentary made by students.

The survey results are then discussed at university, department and course board level with a view to improving the student experience.

**Q27 Who sees the results and are they confidential?**

The results for any one programme are made available to (a) the course director (b) the relevant HoD (c) the relevant faculty dean and (d) members of Executive Committee as part of an aggregate report. The course director is expected to share the results with the course board. The results for any one programme are confidential to this group of individuals.

The aggregate department results are made available to (a) the relevant HoD and (b) the

relevant faculty dean. These aggregate department results are also included in the report to Executive Committee.

Exit 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 (available on the [Exit surveys](#) page of the QSU website), the report prepared for Executive Committee and reports that individual departments may wish to include in, for example, their quality review self-assessment report.

**Q28 I am a final year student that has not received an email to participate in the exit survey. What can I do?**

Please contact [exitsurvey@ul.ie](mailto:exitsurvey@ul.ie) with you student ID number and programme of study and we will investigate this for you.

**Q29 I have completed the survey and I am worried that my responses will be linked to my name. Are my responses anonymous?**

The survey is completely confidential. All standard reports are fully anonymised and student names are never linked to these reports. Only QSU staff can access the submitted survey results and can, under exceptional circumstances, unmask the identity of an individual respondent. This is done only if the Director of Quality deems it necessary to follow up on a serious issue relating to, for example, student welfare. When the survey is complete, the QSU compiles the responses into a series of standard reports for broader circulation and follow-up action (see Q18 *What happens to the survey results?*). These standard reports are fully anonymised and no student name is ever linked to the data provided in these reports.

**Q30 I don't want to take the survey, what can I do? Can I opt-out?**

The exit survey is one of the university's key quality assurance mechanisms and is a very important tool for improving the services we offer. Participation in the survey is voluntary and you can choose not to complete this survey. Under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) the university must have a lawful basis for processing personal data. The lawful basis used to process data for the exit survey is the provision of a contract. An opt-out option is not permitted for operations and core services in the provision of a contract. Please refer to section 3.1.1 of the [University of Limerick Student Privacy Notice](#) (Under 3.1.1). This Notice may also be viewed at [www.ul.ie/dataprotection](http://www.ul.ie/dataprotection)

**Q31 I am a student that is progressing to another programme (e.g. masters, degree programme) in UL next year; I am not leaving UL. Why am I asked to complete an exit survey?**

All students that are registered in their final year of the programme will be invited to participate in the exit survey. This list of "prospective graduates" is provided to us by Student Academic Administration. Even though the title of the survey is "exit survey", we understand that some students will be staying in UL and progressing with their studies. It is important for students to be given the opportunity to provide feedback on each programme that they have studied, and we encourage you to complete the survey for your current programme. If you progress with your studies, you will also be invited to participate in a further exit survey when you are in the final year of your next programme.

**Q32 I am a student that is undertaking a programme at UL, but will not be graduating from UL. Why am I receiving the exit survey?**

All students that are registered in their final year of the programme will be invited to participate in the exit survey. This list of “prospective graduates” is provided to us by Student Academic Administration. Some programmes such as professional development programmes, may not “graduate students”. If you are undertaking a programme that does “not graduate” students, we would still encourage you to complete the survey for your current programme as your feedback will be sent to the relevant course director.

**Q33 I completed the exit survey last year when I graduated from my previous programme, why am I being asked to complete the exit survey again?**

The exit survey relates to the course that you are due to graduate from. If you undertake a further programme, you will be asked to give feedback on it in the year that you are due to graduate from that programme.

**Q34 Where can I find out more about what personal data the university holds on me?**

All data is processed in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. Further information on this policy, the student privacy policy and GDPR are available at: [www.ul.ie/dataprotection](http://www.ul.ie/dataprotection). Queries regarding data protection may be directed to the University's Data Protection Officer at [dataprotection@ul.ie](mailto:dataprotection@ul.ie). The UL Records Management policy is available at [www.ul.ie/recordsmanagement](http://www.ul.ie/recordsmanagement).

Q1. What is the name of the course you are about to complete?

Q2. Which of the following best describes your entry route to this course?

(You may choose more than one option if applicable)

q2.1 = Student who entered through CAO

q2.2 = Mature student

q2.3 = Transferee from another UL programme

q2.4 = Transferee from another 3rd level institution

q2.5 = Overseas student studying abroad

q2.6 = Other

Q3. Course Delivery

q3.1 Learning materials made available on my course have enhanced my learning.

q3.2 The range and balance of approaches to teaching helped me to learn.

q3.3 The delivery of my course has been stimulating.

q3.4 My learning has benefited from the modules that are informed by current research.

q3.5 Practical activities on my course have helped me to learn.

1 = Definitely agree

2 = Mostly agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Mostly disagree

5 = Definitely disagree

6 = N/A

Q4. Course Workload

q4.1 The workload on my course is manageable.

q4.2 This course does not apply unnecessary pressure on me as a student.

q4.3 The volume of work on my course means that I can always complete it to my satisfaction.

q4.4 I am generally given enough time to understand the things I have to learn.

