Review of the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System

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Executive Summary

This UCD consultation on its current Student Feedback on Modules System underpins a commitment to ensuring that student feedback is used to inform quality teaching and learning and promote self-reflection on learning by both students and faculty. Student feedback and satisfaction are complex concepts which have different meanings in different contexts and applications. Meeting the needs of students with increasingly diverse backgrounds, expectations and levels of preparedness (Northedge, 2003), is now a major preoccupation of most institutions in higher education and it is expected that this will be achieved through quality teaching.

Student satisfaction

Institution-level satisfaction is one of the instruments which are normally used to collect students' views about the total learning experience at the institution. Haque et al. (2011) discovered a number of independent factors germane to university services which can impact student satisfaction. They include quality of teaching, student research facilities, library book collections and services, campus infrastructure, canteen facilities, space for group discussions, sport programs, ICT facilities. Ashill et al. (2006) discovered a number of new determinants of student satisfaction such as motivation, learning style, instructor knowledge, feedback, student interaction and course curriculum. Alves and Raposo (2007) found that institutional image, student expectations, word of mouth and student loyalty were also related to student satisfaction.

Student evaluation of teaching

Students evaluating teaching (SET) is another instrument of student satisfaction feedback which has a long tradition in universities. There are a very wide range of validated survey instruments that are used in the higher education context. These include, for example; the Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment (Cashin & Perrin, 1978); the Student Evaluation of Education Quality (SEEQ) (Marsh, 1982); the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) (Ramsden, 1991); the Student Instructional Report (Centra, 1998); the Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness (Burdsal & Bardo, 1986); the Students' Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Rating Scale (Toland & De Ayala, 2005); the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (Ginns, Prosser, & Barrie, 2007); the Teaching Proficiency Item Pool (Barnes et al., 2008); the SET37 (Mortelmans & Spooren, 2009); the Student Feedback Questionnaire (Kember et al., 2002); and the Exemplary Teacher Course Questionnaire (Kember & Leung, 2008). These instruments comprise items that are primarily focused on what the teacher does, and are teacher-centred. (Tucker, 2015). The majority of scholars have developed instruments for the purpose of creating a general score representing the effectiveness of a teacher. Kember and Leung (2009) developed a teaching and learning environment questionnaire (called the Student Engagement Questionnaire) to gather students' perceptions of their graduate capabilities and learning environment. Instruments largely focus on rating aspects of the teaching experience. The term student ratings appears to be preferred in the American and European literature as evaluation implies 'worth', whereas rating implies the 'need for data interpretation' (Benton & Cashin, 2012). There is a vast literature about students' rating systems and an abundance of research into student evaluation of teaching effectiveness, dimensions of teaching effectiveness, issues of reliability, validity, student and teacher bias and usefulness of feedback instruments (Alderman et al., 2012; Benton & Cashin, 2012; Hirschberg, et al., 2011; Perry & Smart, 2007; Richardson, 2005; Spooren, 2012).

Validity of SET Instruments

A number of studies have focused on the validity of SETs. Greenwald (1997) reviewed the literature on SETs over the period 1975-1995, and found that the majority of findings within this set of literature argued for their validity. Well-constructed and tested SETs appear to consistently measure specific components of teaching practice (Centra, 1993; Marsh, 1984; Aleamoni, 1999) and are viewed as a valid method for indicating teaching effectiveness (McKeachie, 1997; Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008). A number of studies have focused on grade inflation resulting from the pursuit of higher evaluations (Wilson, 1998; Simpson & Siguaw, 2000). According to Aleamoni (1999), there was no significant relationship in the majority of studies. Heckert, et. al. (2006) found that higher evaluations on SETs were given to more demanding instructors in which students' expectations of the difficulty of the course were met.

SET and improving practice

Benton & Cashin (2012) summarised numerous studies over the last 50 years, concluding that the perpetuated misconceptions about SETs were not supported by the research but made the utilisation of SETs to improve practice more difficult. The debate on fitness for purpose of surveys of student perceptions of faculty teaching and learning has been the focus of much debate and controversy (Davies et al., 2010). This debate is largely a result of the way student evaluations are used (Marsh, 2007). Despite the longstanding practice of student evaluations, faculty continue to express negative views about SETs, related to a perceived lack of control of the process, a concern over the effort to maintain useful response rates and disquiet over the use of results for tenure and promotion (Rienties, 2014).

SET and faculty performance

There are multiple stakeholders in the evaluation of teaching and learning; students, academics, university executive, employers, parents, accreditation bodies, and government quality assurance agencies (Knapper, 2001). The establishment of external quality assurance bodies, and an emerging requirement for teaching to become a more publicly visible activity, has seen a shift to using evaluations systems for summative evaluation (Tucker, 2012), for accountability purposes, including the allocation of funding, for promotions and teaching awards (Arthur, 2009; Barrie, Ginns, & Symons, 2008; Chalmers, 2007; Hendry & Dean, 2002; Leckey & Neill, 2001; Massy & French, 2001; Meade & Woodhouse, 2000; Nilsson & Wahlén, 2000; Scott & Hawke, 2003; Shah & Nair, 2012). In most US universities, student evaluation is used when considering whether or not faculty are eligible for promotion or tenure (Williams, 2013), or as guiding factors for staff development (Brennan & Williams, 2004). More recently, (2018) some US universities have started reviewing the use of student evaluations as part of the promotion system. In 2018, an arbitration case between Ryerson University in Toronto and its faculty association concluded after 15 years with a ruling that course surveys can no longer be used to measure teaching effectiveness for promotion or tenure (THE, 2018).

Higher Education Institutions generally provide departmental/divisional and/or institutional means on each faculty SETs, normally with graphical information and detailed manuals (or access to them) describing the evaluation tool and guides for interpreting results (Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008). Access to these norm-based reference results is provided to department chairs, deans, and institutional researchers charged with some aspect of faculty evaluation. Providing faculty with norm-referenced results is not the most effective method of enabling faculty to use their SETs for reflective and formative purposes themselves. Concerns of overreliance on SETs for summative decisions by administrators have been voiced over a long period of time (Wilson, 1998), and have been a continuing concern for faculty and researchers (Schmelkin, Spencer, & Gellman, 1997; Zabaleta, 2007; Berk, 2013). The value of SETs as formative assessments and benefits to faculty pedagogy can be detracted by their simultaneous use as summative measurements (Astin & Antonio, 2012).

Using SETs appropriately

Astin and Antonio (2012) argue that one SET instrument should not be used for both formative and summative evaluations, but rather, that two sets of ratings should be used, one for faculty consumption for formative purposes and one for institution consumption, with students being told which rating is being used for which purpose. Beran, Violato, & Kline (2007) stress the importance of multiple sources of information in evaluating teaching effectiveness. Harvey (2003) described these sources as obtaining students' views, such as informal discussion or conversations, formal qualitative sessions, focus groups, facilitated discussions, representatives or consultative committees. Keane and Mac Labhrainn (2005) concluded that the method chosen will be subject to the purposes, levels and context of the evaluation.

Student response rates

A number of factors can greatly influence the response rate of student feedback surveys: survey length, timing, mode of survey (paper-based or online), engagement of students, confidentiality, use of multiple contacts and offering incentives. In order to improve the value of student evaluations, response rate should be relatively high (Nair et al., 2008).

Timing is a key determinant of student response rates. If feedback is sought at the end of a programme, then the feedback cannot help existing students. Powney and Hall (1998) suggest that if surveys are issued too early during a course, then students are not sufficiently versed in the topic in order to offer meaningful input. However, Narasimhan (2001) argues that earlier feedback could be helpful to the current students by contributing immediate benefits. Brennan and Williams (2004) argue that formal feedback in the middle of a course may not be necessary if there are sufficient opportunities for informal feedback exchange between students and faculty. The paradox of timing in student feedback results from the need to achieve high response rates, without decreasing the reliability of the responses (Dinh Thanh, 2015).

Using incentives

Offering incentives has been promoted as a way of increasing response rates. Porter and Whitcomb (2003) argue that while the effectiveness of using financial incentives is not clear, not using them may badly affect the outcome of student surveys. Nair et al. (2008) emphasised the need for institutions to act on student feedback, thus creating a climate of trust. Morton (2002) argues that students expect a lot in return for what they contribute and will not offer their ideas and views unless they receive a direct benefit to themselves.

Anonymity

Online surveys and email reminders are viewed as cost effective within the HEI context. The processing of statistics is also faster within online questionnaires (Gaddis, 1998). It is also easier for participants to fill out surveys in their free time (Sax et al., 2003). In terms of participant identity, online questionnaires are still suffering from the issue of anonymity (Dinh Thanh, 2015). Students are more eager to join a survey provided that their identity is secured (Brennan and Williams, 2004). Universities may need to be able to assure the anonymity of the whole process in order to trigger the confidence of students when they give their views (Dinh Thanh, 2015).

Student commentary

Numerous studies have demonstrated that student comments provide rich data about their teaching and learning experience (Alhija & Fresko, 2009; Richardson, 2005). There is a tendency for high achievers, females, mature students, domestic students and full-time students to submit written commentary (Alhija & Fresko, 2009). The literature also suggests that students tend to write more positive comments than negative comments (Zimmaro et al., 2006). Positive comments tend to be more general in nature, while negative comments tend to be more specific (Alhija & Fresko, 2009). Students tend to focus on the teaching competence and interpersonal skills of the instructor, as well as course content, organisation, and general quality (Alhija & Fresko, 2009; Oliver et al., 2007; Zimmaro et al., 2006; Ory et al., 1980). Various authors (Centra, 1993; Lewis, 2001; Svinicki, 2001) have argued that written comments influence faculty who prefer commentary, as opposed to statistical ratings. Comments from students tend to be more specific and suggest practical approaches which would contribute to their learning. Repeated patterns in student commentary provides important insights into the areas of concern for them (Alhija & Fresko, 2009).

Closing the feedback loop

The publication of student feedback is an issue that has generated much debate. Powney and Hall (1998) and Brennan and Williams (2004) found that students did not hear anything after submitting their evaluations. Rowley (2003) argues that student feedback should be published through a range of appropriate channels.

Student feedback in UCD

UCD engages in a wide range of activities to promote student feedback, as evidenced by the increased student participation rate in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement 13% (2016) to 23.3% (2019).

UCD ISSE Student Satisfaction Scores

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Irish Survey of Student Engagement: % Who rate their entire experience at UCD as Good/Excellent	82.3%	84.6%	86.1%	85.6%

UCD was represented on the Irish Survey of Student Engagement for Graduate Research Students (ISSE PGR) Working Group and had significant input to the survey design. For the pilot survey in 2018, 39% of research students at UCD completed the survey, compared to 31.1% nationally in institutions with cohorts >250. An institutional analysis of this data was conducted in 2019 and distributed across the university.

The Student Experience Mapping Project was initiated in 2018 to learn about the student experience on arrival, living as a student, learning as a student and completing their journey in UCD. Further projects will explore the ways in which students shape their UCD environment to their individual needs and how UCD connects students to the information and supports they need when they look for it. Other projects will focus on the concept of a trusted person for students within UCD and examine the variations in learning experiences and inconsistencies so that these can be minimised.

As part of an ongoing approach to using student feedback, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of ISSE results was conducted in 2016 and 2017 and these reports focused on each individual College in the university. The reports, generated from an analysis of ISSE data, were presented to College Executives, Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning, the Deans/Associate Deans Forum and to the Teaching and Learning Unit for review and action. In addition to this work, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the student feedback system was conducted in 2017.