1 = Definitely agree

2 = Mostly agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Mostly disagree

5 = Definitely disagree

6 = N/A

Q5. Course Content and Structure

q5.1 All of the compulsory modules are relevant to my course.

q5.2 There is an appropriate range of options to choose from on my course.

q5.3 The modules of my course form a coherent integrated whole.

1 = Definitely agree

- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

#### Q6. Academic Support

q6.1 I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.

q6.2 I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.

q6.3 Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

#### Q7. Course Organisation and Management

q7.1 The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.

q7.2 Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.

q7.3 The course is well organised and is running smoothly.

q7.4 Communication between Course Director and students has been efficient and effective.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

#### Q8. Course Teaching Standard

q8.1 Staff are good at explaining things.

q8.2 Staff have made the subject interesting.

q8.3 Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.

q8.4 The course is intellectually stimulating.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

#### Q9. Personal Development

q9.1 The course has helped me present myself with confidence.

q9.2 My communication skills have improved.

q9.3 As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.

1 = Definitely agree

2 = Mostly agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Mostly disagree

5 = Definitely disagree

6 = N/A

Q10. Intellectual Motivation

q10.1 I found the course motivating.

q10.2 The course has stimulated my interest in the field of study.

q10.3 The course has stimulated my enthusiasm for further learning.

1 = Definitely agree

2 = Mostly agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Mostly disagree

5 = Definitely disagree

6 = N/A

Q11. Are there any improvements UL should be making in relation to teaching and course management?

Q12. Student Assessment

q12.1 Teaching staff test what I have understood rather than what I have memorised.

q12.2 Assessment methods employed on my course require an in-depth understanding of the course content.

q12.3 Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.

q12.4 The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.

q12.5 The marking scheme for each module was published at the start of the semester.

1 = Definitely agree

2 = Mostly agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Mostly disagree

5 = Definitely disagree

6 = N/A

Q13. Feedback to Students

q13.1 Feedback on my work has been prompt.

q13.2 I have received detailed comments on my work.

q13.3 Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand.

1 = Definitely agree

2 = Mostly agree

- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q14. Feedback from Students

q14.1 I had adequate opportunities to provide feedback on all elements of my course.

q14.2 My feedback on the course has been listened to and valued.

q14.3 It is clear to me how students' comments on the course have been acted upon.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q15. Are there any improvements UL should be making in relation to assessment and feedback?

Q16. Learning resources

q16.1 The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.

q16.2 I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.

q16.3 I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q17. Welfare Resources and Facilities

q17.1 There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs.

q17.2 When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q18. Work Placements (Coop, Clinical Placement, TP etc)

q18.1 I received sufficient support and advice from my institution about the organisation of my placements.

- q18.2 My placements were valuable in helping my learning.
- q18.3 My placements helped me to develop my skills in relation to my course.
- q18.4 My placements helped me to develop my general life skills.
- q18.5 My placements were a worthwhile use of my time.
- q18.6 The taught part of my course was good preparation for my placements.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

#### Q19. Careers

- q19.1 As a result of my course, I believe that I have improved my career prospects.
- q19.2 Good advice is available for making career choices.
- q19.3 Good advice is available on further study opportunities.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q20. Are there any improvements UL should be making in relation to resources, placements and careers?

#### Q21. Social Opportunities

- q21.1 I have had plenty of opportunities to interact socially with other students.
- q21.2 I am satisfied with the range of clubs and societies on offer.
- q21.3 I am satisfied with the range of entertainment and social events on offer.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

#### Q22. The Physical Environment

- q22.1 Security has been satisfactory when attending classes.
- q22.2 My institution provides an appropriate environment in which to learn.
- q22.3 My institution provides an appropriate environment for personal development.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree

- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q23. Learning Community

- q23.1 I feel part of a group of students committed to learning.
- q23.2 I have been able to explore academic interests with other students.
- q23.3 I have learned to explore ideas confidently.
- q23.4 Within my course, I feel my suggestions and ideas are valued.
- q23.5 I feel part of an academic community in this university.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q24. Are there any improvements UL should be making in relation to the university environment?

Q25. Overall satisfaction

- q25.1 I am satisfied with the quality of the course.
- q25.2 I am satisfied with the campus facilities.
- q25.3 I am satisfied that I chose to study at UL.

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Mostly disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree
- 6 = N/A

Q26. Looking back on the UL experience, are there any particularly positive aspects you would like to highlight?

Q27. Looking back on the UL experience, are there any particularly negative aspects you would like to highlight?

Q28. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your time at UL?

## Revision History

Rev. no.	Date	Approved by	Details of changes
1	22 June 2018	Director of Quality	Initial release document
2	25 February	Quality Research Officer	Updated with relevant FAQs for software change and GDPR