The quantitative analysis focused on the response rates over the period 2012-13 to 2016-17 and the qualitative analysis explored students' open commentary. The number of modules surveyed in that period increased from 1,554 to 2,100; the number of module invites rose from 100,000 to 111,000 and the average number of requests per student was 4.5. Students generally submitted feedback on an average of 3.5 modules. The response rates for semester 1 was higher than semester 2.

The overall response rate indicates a drop from 30% in 2012/13 to 22.5% in 2016/17. Response rates tended to be higher at the end of Semester 1. The open-ended questions' response rate remained stable over the period. When the response rates were analysed by College during the period, it emerged that rates ranged from 18-33%.

The qualitative analysis of student comments over a five-year period from 2012-2017 from the Student Feedback on Modules System was conducted focusing on 10,000 individual student comments, using a sample from each year. The findings were assessed at College and university level and presented at the UCD Teaching and Learning Symposium 2018. A number of themes emerged from this analysis, including the importance of ensuring timely feedback to students on assignments. In part to address the student feedback issue, the 2019/20 Academic Regulations include a specific regulation requiring feedback to be given to students within 20 days of submission of each piece of assessed work.

The Working Group to Review the current Student Feedback on Modules System was established in 2018 by the Registrar and Deputy President. It is clear from existing data that response rates are declining and the current system should be reviewed. The consultation with students, faculty and staff yielded a range of responses about the current system and offered suggestions about developing new approaches to feedback.

Purpose and role of the current system

There is a lack of clarity around the purpose and role of the current system among students and faculty. Students were not clear about the purpose of the feedback survey. They were of the view that it was used to monitor lecturers and that the university was obliged to have a feedback system in place.

Faculty were also unclear about the purpose of the system; the majority felt that the role of the current system was to satisfy institutional requirements, improve module content, improve the quality of teaching and improve the students' learning experience. Half of faculty who responded to the survey were of the view that the system was there to provide evidence for promotion. Female and early career faculty members held that view. It was not clear to faculty whether the current feedback system was for staff evaluation or for getting student feedback. Faculty wanted a feedback system that would allow them to consider patterns over time and to improve teaching. Equally, it was important to faculty that a feedback system should facilitate students in their own reflections on their learning.

Reasons for giving feedback

Students offered a number of reasons for giving feedback. Some gave feedback in order to improve the experience of future students, or if they felt aggrieved by a negative assessment experience and if they wanted a grade change. Other students were reluctant to give feedback as they did not view it as of direct benefit to their own learning; some did not want their feedback to benefit other students; some were of the view that their feedback would not be taken on board and they did not know what the outcome of their feedback would be. The majority of students viewed the process as very time-consuming.

Importance of receiving feedback

Receiving feedback from students was very important for faculty, especially early career faculty members. In general, faculty were of the view that students who gave feedback took the process seriously. The low response rates within the feedback system was a cause of serious concern for faculty. Many had tried different approaches to increase student response rates, including reminding students in class, sending emails to students, using messages through the VLE, time in class to complete the survey and reminders through School and programme communication. The majority of faculty felt that the current system should be changed, particularly with reference to student response rates. Equally, faculty were of the view that students who had not attended lecturers/classes should not be in a position to offer feedback on a module.

Multiple approaches to getting student feedback

It also emerged from the review that multiple approaches to getting student feedback existed in the university. Some of these approaches were viewed positively by students, others less so. Faculty indicated that they used a range of feedback approaches. The vast majority used conversations with students both inside and outside the classroom context, in-class paper surveys, the VLE, feedback from class representatives, student performance on assessment and mid-semester surveys.

Access to student feedback

Students were not clear about who sees their feedback and faculty also expressed the view that there should be more clarity around who has access to feedback. Female faculty members were more in agreement with sharing feedback with Heads of School to demonstrate enhancements, compared to their male colleagues.

Using student feedback

Students were not clear about how their feedback was used. Faculty used feedback in a variety of ways, such as reviewing notes and module materials, reviewing assessment, reviewing student workload, changing approaches to giving feedback to students and changing teaching methods.

Informing students about changes as a result of feedback

Less than half of faculty informed students about changes made as a result of their feedback. Female faculty members were more inclined to inform students about changes made as a result of feedback, compared to their male colleagues. Those who commented were of the view that such changes would not be to the benefit of existing students.

Redesign current system

A general consensus emerged about the need to redesign the current system. Students recommended a number of enhancements to make the survey more attractive and compatible with mobile devices. The majority of faculty wanted the system to support reflection on teaching.

Communications plan

In general, students were negative about the current communication process used to promote the survey. This was linked to the fact that they felt overwhelmed by the number of surveys that they received from UCD about a range of issues. They complained about the frequency of the requests to complete the survey and the timing of these requests, especially around the examination period. Faculty also recommended the development of a communications plan around time frames within which to complete the survey.

Development of guidelines for completing the survey

Students stressed the need for having clear guidelines about completing the survey. Faculty also concurred with this view, especially in relation to the nature of student commentary and the need for guidance around that. It was suggested that students should be obligated to give feedback in a constructive manner.

Anonymity

Students expressed some unease about the anonymity of the survey; they were not clear that it was anonymous. This was an issue for some faculty members, who believed that anonymity allowed students to make unacceptable comments.

Incentivisation

Both students and faculty agreed that some form of incentivisation should be introduced to increase engagement with the feedback system. Students suggested awarding additional marks and offering vouchers and additional UPoints on their current student cards.

Review current questions

A range of issues emerged with reference to the current survey questions. Students felt the questions were too generic and somewhat repetitive. They also found some questions difficult to answer, especially with reference to learning outcomes and the way in which teaching contributed to their learning. Some students were unclear about what to say in the open text sections of the survey, when trying to relate it to their own learning. Faculty members also felt that students found it difficult to answer the questions that the survey asked.

The majority of faculty members were of the view that the open-ended questions provided the most valuable feedback. The standard Likert scale and additional questions were viewed as offering useful feedback by half of faculty who responded to the survey. Female faculty members were more satisfied with the option of including additional questions, compared to their male colleagues.

Faculty offered a range of views about the standard questions, especially with reference to the way the current Likert scales are calculated. The Likert data was viewed by some as unhelpful and it was not clear what a Head of School could do with the data received. It was also difficult to make comparisons at College level and across the wider university. During the workshops, faculty were generally agreed that the phrasing of the questions was not helpful and did not explore the module issues in-depth. Faculty in general were unhappy with the quality of the reports produced by the system.

Areas for inclusion in a feedback system

Both students and faculty offered a number of perspectives about areas that they would like to see included in a feedback system. Students were clear that they did not wish to provide feedback on individual lecturers or their characteristics but felt engagement, communication and approachability were important traits that contributed to their learning experience. Faculty generally agreed that areas such as lecture planning and organisation, lecturer communication, lecturer approachability, student engagement with material, students taking responsibility for their own learning and the helpfulness of the lecturer in supporting student learning should be included as in any feedback system.

Less agreement existed about the inclusion of areas such as lecturer knowledge of the subject, lecturer ability to make the subject interesting, lecturer enthusiasm and student attendance. Faculty also expressed the view that there were few opportunities for students to reflect on their engagement or learning in the current system.

Closing the feedback loop

Students were very clear that they wanted to be informed about how their feedback was used when it was received. Faculty were not generally in favour of sharing feedback results with students; half of those who responded to the survey were supportive of sharing changes made as a result of student feedback. Faculty and staff who participated in the workshops were of the view that the university did not have a policy on closing the feedback loop to students. Female faculty members and early career faculty members were more inclined to inform students about changes made. Female faculty members were more in favour of this than their male colleagues. Faculty and staff who participated in the workshops expressed strong agreement that any feedback system should have the capacity to feed-back and feed forward and that existing students should benefit from feedback, as well as incoming students.

Developing new approaches

As students had many different lecturers within one module, they felt that they did not have an opportunity to provide constructive feedback on individual lecturers, tutors or teaching assistants. Students were keen to have opportunities to report directly on their module learning experience, to include issues such as assessment and workload. They also wanted to have the opportunity to provide mid-semester feedback on modules.

Students expressed the view that Schools should develop a set of questions that were module-specific so that feedback would be meaningful to each School. While they were in favour of a programme-based approach, they could see a number of challenges associated with giving feedback in this way.

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The majority of faculty were of the view that the feedback system should reference those who teach, as opposed to module coordinators. Faculty who attended the workshops favoured the introduction of a teaching survey provided such an approach was adequately resourced. Those who expressed reservations focused on issues such as gaming the system and the potential for it to develop into a rating scale, and they did not like the title 'teaching survey'.

Faculty in the workshops expressed the view that students should have the opportunity to flag issues as they arise mid-way through a module to allow for immediate interventions. Some faculty saw value in having a programme evaluation but did not consider a survey to be the best methodology as programmes were very contextually based.

01

Introduction

1.1   Background to the review

In March 2018, the Registrar and Deputy President, Professor Mark Rogers established a Working Group under the Chair Professor Marie Clarke, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, to review the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System under the direction of the University Management Team Education Group. The terms of reference of the Working Group were:

- To consider how to ensure high response rates from students and value of information to faculty and programme teams
- To encourage a focus on programmes within the student feedback on modules
- To reduce the burden on students in the overall number of survey responses required
- To provide a mechanism where there is a formal response to the feedback provided in a simple process that informs students of how the feedback has been used to improve teaching, module and programme design
- To ensure that the revised system is efficient and gives value to both student and faculty
- To maximise its interaction with and suitability for integration in the faculty development workspace, P4G and faculty promotion system
- To integrate the capture of relevant information through current processes such as curriculum update and module descriptor development and the VLE
- To consider how the data obtained should be reported locally and at a university level
- To consider the introduction of a teaching survey separate from the module feedback and how it might be operationalised
- To consider what success will look like and how it might be measured in the context of the broader university and national agenda including possible use of and impact on ISSE
- To make recommendations on the operational oversight of any system put in place.

The findings from this review will be used to inform policy in this area and the development of a revised student feedback system.

1.2   Student Evaluation Systems

Student evaluation systems have a long tradition in higher education internationally (Knapper, 2001). The higher education sector has collected enormous amounts of data, but there are gaps in the literature on how student feedback is used to inform quality teaching and learning in higher education (Nair & Bennett, 2012). A key argument for using student evaluations for improving learning is that it should enhance self-reflection on learning by both teachers and students (Freeman & Dobbins, 2011). Faculty may disregard student feedback and make few, if any, changes to their teaching practice if they think that student feedback is not useful; if there are negative attitudes toward the instrument used (validity and reliability); if there is a lack of detail in the data to identify problems; a lack of support by the institution in relation to teaching and learning; and/or, an absence of incentive for improving teaching and learning practices (Palmer, 2012; Wong & Moni, 2013).

Student feedback and satisfaction have become complex concepts, which have different meanings in different contexts and applications. Elliott and Healy (2001) described student satisfaction as a short-term attitude based on a valuation of experience with the educational services provided. Student satisfaction is also defined as student's evaluation of the services provided by universities and colleges (Wiers-Jenssen et al., 2002) and may also be affected after graduation. The view of students during and after the study period may vary greatly (Dinh Thanh, 2015). Institution-level satisfaction is one of the instruments which institutions normally use to collect views of their students towards the total learning experience at the institution. Haque et al. (2011) found a number of independent factors germane to university services which can impact student satisfaction. They include quality of teaching, student research facilities, library book collections and services, campus infrastructure, canteen facilities, space for group discussions, sport programs, ICT facilities. Ashill et al. (2006) discovered a number of new determinants of student satisfaction such as motivation, learning style, instructor knowledge, feedback, student interaction and course curriculum. Alves and Raposo (2007) argue that institutional image, student expectations, word of mouth, student loyalty, etc. were also related to student satisfaction.

1.3 Students evaluating teaching

Students evaluating teaching (SET) is another instrument of student satisfaction feedback. Reference to students evaluating their teachers has been made in ancient times in Antioch in the time of Socrates (Marsh, 1987) and in medieval history where students responded to teaching through the stamping of their feet or by walking out of the class (Knapper, 2001). Student evaluation of teaching (SET) commenced in North American universities in the mid-1920s, (Apollonia & Abrami, 1997; Mason et al., 2002; Algozzine et al., 2004). Harvard introduced its first student evaluation of teaching in 1925. Student evaluation systems have been utilised in higher education world-wide since the 1950s (Knapper, 2001). In the 1960s, the evaluation of teaching was driven by students who wanted to evaluate their teachers and requirements by authorities for public accountability in countries such as the United States and United Kingdom (Ory, 2000). In the 1970s, these countries obtained information from students to assist in the development of schools and universities and from the 1980s, the demand for evaluation systems emerged from administrative needs, such as performance monitoring and to inform quality improvement (Ory, 2000). Meeting the different needs of students with increasingly diverse backgrounds, expectations and levels of preparedness (Northedge, 2003), is now a major preoccupation of most institutions in higher education and it is expected that this will be achieved through quality teaching.

There are multiple stakeholders in the evaluation of teaching and learning; students, academics, university executive, employers, parents, accreditation bodies, and government quality assurance agencies (Knapper, 2001). The establishment of external quality assurance bodies, and an emerging requirement for teaching to become a more publicly visible activity, has seen a shift to using evaluations systems for summative evaluation (Tucker, 2012), for accountability purposes including the allocation of funding, for promotions and teaching awards (Arthur, 2009; Barrie, Ginns, & Symons, 2008; Chalmers, 2007; Hendry & Dean, 2002; Leckey & Neill, 2001; Massy & French, 2001; Meade & Woodhouse, 2000; Nilsson & Wahlén, 2000; Scott & Hawke, 2003; Shah & Nair, 2012). In most US universities, student evaluation is used when considering whether or not faculty are eligible for promotion or tenure (Williams, 2013), or as guiding factors for staff development (Brennan & Williams, 2004). More recently (2018) some US universities have started reviewing the use of student evaluations as part of the promotion system. In 2018, an arbitration case between Ryerson University in Toronto and its faculty association concluded after 15 years with a ruling that course surveys can no longer be used to measure teaching effectiveness for promotion or tenure (THE, 2018). Many approaches have been used to get student feedback. The most commonly used in universities is some variation of SET.

1.3.1 SET Instruments
There are a very wide range of validated survey instruments that are used in the higher education context. These include for example; the Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment (Cashin & Perrin, 1978); the Student Evaluation of Education Quality (SEEQ) (Marsh, 1982); the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) (Ramsden, 1991); the Student Instructional Report (Centra, 1998); the Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness (Burdsal & Bardo, 1986); the Students' Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Rating Scale (Toland & De Ayala, 2005); the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (Ginns, Prosser, & Barrie, 2007); the Teaching Proficiency Item Pool (Barnes et al., 2008); the SET37 (Mortelmans & Spooren, 2009); the Student Feedback Questionnaire (Kember et al., 2002); and the Exemplary Teacher Course Questionnaire (Kember & Leung, 2008). These instruments comprise items that are primarily focused on what the teacher does, that is teacher-centred (Tucker, 2015). The majority of scholars have developed instruments for the purpose of creating a general score, representing the effectiveness of a teacher. Kember and Leung (2009) developed a teaching and learning environment questionnaire (called the Student Engagement Questionnaire) to gather students' perceptions of their graduate capabilities and learning environment. Instruments largely focus on 'rating' aspects of the teaching experience. The term 'student ratings' appears to be preferred in the American and European literature as 'evaluation' implies 'worth', whereas rating implies the 'need for data interpretation' (Benton & Cashin, 2012).

1.3.2 Validity of SETs
There is a vast literature about students' rating systems and an abundance of research into student evaluation of teaching effectiveness, dimensions of teaching effectiveness, issues of reliability, validity, student and teacher bias and usefulness of feedback instruments (Alderman et al., 2012; Benton & Cashin, 2012; Hirschberg et al., 2011; Perry & Smart, 2007; Richardson, 2005; Spooren, 2012).

A number of studies have focused on the validity of SETs. Greenwald (1997) reviewed the literature on SETs over the period 1975-1995, and discovered that the majority of findings within this set of literature argued for their validity. Well-constructed and tested SETs appear to consistently measure specific components of teaching practice (Centra, 1993; Marsh, 1984; Aleamoni, 1999) and are viewed as a valid method for indicating teaching effectiveness (McKeachie, 1997; Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008). A number of studies have focused on grade inflation resulting from the pursuit of higher evaluations (Wilson, 1998; Simpson & Siguaw, 2000). According to Aleamoni (1999), there was no significant relationship in the majority of studies. Heckert, et. al. (2006) found that higher evaluations on SETs were given to more demanding instructors in which students' expectations of the difficulty of the course were met. Benton & Cashin (2012) summarised numerous studies over the last 50 years, concluding that the perpetuated misconceptions about SETs were not supported by the research but made the utilisation of SETs to improve practice more difficult. The debate on fitness for purpose of surveys of student perceptions of faculty teaching and learning has been the focus of much debate and controversy (Davies et al., 2010). This debate is largely a result of the way student evaluations are used (Marsh, 2007). Despite the longstanding practice of student evaluations, faculty continue to express negative views about SETs, related to a perceived lack of control of the process, a concern over the effort to maintain useful response rates and disquiet over the use of results for tenure and promotion (Rienties, 2014).

1.3.3 Ways in which SETs are used

Higher Education Institutions generally provide departmental/divisional and/or institutional means on each faculty SETs, normally with graphical information and detailed manuals (or access to them) describing the evaluation tool and guides for interpreting results (Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008). Access to these norm-based reference results is provided to Department chairs, deans, and institutional researchers charged with some aspect of faculty evaluation. Providing faculty with norm-referenced results is not the most effective method of enabling faculty to use their SETs for reflective and formative purposes themselves. Concerns of overreliance on SETs for summative decisions by administrators have been voiced over a long period of time (Wilson, 1998), and have been a continuing concern for faculty and researchers (Schmelkin, Spencer, & Gellman, 1997; Zabaleta, 2007; Berk, 2013). The value of SETs as formative assessments and benefits to faculty pedagogy can be detracted by their simultaneous use as summative measurements (Astin & Antonio, 2012).

Penny and Coe (2004) concluded that SETs have considerable utility formatively, especially with proper consultation of feedback. Kember et al. (2008) stressed the importance of instructor reflection on SET feedback. They found that self-reflection ranged from non-reflection, whereby results are viewed but ignored, to reflection, when instructors relate the results to their experience. This is critical to facilitate faculty making changes and developing practice.

Astin and Antonio (2012) argue that one SET instrument should not be used for both formative and summative evaluations, but rather, that two sets of ratings should be used, one for faculty consumption for formative purposes and one for institution consumption, with students being told which rating is being used for which purpose. Beran, Violato, & Kline (2007) stress the importance of multiple sources of information in evaluating teaching effectiveness. Harvey (2003) described these sources as obtaining students' views, such as informal discussion or conversations, formal qualitative sessions, focus groups, facilitated discussions, representatives or consultative committees. Keane and Mac Labhrainn (2005) concluded that the method chosen will be subject to the purposes, levels and context of the evaluation.

1.4 Student feedback and response rates

A number of factors can greatly influence the response rate of student feedback survey: survey length, timing, mode of survey (paper-based or online), engagement of students, confidentiality, use of multiple contacts and offering incentives. In order to improve the value of student evaluations, response rate should be relatively high (Nair et al., 2008).

Timing is a key determinant of student response rates. If feedback is sought at the end of a programme, then the feedback cannot help existing students. Powney and Hall (1998) suggest that if surveys are issued too early during a course, then students are not sufficiently versed in the topic in order to offer meaningful input. However, Narasimhan (2001) argues that earlier feedback could be helpful to current students by contributing immediate benefits. Brennan and Williams (2004) argue that formal feedback in the middle of a course may not be necessary if there are sufficient opportunities for informal feedback exchange between students and faculty. The paradox of timing in student feedback results from the need to achieve high response rates without decreasing the reliability of the responses (Dinh Thanh, 2015).

Offering incentives has been promoted as a way of increasing response rates. Porter and Whitcomb (2003) argue that while the effectiveness of using financial incentives is not clear, not using them may badly affect the outcome of student surveys. Nair et al. (2008) emphasised the need for institutions to act on student feedback, thus creating a climate of trust. Morton (2002) argues that students expect a lot in return for what they contribute and will not offer their ideas and views unless they receive a direct benefit to themselves.

Online surveys and email reminders are viewed as cost effective within the HEI context. The processing of statistics is also faster within online questionnaires (Gaddis, 1998). It is also easier for participants to fill out surveys in their free time (Sax et al., 2003). In terms of participant identity, online questionnaires still suffer from the issue of anonymity (Dinh Thanh, 2015). Students are more eager to join a survey provided that their identity is secured (Brennan and Williams, 2004). Universities may need to be able to assure the anonymity of the whole process in order to trigger the confidence of students when they give their views (Dinh Thanh, 2015).

The publication of student feedback is an issue that has generated much debate. Powney and Hall (1998) and Brennan and Williams (2004) found that students did not hear anything after submitting their evaluations. Rowley (2003) argues that student feedback should be published through a range of appropriate channels.

1.5   Student commentaries

Numerous studies have demonstrated that student comments provide rich data about their teaching and learning experience (Alhija & Fresko, 2009; Richardson, 2005). The frequency of written student comments tends to be variable (Alhija & Fresko, 2009). Some studies (Theall & Franklin, 1991), reported low response rates, with just 10-12% of students writing comments, while in other studies the proportion of students writing comments was 40-50% (Hardy, 2003; Zimmaro et al., 2006). Contextual factors impact on the rate of student commenting; it tends to be higher when it is completed online and when the form of evaluation is short. There is a tendency for high achievers, females, mature students, domestic students and full-time students to submit written commentary (Alhija & Fresko, 2009). The literature also suggests that students tend to write more positive comments than negative comments (Zimmaro et al., 2006). Positive comments tend to be more general in nature, while negative comments tend to be more specific (Alhija & Fresko, 2009). Students tend to focus on teaching competences and interpersonal skills of the instructor, as well as course content, organisation, and general quality (Alhija & Fresko, 2009; Oliver et al., 2007; Zimmaro et al., 2006; Ory et al., 1980). Various authors (Centra, 1993; Lewis, 2001; Svinicki, 2001) have argued that written comments influence faculty, who prefer commentary as opposed to statistical ratings. Comments from students tend to be more specific and suggest practical approaches which would contribute to their learning. Repeated patterns in student commentary provide important insights into the areas of concern for them (Alhija & Fresko, 2009).

1.6 Student feedback systems in other Irish Universities

Irish universities engage in a diverse range of approaches with reference to student feedback systems. Table 1 presents the data.

Table 1: Student Evaluation Systems in Irish Universities

Institution	Timing	Frequency	Title	Platform / VLE	Responsible
UCD	End of Semester	Every semester	Student Feedback on Modules System	Student Portal & Info-Hub Reporting	Institutional Research
Trinity	At discretion of school	Every semester	Undergraduate Module Evaluation	Blackboard	Faculty/School/Course level
NUIG	End of semester	Not mandatory	End of module questionnaire	Blackboard / paper based	Lecturer level
NUIM	End of semester	Every semester	Student evaluation of learning experience	Moodle / paper-based	IRO, VP Strategy & Quality's office
DCU	End of semester	Every semester	SSOT Student Survey of Teaching	Moodle	Teaching Enhancement Unit
UCC	End of semester	One semester per year	University-wide Module Survey	Blackboard	Office VP Teaching and Learning
UL	Weeks 5 & 6	One semester per year	Module Satisfaction Survey	Mark-class	Quality Support Unit

Source: Quality Support Unit, University of Limerick.

1.7 Student Feedback on Modules System in UCD

The Student Feedback on Modules System was first piloted in UCD in Semester 1 2009/10. The system was introduced across the university in Semester 1 2010/11. The online questionnaire contains seven core questions and individual module coordinators can add up to six additional questions. The questions are on a 1-5 scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Students also have the opportunity to provide open-ended commentary on two questions: identify up to three aspects of the module that most helped your learning; and suggest up to three changes to the module that would enhance your learning. Feedback reports from each module are provided online; quantitative results are available to both module coordinator and Head of School, with qualitative results available only to the module coordinator.

A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the student feedback system was conducted in 2017 (Clarke & McGinn, 2017). The quantitative analysis focused on the response rates over the period 2012-13 to 2016-17 and the qualitative analysis explored students open commentary. The number of modules surveyed in that period increased, from 1,554 to 2,100; the number of module invites rose from 100,000 to 111,000 and the average number of requests per student was 4.5. Students generally submitted feedback on an average of 3.5 modules. The response rates for semester 1 was higher than semester 2. Table 2 illustrates the response rates during the period.

Table 2: Student response rates in period 2012-13/2016-17.

	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	SEM 1	SEM 2	SEM 1	SEM 2	SEM 1	SEM 2	SEM 1	SEM 2	SEM 1	SEM 2
No. of Modules Surveyed	1,554	1,875	1,618	1,793	1,698	1,836	1,990	2,004	2,049	2,100
No. of Modules with Optional Questions	447	375	267	333	253	234	345	255	385	328
% Modules with Optional Questions	28.8	20.0	16.5	18.6	14.9	12.7	17.3	12.7	18.8	15.6
No. of Module Invites	99,957	99,720	102,871	99,976	105,003	99,570	113,048	105,560	119,104	111,014
No. of Responses	30,147	24,476	30,614	25,020	29,997	24,298	28,793	25,082	31,348	24,976
Average No. of Module Requests per Student	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.6	4.5
Average No. of Module Responses per Responding Student	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.3
Overall Response Rate	30.2	24.5	29.8	25.0	28.6	24.4	25.5	23.8	26.3	22.5
Open-ended Questions										
No. Responses to Q6a	21,012	16,579	21,004	16,930	21,151	16,609	19,756	17,269	20,817	16,895
No. Responses to Q6b	19,310	15,366	19,329	15,840	19,245	15,475	18,303	15,874	19,238	15,772
% Responses to Q6a	69.7	67.7	68.6	67.7	70.5	68.4	68.6	68.9	66.4	67.6
% Responses to Q6b	64.1	62.8	63.1	63.3	64.2	63.7	63.6	63.3	61.4	63.1

The overall response rate indicates a drop from 30% in 2012/13 to 22.5% in 2016/17. Response rates tended to be higher at the end of Semester 1. The open-ended questions response rate remained stable over the period. When the response rates were analysed by College during the period, it emerged that rates ranged from 18-33%. Figure 1 illustrates the data.
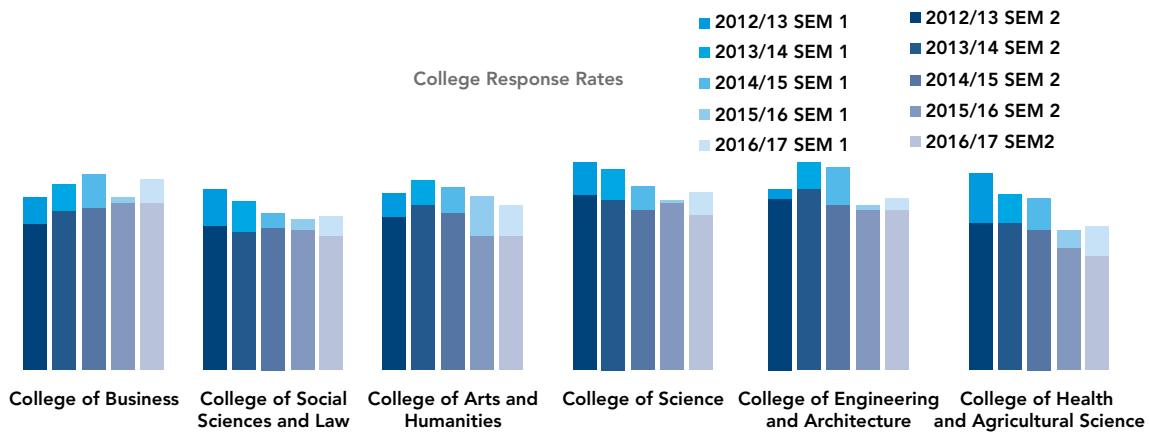
Figure 1 College response rates.

An interesting pattern emerged with reference to response rates by module size. Larger modules demonstrated lower response rates. Figure 2 illustrates the data.
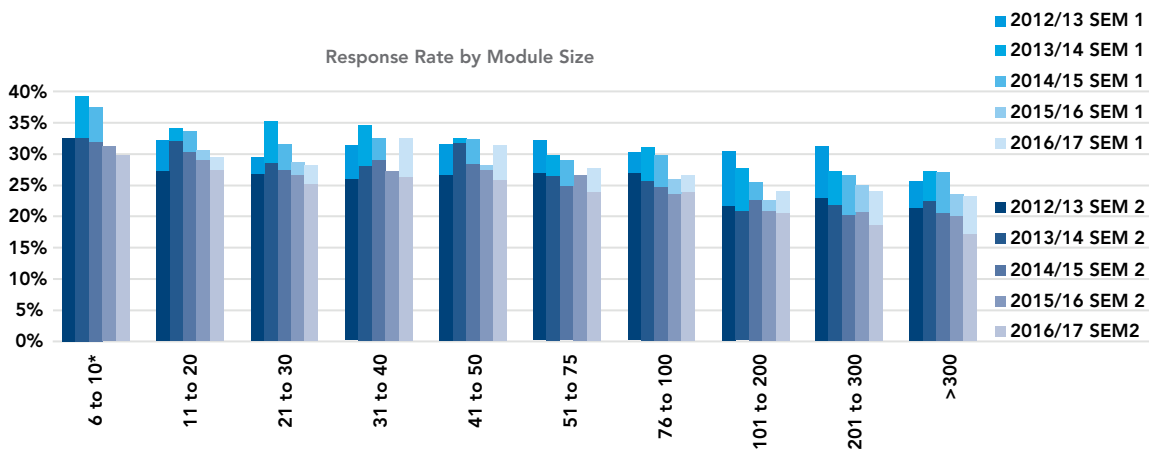
Figure 2 Response rate by module size.

The response rates to each core question is presented in Table 3.

Mean Scores	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	SEM1	SEM2	SEM1	SEM2	SEM1	SEM2	SEM1	SEM2	SEM1	SEM2
Q1: I have a better understanding of the subject after completing this module	4.11	4.12	4.12	4.13	4.12	4.17	4.14	4.17	4.17	4.18
Q2: The assessments to date were relevant to the work of the module	4.11	4.10	4.12	4.10	4.12	4.14	4.13	4.15	4.16	4.16
Q3: I achieved the learning outcomes for this module	3.92	3.95	3.95	3.96	3.94	4.00	3.96	4.00	3.99	4.02
Q4: The teaching on this module supported my learning	3.96	3.96	3.96	3.95	3.95	3.99	3.97	3.99	4.00	4.02
Q5: Overall I was satisfied with this module	3.88	3.90	3.90	3.89	3.90	3.94	3.92	3.95	3.95	3.97

Table 3. Mean Scores for each question in the period 2012/13 to 2016/17

It emerged from the analysis that questions 3, 4 and 5 elicited mixed responses, compared to the first two questions on the feedback survey.

The qualitative analysis examined responses to the two open-ended questions on the survey. That data was analysed using a sample data set comprising 5,000 questionnaire returns containing 10,000 comments from students over a five-year period, 2012/13 to 2016/17. A random sample of 1,000 returns were selected from each of the five years which included all schools and colleges in UCD. Of the 5,000 selected questionnaires, returns were completed by 4,291 students. No student completed more than four questionnaires.

The analysis revealed that half of the feedback came from first year students, a quarter from second year students and less than 10% from third year students. The majority of respondents who wrote commentary were female. Student commentary focused on repeated themes over the period; lectures, assessment, faculty and, to a lesser degree, module organisation (Clarke & McGinn, 2017). These issues were replicated across each College and each year for the period under review. The areas that students highlighted as making a positive contribution to their learning were a mirror image of the areas that required further improvement.

Students were very positive in their commentary about tutorials, and acknowledged the importance of recommended readings, virtual learning and the practical application of lecture material. They commented positively when lectures were entertaining and interesting. Students emphasised the need for more tutorials and indicated that better use could be made of the VLE. They also suggested that lectures could be structured better; this included scheduling, smaller lecture sizes and more interactive teaching methods. Students commented on the poor quality of lecture notes, which had too little or too much detail, notes that were not explained in the lecture and notes that were not delivered on time to students. Some commentary focused on the lack of connection between lecture materials and assessment practices (Clarke & McGinn, 2017).

Students commented positively on their assessment experience when they perceived it to be well structured and fair. They were very positive about continuous assessment and recognised the importance of good preparation for examinations and assignments. When examination preparation was built into their modules, this was viewed as contributing positively to their learning. They emphasised the importance of clear links between module content, assessment and timely feedback.

When students commented less favourably about the assessment process, they focused on examination weightings, the need for more continuous assessment and additional support in preparation for examinations and assignments. Being unable to make the connections between module content and the assessment process contributed negatively to their learning experiences (Clarke & McGinn, 2017).

Students viewed faculty as playing a very important role in enhancing their learning. Being helpful, demonstrating enthusiasm for their subject, encouraging students, being approachable and being supportive were characteristics that students viewed as contributing to their learning. Faculty who created interactive learning experiences and who responded to student queries were rated highly. Students emphasised the need for more support from faculty. They also wanted feedback that would contribute to their learning; some students had received very little feedback, while others had received none. Students also emphasised the importance of good communication skills and wanted faculty to engage them in the learning process. The decline in response rates since the introduction of the system, the issues raised in the student commentary, in conjunction with the increased participation of students in ISSE, coupled with the introduction of the new UCD Regulations (2019), indicate that a review of the current system is timely.

1.8   Methodology

The Working Group on Reviewing the Student Feedback on Modules System convened its first meeting in March 2018 to oversee the various dimensions of the consultation process and discuss emergent issues. Professor Beatrice Tucker, Curtin University, was invited to act as an international adviser to the group.

The Working Group decided to conduct a wide-ranging consultation, using a mixed methods approach to include focus groups with students, a survey for faculty and a series of theme oriented workshops to which all faculty were invited to attend. Staff from UCD ALL also participated in these workshops. Participants at all stages were assured of confidentiality throughout each stage of the process.

The Working Group hosted three presentations, including two from Professor Tucker during January 2019 when she visited UCD. During her visit, she reviewed the current UCD system and provided an overview of the evaluation system which she had designed at Curtin University. She also gave a seminar on student evaluation and feedback systems, which was organised by UCD Teaching and Learning and was very well attended by faculty and staff. The Working Group also received a presentation from SPARK which had been commissioned to run the student consultations. The Chair of the Working Group updated the University Management Team Education Group on progress at each meeting of this group in the period 2018-19. The Working Group reviewed this final report on the review process prior to its submission to the University Management Team Education Group and the University Management Team for consideration.

1.8.1 Student consultation

SPARK was engaged to conduct the student consultations using a qualitative methodology. UCD supplied SPARK with the questions and a sample screenshot of a typical survey used in the feedback system, which was used as a stimulus during the workshops. The workshops also used projective techniques. Students were asked to consider three questions:

- What are their perceptions of the feedback system?
- What are the key reasons to use it or not to engage with it?
- How can UCD improve the system?

20 midi focus groups were convened. The workshops were of 1-hour duration, with 105 participants in total, with undergraduates at Stages 1, 2, 3, 4, graduate taught and graduate research students from each College in the university present. UCD sent out an email to all students requesting their participation. Students were also recruited through Students and Access and Lifelong Learning. The mix of groups included students who had completed the feedback surveys and those who had not. The focus groups contained a mix of genders, as well as international students and students with additional needs. Students were offered an incentive to participate; a €20 One4All voucher was given to each participant. The focus groups took place between January 29 and February 6, 2019, in the Students' Union as it was viewed as a safe space and were conducted by moderators from SPARK. Participants were provided with a guarantee that all data would be reported in aggregate form only and that no individual would be identified in any report resulting from the study. Some students were unable to attend the student focus groups facilitated by SPARK but submitted separate feedback which formed part of the analysis.

SPARK transcribed the focus groups verbatim. Each transcript was then imported into the MaxQda software system. The two SPARK Moderators and two SPARK coders met for several analysis sessions to develop an initial coding frame. This coding frame was also shared with the UCD team at that point in case any issues arose. It was important that the coders were part of this process and one of the coders was also present at many of the focus groups, so was immersed in the process. The coders coded the same transcript initially and agreed any points of difference alongside the moderators and then proceeded to code the remaining transcripts. The moderators and coders had regular meetings to ensure that the coding process was on track and to agree any additional codes as they emerged during the coding process. SPARK adhere to the MRS Code of Conduct and their research is carried out in line with GDPR guidelines.

1.8.2 Faculty survey

The Faculty Survey was designed with input from all members of the Working Group and the Vice Principals for Teaching and Learning who serve on the University Teaching and Learning Committee.

The finalised survey was divided in four sections: demographic profile; views on the current system; how faculty use the current system; and areas that a feedback system should address. It was sent to each member of faculty through the UCD Targeted Communications System and remained open from April 15 to May 1, 2019.

1.8.3   Survey sample

The SFM staff survey was distributed through a web-based survey tool operated by Qualtrics; see survey at Appendix A. The survey yielded the following results as illustrated in tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Number and percentage of faculty responses across colleges.

College	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Academic Affairs	1%	3
UCD College of Arts and Humanities	15%	60
UCD College of Business	9%	37
UCD College of Engineering and Architecture	8%	34
UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences	30%	120
UCD College of Science	18%	72
UCD College of Social Sciences and Law	19%	76
VP for Global Engagement	1%	3
Grand Total	100%	405

Table 5 illustrates the number and percentage of faculty responses by grade.

Table 5: Number and percentage of faculty responses by grade.

Grade	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Associate Professor	26%	105
Full Professor	10%	41
Lecturer / Assistant Professor	50%	209
Other Teaching Related	6%	23
Professor	8%	32
Grand Total	100%	410

The gender breakdown of respondents is illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Gender of respondents

Gender	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Female	50%	202
Male	49%	198
Other	1%	5
Grand Total	100%	405

The majority of respondents had over ten years experience in UCD. Figure 3 illustrates the data.

Length of Time in UCD
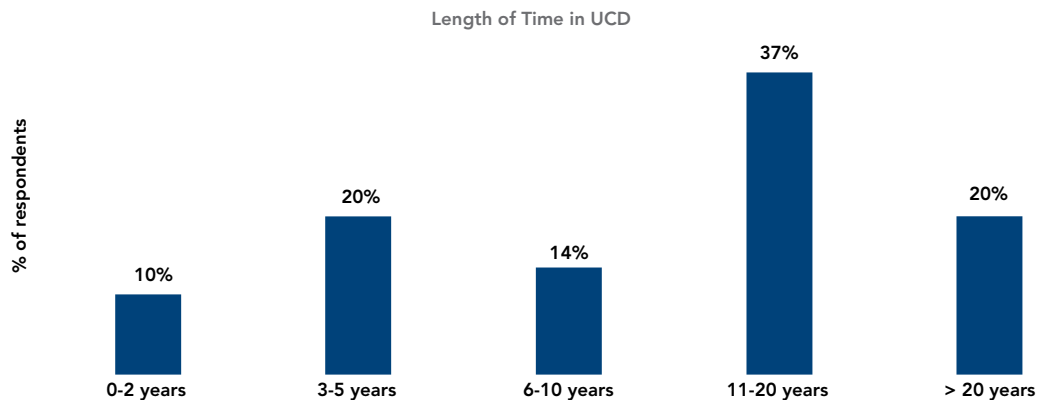
Figure 3 Length of service in UCD

1.8.4 Analysis of survey data

The data was analysed using SPSS V.24. Percentages were reported and in some cases, a chi-squared statistic is quoted when testing the independence between two categorical variables such as gender, college and years of service. Faculty had the opportunity to offer open commentary on a range of issues. Content analysis was used to analyse the commentary (Marvasti, 2004, pp 90-91). This approach facilitates replicable and valid inferences from data in context, for the purpose of analysis, providing insight and representing content and messages (Krippendorff, 1980). This process also facilitated a quantitative analysis of the frequency and prevalence of certain themes, attributing a hierarchy of importance to those most frequently cited. The survey data was downloaded in Excel format. All responses were coded individually by researcher-led, manual, interpretive coding. An inductive approach was taken where categories are derived from the data being analysed (Elo et al, 2008). This allowed the observation of instances and references to be collated into larger descriptive categories (ibid). Table 7 illustrates the data analysis process undertaken.

Table 7: SFM Staff Survey qualitative data analysis method.

Preparation Phase	Organising Phase	Reporting Phase
Download dataset from Qualtrics survey tool	Phase 1: Open coding. Text analysed to create categories	Analysis of categories to identify predominant themes
Decide on unit of analysis - individual response to each of the open-ended questions	Phase 2: Grouping and categorising coded references from Phase 1 into "higher-order headings" to collate broadly similar categories together	Preparing a quantitative representation of the results from the coding phases
Formatting and preparing dataset. Preparing demographic and relevant attribute detail	Phase 3: further grouping categories from Phase 2 into succinct themes relevant to the survey questions	Discussion of findings, drafting of final report
Importing data into NVivo qualitative analysis software		

The dataset was cleaned, formatted and prepared for analysis. Respondent attributes including grade, college, length of service and demographic information were included to allow for reporting. The data was imported into the qualitative analysis software, NVivo.

Three phases of coding were conducted.

Phase 1 coding - Open Coding: manual, researcher-led analysis of all responses. Identified themes and coded individual references to themes.

Phase 2 coding - Grouping: further distilling the references and themes that emerged in the first cycle of coding. Data grouped to reduce the number of overall themes and collapse in to similar 'higher-order' categories' (Elo et al, 2008, p.111) to allow for the identification and description of phenomena.

Phase 3 Coding – Final phase of coding to further distil the categories identified in Phase 2 coding into more succinct categories of relevance to the survey questions.

The final stage of the data analysis involved examining the themes that emerged and identifying the most common themes and categories identified by staff in response to each of the survey questions. The data generated by this analysis was displayed graphically to illustrate the frequency of references and themes.

1.8.5 Faculty and staff consultation process

All faculty were invited to participate in a series of workshops held over a three-day period from April 29 to May 2, 2019. Faculty enrolled on a centralised booking system. In total, 70 faculty and staff participated over the three days. The Faculty Workshops were facilitated by Mr Tony Carey, Director of Strategic Planning, UCD. Faculty were presented with three questions, each to consider and discuss for 20 minutes' duration. Each group nominated a facilitator who reported back to the wider group. The reporting back session lasted 15 minutes per question considered. During the workshop, faculty and staff were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What are your views about the current feedback system? What are the best features and what elements would you get rid of?
2. How would you design a new feedback survey?
   - *What should the objective of the student feedback survey be?*
   - *What do you need from student feedback?*
   - *Please consider response rates, timing, sharing of results.*
3. What are your views on replacing the current system to include:
   - *a programme approach where students would be asked to evaluate their programme at the end of each semester or stage*
   and
   - *a separate teaching only survey to capture the teaching of staff as individual teachers on modules?*

   Please consider the following:
   - *A new specific teaching feedback survey which focuses specifically on the teaching of individual faculty members*
   - *A programme approach evaluated each semester or Stage*
   - *Examine and discuss merits of Curtin model [Appendix 3]*
   - *Any other considerations*

Faculty responses were captured on flip charts and were transcribed verbatim by three transcribers allocated to each group.

The major themes emerging from the staff workshops were identified and categorised for consistency in meaning and context. The themes were iteratively refined using the constant comparison method (Krippendorf, 2004) until a relatively comprehensive set of themes was developed for analysis. This qualitative data was analysed using inductive analysis and constant comparison methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In the process of generating the codes, words or phrases that emerged directly from the transcripts were used in order to stay as close to the original transcripts as possible. Verbatim comments are used to illustrate themes.

1.9 Outline of the report

Chapter 2 presents the findings from the student focus groups. Chapter 3 reports on the findings from the faculty survey and chapter 4 highlights the main themes emerging from the faculty consultation workshops. Chapter 5 reviews the main findings.

02

Students' Perceptions of the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System

2.1   Introduction

Students were asked about their views and their experience of the education environment in UCD; the opportunities available to give feedback; their reasons for engaging and not participating in the student feedback system; and changes that they would like to see with reference to the current system.

2.2   UCD: the education environment

Students offered a range of views about their experience of the education environment in UCD. Many referred to large lectures. The following comments are illustrative:

"When there's a bigger class, there's no importance to an individual. It could be a more interactive session with every individual. I feel the lectures can be improved. I have classes that vary from 200 to 300 students to a 20-student class; there's a big difference. I can see the difference between a big class and a smaller class. I like the smaller classes better. When it comes to a bigger class, I feel it could be improved."

"I really agree with that. It depends on the subject. It's not necessarily the lecturer, it's more like the amount of students that they have. They obviously can't get one-on-one with 200 people."

Students also referred to the competitive environment that they experienced in UCD. For some students, the focus on examinations and performance was quite intense:

"I think compared to other universities in Ireland UCD is very competitive. I find it's very intense, compared to when I talk to my friends that will be in the likes of [-------] or [---------]. I just find the way they talk about it and the way that people talk about exams and stuff here, I find that we have it a lot more intense in UCD than in other universities. Maybe that is just my opinion, but I find here in UCD that people are a lot more competitive with one another."

"Yes, so we go out on clinical placement with [---------], so we go to all the big hospitals like Vincent's or The Mater and since we are UCD students, the standard is expected always to be high and if you do make some kind of a flop, you kind of get poorly judged on that as well in grading."

In relation to their experience of teaching, students expressed a range of views, particularly with reference to having different lecturers during modules:

"I've had guest lecturers and they've always been really interesting, but last semester I had two lecturers doing 12 weeks, and each of them brought in a guest lecturer. So it was four people and I'm like, 'There's 12 weeks. Can you just do them, please?'"

"One issue I do have with the teaching of this module is, most of my modules are constructed in such a way that I can have up to three or four different teachers."

"I have it for the first time this semester and it really irked me. It's really hard to keep a flow – I don't see why it's done."

"I feel like you'll remember a lecturer for a certain thing; they were really good or maybe they were always late, or maybe they were nasty, or maybe they were really positive, or maybe they just weren't memorable. The same thing for demonstrators, the same thing for tutors. Because in the module you may have six or seven different people teaching you, and that's for one module. And then 12 of them."

Some students saw the benefit of having two lecturers:

"We had this one module last year, which was the first time that the lecturer and tutor were the same person and that was the first time that I completely struggled, not having a second person to teach it to you and just go through it in their own way. So I do think for some modules, it's really helpful when it's two different people teaching it."

"I had a lecturer who could not teach for his life, but my tutorial teacher was amazing, and you'd learn three times as much in one hour as you would with the two hours a week with the lecturer."

Students referred to the differences between lecturers; those whom they viewed as helpful and those who were less so:

"Sometimes lecturers will ask: 'Can I do anything to help?', and others just don't seem to care as much. They're like, 'This is the lecture. I stand up here two hours a week, that's it.' Whereas others are like, 'Can I do anything? Do you need tutorials?'"

They felt that lecturers in general wanted to hear student feedback. The following comment illustrates the general view:

"I think they really take things on board. I only know about [--------] anyway, I am class rep for my class. So even if there are things that my class would like changed or whatever, just me talking to my lecturers and the Head of School, they're really, really nice and really supportive. They really want to hear what the students want to say."

Some students expressed the view that as Schools did not promote a culture around feedback, there was no incentive for lecturers to give feedback to students:

"Nobody was giving us test results or assignment results back. So that's a School-level issue if there was no incentive for the lecturers to give us feedback in any timely fashion."

3   Opportunities to give feedback

Students indicated that they had many opportunities to give feedback and reflected on their different experiences. One student referred to a particular approach used by a lecturer:

"We used one, Mintel, which is like a marketing thing. It's very easy, you just get out your phone and pick a few options and get instant results. That was actually for a [---------] module that I did, and the lecturer wants to get feedback, because he was saying the feedback form could sometimes not get great uptake, so he wanted instant feedback there. He just said, 'I think this is the best way to do it, judging on previous years. Unless people are really unhappy with the module, I won't hear from people, so I won't get a representative voice.' He just had seven questions and then you just picked from the options. I think a few of them were like, one to five, 'How would you rate the tutorials?' 'Did this work well?' 'Did you like the group presentations?' Then there was one, 'Would you have any additional comments?' Because you're there, doing it on the spot, you're more likely to do it than the feedback form."

Other students referred to lecturers who sought feedback on completion of a topic:

"One of my lecturers this semester, when he's finished a certain topic, he asks us if we want to write down on a sheet. He gives us a few questions about the module and about his teaching. He asks us if we want to do it and he incorporates that as he's teaching the module. At the end of the lecture, when we've finished a topic, he asks us for some feedback. And then he would know how we are feeling about that topic, so he would know whether we need to do more on it or not."

"I had a couple of lecturers who wanted the feedback and specifically asked us for it, so we had a suggestions box in one of the classes and we just wrote down what we suggested, and then we gave it to them. The ones that seem to want the feedback specifically ask for it on Blackboard or with a suggestion box, rather than waiting for the feedback at the end."

Another student referred to a lecturer who used an assessment-based approach to get feedback:

"I have had a very passionate lecturer though last year who gave out a sheet on the last day for everyone to sign out because we were supposed to have a quiz that was worth 5% of the total. The quiz was just writing your name on the sheet that he collected and then he left a survey for us all to do and he had to leave because he couldn't be there when we were filling it out. I just thought that was a very good way for him to get feedback from us because it was a very good module and he was a very passionate lecturer and really cared about how we did and our learning. We didn't actually have to fill in the survey but everyone was going to because everyone kind of loved him, so they all wanted to give back true feedback because he actually seemed like he wanted to improve, regardless of what the feedback was."

Some students were asked to complete evaluation forms at the beginning and end of their modules:

"I remember for our Foundations of [----------] module, at the start they gave us a form to fill out about, 'What do you think of the subject or how the lectures are going?' And then near the end as well, they also gave us the same form, to see how we did and what you think about the subject at the end. Yes, a paper form. I think it was meant to be anonymous as well. So it was good."

Another student had the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of being part of a project:

"We had, for our [------------------] project, where we used Sparkplus."

Where students had guest lecturers, they were asked to complete forms at the end of each lecture:

"When we have guest lecturers, at the end of the thing they give us a sheet, it's like asking how they did, basically."

Students also referred to School based approaches to getting feedback:

"Either last year or the year before, we had something like TA awards – TAs are Teaching Assistants in my class practicals. That basically gave us photos of each TA and we would then pick who was the best, and we'd give a little reason why. We had something similar for our module coordinators as well. And that was nice because it was really personal. We have personal experiences with most of those people, so we could pick in a much more logical way, or give them better feedback because it was tailored more to the purpose. I think the TA one was done online somewhere, I think it was through the UCD website somewhere. But the module coordinator one was just on paper in class."

Another student commented:

"In my School, every year they have a focus group on the course itself with I think usually final year – I've done it once – I'm not sure exactly, I think they just pick random people. That's actually really useful in terms of the fact that they actually want to know, 'Can we make the course better? Should this module be here?' and there have been changes. We would have done this in second year and we gave feedback on the second year modules, what way it should be structured and you actually realised two years down the line, 'Oh they've changed things around', so in a different semester, the module's gone."

One School had actively encouraged students to complete feedback based on what students perceived to be operational concerns:

"I did a [-----------] module this year, and they told us specifically, 'Don't forget to do it, because the university is trying to cut down some courses or not allow the first years to take the courses' or something like that. And they were like, 'We're really concerned about this, so of course be honest, but just so you know, this is important for us when we are trying to make our case.' So that makes you want to do it, because you know what the effect is."

One student referred to an experience where she understood that in order to get her grade, she had to complete an evaluation:

"We had a PhD lady who was leading our class and…we had to fill out the module feedback: we would not pass the module if we didn't do the feedback. I guess we were like, we wanted to pass the module so we filled it out. I think it was just that you won't get a grade if you don't do it. And she had extended module feedback as well, it wasn't just the usual five questions or whatever they are. You know the way lecturers can add optional questions? It was really long. It took us ages, and then her server was down so we had to do it twice. Everyone was really angry about that."

While students had experienced different approaches in relation to giving feedback, some stated a preference for speaking directly with the lecturer:

"Spoken feedback is kind of the one that's taken the most seriously. So if you go to someone and you physically say to them, 'I'd like if you could change this and this,' they take it more seriously than if you were to write them something, because that they can easily just discard."

One student agreed but was of the view that this approach depended on the lecturer:

"I personally would rather go and see them at the end rather than saying a question out loud. It depends though on the lecturer; it goes down to if they're approachable or not, and if they're willing. There was one instance last year, it was just a general question, I was going to miss a tutorial for an appointment, and she was just, 'Oh, email this person, that's not my problem,' sort of thing."

Some students offered the view that lecturers' office hours did not always suit their own timetabling structures:

"Some of the lecturers' office hours are like 1 to 2 pm on a Wednesday and nobody is going to go then. We all have something on, because we don't get to choose a lot of our modules, so we'll all have the same thing on."

One student commented on the number of email exchanges that were required in order to secure an appointment with a lecturer:

"There should be some time allocated in a way that anybody could go and meet the professor; they don't need to email them and then explain why they wanted to meet them. Because that's something – you first email them, then they ask why you want to come, and then again you need to email, and then he will reply. In that time, it's a huge time. There should be one day or one hour in a week that is dedicated, that anybody can go and approach the professor."

Some students reported very personal negative experiences with reference to giving feedback to lecturers:

"I tried to give feedback to a lecturer once during their office hours, and said I was confused and I wasn't sure I was getting it, and they basically said, 'Sucks for you, you might fail.' And then they sent me away. I went home and cried."

"I've had other lecturers who have been patronising to students and who have been rude."

Students experienced a range of feedback approaches used by lecturers and Schools and reported both positive and negative experiences in relation to this.

2.4   Reasons for giving feedback

A majority of students felt that it was important to give feedback:

"I would assiduously do the feedback, and what I would usually do is I would take notes during the year and try and give some kind of constructive feedback."

Some students felt that feedback was taken on board by lecturers:

"Because I believe they're used, so that's why I keep filling them out. I see the point of something even if I don't know of what, but I believe they are important."

Others felt their feedback would contribute to change and enhance the experience of future students:

"I think as students we have a responsibility to speak about it, because we are the voice. We are the people who will be telling the changes they can bring and how they can uplift the standards of education. But if we are not doing it, then who else will? The professor will keep on teaching and students will keep on coming and going. But I have a small responsibility as well to bring a change. So that's why."

"I mean that won't make a difference to me, I've already completed the subject, but for those in the future, it might help them."

"For me it was actually the chance to change things, because I didn't submit feedback in second year, I was abroad for third year. But this year, I wanted to submit feedback because there were so many classes that I was like, 'these could be so easily improved'. I wanted to come here because I still believe that the feedback should be used to improve the classes."

A number of students indicated that they gave feedback when they felt strongly about some aspect of their experience:

"I wouldn't go out of my way to do it, unless I was really angry about something, I'd probably do it then. I never really go push myself to do it. If you don't have to go out of your way to do it, that's good."

"Just if it was something I actually was bothered about or felt strongly about then I'd probably fill it out, but in general not that much."

For one student, a negative assessment experience prompted him to give feedback:

"In my course this year, we had a module last year and we took the module and the lecturer was lovely and the continuous assessment, we had two MCQs and they were both okay, they were tricky, but grand, and then we got to final exam and it was a negative marking MCQ. It was 100 questions and it was like the worst exam any of us have ever sat in our time in college. I broke out in a rash in the exam because I was just that stressed because I couldn't answer any of the questions and everyone around me was panicking. We all came out and we all thought we'd definitely failed it. It was the only module I'd say where a good majority of the class failed it. We all went onto the module feedback, so we were all sure we were going to fail, so we went on and said that the final exam had nothing to do with anything we were taught throughout the semester. This year the same module, she gave them the same exam and they all came out of it the exact same way that we did, but this year, because they did so much worse than we did last year, she changed it to not negative marking. She took the negative marking away, so that a lot more of them passed it than our year did. She obviously realised that she was going to end up getting in trouble maybe, because so many people had failed it. But again, a lot of people in our year who had failed it last year were very annoyed that this year, the negative marking was taken away."

Some students emailed lecturers with feedback hoping to get their grades changed:

"Once or twice it's got our grades bumped up so it does seem to work when we do so."

Students were motivated to give feedback for a number of reasons, including a desire to contribute to change and improve the education experience for future students. Some students gave feedback when they felt strongly about issues and when they wanted to secure grade changes.

2.5   Reasons for not giving feedback

The reasons for not giving feedback were quite varied. Being part of a competitive educational environment informed some decision making around giving feedback:

"I can see how people could be almost selfish about it, like when we get out to the real world, if people are looking at our CVs, I don't want the year below us to have better grades."

"There's always just that little niggling thing at the back of your mind that's. Yes, if I had to struggle through it, somebody else maybe should try too."

"What do you get out of it? You get to help other people in the years behind you, but at the same time people aren't exactly selfless."

Some students were of the view that their feedback would not impact on their own progress and therefore did not see the point in giving feedback:

"It's too late. If you've done the continuous assessment, it's either gone well or it hasn't."

"Maybe if you know that you're never going to have that lecturer again you just don't."

"For me, part of it is if I'm taking the course this semester, obviously I'm not going to be taking it next semester so my feedback is not going to affect me in any way. So in that sense, there's no point me giving feedback because I'm not going to benefit at all from any changes that happen."

"It might also be the thing of, I've done these modules, it's not my problem anymore.I think even the module feedback; people don't fill it out on a selfish kind of side because it's not going to help them."

"It says your responses will not be made available until after the results. So you know that saying anything isn't going to affect your results for good or bad."

Many students expressed the view that giving feedback was not worthwhile as they were not informed about the impact of their feedback:

"But you have no idea. I did this feedback at the end of semester one, and I'm going to be done after this year so I've no idea what came of any of our feedback."

"Because I guess we don't really see it. I don't know if maybe I've missed it or anything, but do we get a direct feedback of what is going to be done to…? After we fill it in, do they send us anything that says, 'We've read it, this is what's going to be changed in the future?' Because as far as I know, we don't get those emails."

"It's a black hole sort of thing. If you want, you just give your feedback and nothing else comes out of it."

"You send it off into the void and you never hear back, like: 'We are going to do something about it'."

One student was not clear if feedback was taken on board:

"You presume they're going to use this for the next time they're teaching this module and they're going to improve on it, but then you question sometimes – you might go, 'Are they really going to?' You might just think, if you find there are so many problems, do you think this has never been spotted before? Some lecturers will be like, 'I don't know how this is…' Some parts of it or some contents are really hard, and you're just thinking, 'Surely someone else has brought that up before, and it's still there.' I don't know. But you'd like to think in a perfect world that they're going to focus on this and they're going to improve it for next semester, but you just don't know."

Other students expressed the view that lecturers tended not to change their approaches so there was little point in offering feedback:

"I see the same professor multiple times this semester and we gave the same feedback and he was still unenthusiastic about everything he said; therefore, his teaching has not improved."

"Other years are telling me, 'We experienced what you're experiencing.' They did a lot of feedback and everything and they went to their module coordinator and nothing changed."

"I think some people can see lecturers as set in their ways, which a lot of them can be, in the sense that people think that the years ahead of them have given the feedback. When you talk to people ahead, they will give you advice on the course and on the lecturers, and they could be three or four years ahead of you and the lecturer still hasn't changed the way of teaching, or the exams haven't changed. So when something's not changed for three or four years down the line, sometimes people think it's not worth trying to change it, because it's not going to change."

"Sometimes you go through classes, even lecturers will say, 'Well, back in the 80s when I was an undergrad, we had to learn it this way, so I'm going to teach it to you this way.' Maybe it's the right way but it doesn't necessarily mean that there couldn't be improvements made."

One student offered an alternative view:

"We actually had a lecturer that, from previous years we know people who have told us that they weren't doing very well, basically. There weren't teaching very well. But then when we had this particular lecturer, we had a great time. So obviously something changed over the years, and maybe that is due to feedback, but I suppose there's no way of knowing."

One student was of the view that if a lecturer did not add extra questions, they were not interested in getting feedback:

"I know the module coordinators can change the questions, add questions, because sometimes you end up with a really long list, but most of the time it's always the same five or whatever, and if it's just the standard ones you kind of feel like the lecturer doesn't even care, so there's no real point to filling it in."

Some students felt that in large classes, lecturers would not look at all of the feedback:

"Definitely for the larger courses, for like 300, I don't think they're going to take all 300 and flick through them. I'd say they probably take a handful of them. I understand that rather than my course of 28, even if every one of us filled it out, there's still only 28 of us; it's not difficult to look at them all."

One student queried if persons other than the lecturer reads the feedback:

"It's hard to know if they read it. And if they read it, more so do the people in charge read it, you know? You could say, 'You're a terrible lecturer', or whatever, but they're not going to listen to that unless someone higher maybe sees it."

Another student concurred with this view and wondered if lecturers were obliged to do anything with the feedback:

> "Then is there any obligation for them? When we fill it out and they get the results, do they have to say in a report, 'This is what the students said. X, y, z, this is what I'm going to do'? Or do they read it and go, 'Oh, okay,' and not do anything about it? Is there a framework for them?"

Giving feedback was viewed as a very time-consuming process:

> "Especially when you have six modules. You usually do six a semester, you're constantly doing it. You've one of them and then you have to do another five. So it's time consuming."

> "I'd be put off from filling it in just because, even when there are six modules, I realise it'll take 20 minutes to do it for every single module."

Students offered a number of reasons for not giving feedback, which included: not seeing the relevance to their own progress; the competitive educational environment in UCD; not being informed subsequently about changes made as a result of their feedback; thinking that some lecturers did not take feedback on board; and the time-consuming nature of the process across multiple modules.

2.6   Purpose of the survey

The majority of students were of the view that the UCD feedback survey existed to monitor lecturers:

> "I always assume it's for a lecturer to improve themselves, but also it's a way of, not control, but yes, a way of supervision of the lecturer from whoever is responsible for that area in the school or university."

> "To let the lecturers, know how they are doing. To pinpoint problems, maybe."

> "They're continuously assessing lecturers because they have to get credentials for whether this programme meets UCD's qualifications or the national qualifications."

> "I suppose if all negative reviews of a module were coming in, then it would be brought up that if everybody had the same complaint or something like that, then they might look into if the lecturer is doing it right."

> "I don't know: if everybody was complaining about something, they would probably look into it and see."

Some students thought that the university was obliged to seek feedback from students:

> "Maybe it's mandatory, that's why they do it. Maybe from the government side or something, from the Education Department, something like that, that's why they do it."

> "One of the metrics that universities are measured on is teaching, and this is just a handy way for them to try and keep their teaching at a good standard. So when graduates report what they liked about it, they can be like, 'Oh yes, the teaching is very good,' because they have a feedback system in place that helps people improve."

> "I don't know if the feedback is used to just compare it to some academic standards they have, like a report that should look the same."

Other students felt it was a bureaucratic exercise:

"It's not about students, it's about the administration."

"For them to tick that box, like they've done this."

"Is it they are doing what they think they should be doing but it's not effective, so they're ticking the box to say they're getting the feedback and they're applying the feedback, but it's not really effective, so they're satisfying the requirement for them to ask students and provide the system to get the feedback and it's there for you to fill it out if you want to."

Students offered a variety of views about the purpose of the feedback survey, suggesting that it was a way of monitoring the performance of lecturers and that the university was obliged to have a feedback survey in place.

2.7   Who receives the feedback?

Students were not sure about where their feedback was sent:

"I think it's unclear who actually gets the feedback. Does it go directly to the module coordinator? Does it go to the School?"

"Admin office somewhere, I don't know."

"I'd imagine it goes to the Schools and the lecturers and whoever it's for, seeing as it's meant for them."

"I would say it's compiled into some sort of barely readable document, and lecturers have to sort of skim through it and be like, 'Which is the bit that's relevant to me?' Because that seems to be UCD's style for admin purposes. Let's put this into a massive big Excel sheet."

Some students felt that lecturers got the feedback:

"I know for a fact the lecturers are getting it."

"I'd say the lecturer and a module coordinator, or whoever is involved in that module."

"Yes, I would say the lecturers get it but someone oversees it maybe."

"I feel like a lot of my lecturers, I don't know, do they read it all themselves? I don't even know, is it sent to them or is it just sent to someone else and then sent to them? I don't actually know what happens afterwards; that's something that's kind of blurry."

Other students were of the view that their feedback was sent to people other than lecturers:

"I'm pretty sure with the [-------------- School] I think it goes to the very top, with the Dean and obviously the individual lecturers."

"I think it depends from School to School. It varies from School to School how the information is used."

"The programme coordinator. And what do they do with it? Hopefully they read it and do a review on it."

"I mean, I would hope that they are looking at them, but realistically it's probably some teaching assistant, who would summarise all the information and pack it up in a neat little report and send it off."

"I always thought it went back to the lecturers, but this is what I heard that it actually goes to the programme office and they send them on to the lecturers or whatever."

"The dean or the coordinator or something."

"Would have hoped it went through someone else first because if a lecturer gets really bad feedback, they're not going to put themselves forward being like, 'oh the students really didn't like my style of lecturing', whereas if it went through someone else, there might be incentive for them to actually change."

Students were not clear about who received their feedback. Generally, they were of the view that lecturers got their feedback as did senior people in Schools.

2.8   Anonymity

Students expressed some reservations about the anonymity of the survey:

"You're also doing it through your email. So how anonymous that is? Well they definitely could if they wanted to. If they really wanted to, they could definitely find out who."

"About the anonymity, I feel like they don't necessarily know who sent the single feedback, but they know the class where it is coming from. So it's good that it comes at the end, when the lectures are over."

"It's all digital fingerprint really. If it doesn't specifically say on the site whether it's confidential or not, I don't think, I didn't see it anyway."

"You do the feedback anyway through your SISWeb, so it is traceable at some point, but I think they would just pick student numbers at random. I don't know how it runs now. They can obviously see who did it and who didn't."

"You need to insert your student ID password to log in to the portal."

While some students knew that the emails communicated that the survey was anonymous, they were still not sure:

"You get the emails saying about giving the feedback, there's nowhere that it says that it's confidential, well not that I noticed immediately and after that, I just wasn't really too interested."

"I think I've always known it was confidential. You're always going to worry because it's one thing saying it's confidential but you never know if it actually is I guess."

"It depends I think what course you're in; in my course, it's tiny, so all the lecturers would know everyone and you feel like maybe in the future they might hold that against you. They probably wouldn't but that is what I just feel. "

The majority of students were unclear about survey anonymity and this was an important issue for them.

2.9   Survey Design

Students were asked to comment on the design of the survey and were generally of the view that the current survey design was not optimum and had not changed over a number of years:

"It looks like somebody threw it together a few years ago. Basic enough and it's just been like that for years."

"I don't know, but it seems quite antiquated at the moment. It's very functional."

"It doesn't change very much. I was a student here back in 2015 and we did surveys, like feedback surveys back then, and I've done some this year and I find that there is not really that much change. It hasn't changed in about four years."

"It just seems a bit dated, not as up to date."

Accessing the survey on mobile phones was considered unnecessarily complicated:

"It works horrifically on mobile which annoys me because I do a lot of things on my phone."

"It's just annoying, I've kind of given up on that now, but I do most of my things on my phone, so it's just annoying that I have to go find a computer."

"Yes, SISWeb is so annoying on your phone. On SISWeb, there are a lot of issues."

In general, it was felt that further work was required to enhance the survey design:

"Some reviews are supposed to be fun to fill out, but it doesn't really strike you, the actual layout of it. It doesn't really appeal. Like if you click on to the website, when you get the email say, and then you get side-tracked with something else and then you go back to it, it doesn't really go, 'Oh, fill me out, fill me out'."

"It's very bland, there's no colour pictures. I'm not sure if that necessarily the right place to try and add pictures and colours and that but it doesn't catch the eye at all."

"Even like a UCD logo, there's literally nothing."

"Even like My UCD or something, on Facebook and Snapchat and everywhere else, just so you see it more often, make it funkier."

"You could have a link in the picture at the top with a survey link where you click on the picture and it goes straight there, because there's a lot of text there before the link. I know people who would just ignore that email."

"Maybe a photo of UCD."

"Even a little cartoon. I feel that having it there at the bottom of that block of text, that would be put aside."

"It could just be, 'Give your feedback', in a speech bubble or something. It could be a lot easier to click the picture and do the survey; you don't have to read all that."

There was a general consensus that the survey should be redesigned, with new features to make it more up-to-date and adaptable to mobile technologies.

2.10 Communications about the survey

Students offered a variety of perspectives about communications surrounding the survey. The majority of students were unhappy about the number of emails that they received:

"You get like 10 emails. We get it, leave me alone."

"Please stop annoying me. That's actually the reason I didn't do it."

Other students found it irritating that they received emails even though they had completed the survey:

"It was again, 'Fill in the survey'. I had already filled it in by that time, so it was just annoying."

"I was so confused, because I had given the feedback for all my modules and I was still getting emails. I was like, 'Wait, did I not do it?; So I'd go back and check and I already did it, I'd done all my module feedback."

"I got those emails even though I had done the feedback, but they act like you haven't done it."

"It's annoying to get that email when you have already provided the feedback. You think, why would I do it on the first email then?"

One student felt she was pressured into completing the survey:

"It's really trying to pressure you into doing it. And they make it seem more important than it is. They make it seem like your opinion is really valid and it will actually do something. That's what annoys me, is that they are so adamant on you doing it, and then if you do it, nothing happens."

Some students liked the fact that they received a number of emails from their lecturers asking them to complete the survey:

"I've done the feedback system before but really only when lecturers remind me, when I get one of their emails because they're quite persistent with it."

"Just because a lot of the lectures keep mentioning it at the end and, 'All fill out the module feedback, blah blah, it's good to do,' and then a lot of them then sent emails to remind you to do it when they're reminding you about the exams and stuff like that. They're like, 'Oh, don't forget to fill it out,' so then I just assumed it was something you have to do."

Students were in general very unhappy about the frequency and timing schedule in relation to requests for feedback:

"They always send a little reminder at exams. They're like, 'Take a study break and send your feedback,' and I'm like, 'You don't want me in this mindset because I'm really pissed off with UCD at the moment.' I'm studying for exams, I'm crying. Why are you asking me for my feedback now? All you're going to get is, 'I hate you, you're awful'."

"They keep sending them during study week when I'm just not filling these out. I'm in a bitter mood and I haven't done my exams so I don't have all the information to give feedback on."

"You see, I think the timing is part of the problem here, and those mails are coming out when you're taking your break between your studies and mentally, it's going into the bin, because writing to us before the exams finish, I just think is utterly inappropriate. We were all up to our oxters until about the 20-something of December. I can understand that people are trying to collate these things, and there's a timing issue, but lads, if you really want feedback, give people a chance. I wouldn't send anything in the two weeks of an exam. Not a mail, unless it was, there was a fire."

"I feel like if you get it during Christmas, it's kind of like, UCD's gone for a month, leave me alone. I'm not going to pick up my laptop just to start filling out this. It would be much better during week one and two because I'll have my laptop out, getting ready for lectures."

"I think it is a bit bizarre to send it before you've finished your module. My Master's is assessment-based, so we don't have exams. But I would have an assignment due maybe two or three days after, and I was getting like: 'Don't forget to do the module feedback.' And I was like, 'I haven't even finished that module yet; I still have four other modules, I've got 25,000 words to do: chill'. It was a little bit that kind of vibe."

"In the calm of when the exams are over, then send a mail."

Students made a number of suggestions around the timing of the survey:

"I think that the start of the next semester would be a better time, because everyone is out of the holiday mode and you'll still close enough to the previous semester to remember."

"I think three [emails] would probably suffice and then if they had some global post on everyone's Brightspace, like Blackboard, so your announcements come and they disappear after a week or when you click into them. But if one was longstanding throughout the exams, when you went on, it was just there and the link was there maybe, so then it's not coming into your inbox."

"There is a homepage and you go on to get your lecture notes and lecturers can post announcements, so if you just had one that was kind of longstanding with the link there, I do think people might click onto it there when they are going on to study or finished their study, as opposed to going from their email into it."

Students offered a range of perspectives about the communications process. The majority felt that the number of emails they received from UCD was too many in general and this was also their view in relation to completing the feedback survey. They were especially aggrieved to receive email reminders after they had completed the survey. Some students were of the view that receiving emails during study and examination periods was inappropriate.

2.11 Rules for completing the survey

Students offered a range of suggestions in relation to providing clear ground rules about completing the survey:

"Saying clearly that it is anonymous."

"Maybe they should write it in the title: 'Anonymous module feedback'."

"I think it would be really nice that, when we're talking about everybody feeling safe, there's assurance upfront, and as a student you have a responsibility to do A, B, C, so you undertake not to do personal marks or whatever, and the assurance that you're getting is it's confidential, it's not going to be divulged or circulated in any fashion until after grades are finalised or something. Whatever you have to say. And then maybe you're in a better place to say, 'Okay, I'm not going to go throwing muck here: constructive feedback."

"The ground rules, I think, need to be emphasised a bit more. Having a go at somebody in writing when you know it's anonymous, I have a problem with that."

"The construct needs to be safe to both. Or maybe even a declaration at the front to say, 'Here are the ground rules and I will stick by them,' and the ground rules would be, 'No personal offensive remarks,' and this kind of stuff."

Some students wanted to have their grades prior to giving feedback:

> "Yeah, it would be better if you already knew your grade, because then they can't change it. They say they're not going to see it until your grades are sent off, but there's like a solid two weeks before you get your grades."
> *"In the back of your mind you wonder are you going to give feedback before you've got your results? Now of course, ethically I'm not saying that UCD are doing that, but it is in the back of your mind. You think, suppose someone actually figured out this was me. I was not giving them a good score, and the rating was still open."*

> *"Even generally, even if he gets generally bad feedback before he starts marking, I'd say it's also probably not good."*

The majority of students felt that clear ground rules should be explained around offering feedback. Some students did not want to offer feedback until they had received their grades.

2.12 Incentives

Students suggested having incentives to fill out feedback in order to increase response rates:

> "They can make it, like in one of my modules last semester, 10% was filling out a survey at the beginning and at the end. But I'm just saying, if you make it that there is some incentive to do it. Even if that's like 1% or 2% or some kind of incentive to fill it out, apart from 'This is great' or, 'This isn't great'."

> "At the moment, there is no incentive, one in five gets a tenner on their student card or something. Or even some small incentive."

> "Your name would be entered into a raffle to win something, like a discount on your card or something."

> "Free coffee and pie. That's for finishing all of them."

> "Like literally do 20 club house vouchers, and UCD owns the club house, and then dig up whatever, a free USB dock."

> "It's so easy to just give out UPoints, you could give us a few UPoints for doing surveys."

Suggested incentives ranged from awarding additional, offering monetary incentives such as vouchers and additional UPoints on their student cards.

2.13 Survey Questions

Students commented on the nature of the questions used in the survey and focused on the learning outcomes and their experience of teaching questions.

2.13.1 Similarity of questions
A majority of students referred to the generic nature of the questions. The following comment illustrates that view:

> "I think maybe, just because when you're filling it out it's kind of vague. Especially the first question, which is just like, 'I have a better understanding of the subject'. Because I think even if it wasn't necessarily well taught or whatever, you're going to know more by the end of the course. So I think maybe if the questions were a little bit more specific, then that would be more helpful."

Reference was also made to the questions being the same across modules:

"A lot of the questions are the exact same, over and over again. So it looks like no-one's actually [reading them]: they've just put up a template for the sake of it."
"I think it can sometimes be quite generic. A lot of the modules can have the same kind of questions, and there isn't really anything to distinguish them. They are just the same questions; whereas if they were tailored to the individual module, you might be more likely to think a bit more about your answer."

"I have seen that occasionally with one or two modules, that they actually do have one or two extra tailored questions, but it's very rare, for me anyway."

"All the questions were the same. I thought maybe there would be different ones. I went to the first module and filled out the questions, then I went to the second one and saw the same."

Some students were of the view that the survey was repetitive:

"I want to say it's slightly repetitive, like the questions. It will ask the same question in a different way. I understand what they're trying to do but it gets annoying."

"It gets repetitive as well… In first year, you have all these opinions and then you realise all the modules are the same: so you feel like it's already been said, there's no point."

Students thought that the questions could have been worded differently as they felt that it was difficult to complete in its current form:

"If it's worded better, the person will know specifically what to say. I think some people don't understand how to approach the question or how to answer it."

Other students were of the view that the questions were designed to give a positive evaluation:

"They're kind of leading questions. 'Do I have a better understanding of the subject?' I feel like on average, people would be more likely to just say 'agree' because of the way the question's phrased."

"I know you are asked to give positives first, so they kind of tailor your minds to be positive in the first instance, so it kind of mutes your negativity a bit so that your actual response is less negative."

A number of students did not feel able to give the feedback that they wanted to:

"I'm not so much of a fan of that… they give you distinct categories that you can fill in, so we had a huge issue with a module this semester. Everyone went insane, so in the module feedback, what I wanted to say didn't really fit into any of the categories, so I ended up just writing it in one of them anyway."

"Not really, because I have a module [--------------] and it's just project based, and they're asking me how the lectures were. I didn't have lectures. Sometimes the questions they ask you to rate don't really apply, so sometimes you don't agree with any of them."

"I'm in my first year, so I've done one of the module feedbacks. I did the module feedback that we got maybe a month ago, only for about I'd say three of my six modules. They were the three I kind of felt like I had the most to say about, I suppose. I wasn't the biggest fan because I felt like the questions asked were a bit specific, and I couldn't give my feedback on certain aspects."

Students were of the view that the survey contained too many generic and similar type questions. Equally, they did not think that the survey gave them the opportunity to give the type of feedback that they had wanted to.

2.13.2 Learning Outcomes

Students found the question on learning outcomes difficult to answer. The following comments illustrate that view:

"You might not even remember what the learning outcomes were."

"I think they are online, in the descriptors, and some lecturers would, I think, point them out in the beginning, but I don't think it's something most students keep in mind all the time. I don't think that's how a student perceives a module."

"I wouldn't have read my lectures and the learning outcomes or my modules, before I started them. So I didn't have a clue what they were, personally."

Others did not understand what learning outcomes were:

"It's very vague. I don't remember… I know what I learned but I didn't know what the learning outcomes were from my modules last semester. So it's a very shaky thing."

"Some lecturers put it on at the start of your lecture, which is great. But learning outcomes is a very vague thing, and honestly, unless they make it a bit more specific, I don't know if it's a good question."

"I have to open in tandem the module descriptor and look at it and say, 'Well yes, I understand this and this and this,' but is that what they meant for me to understand as an overall goal? What's the limit? I don't know, it's strange."

For one student, learning outcomes equated good grades:

"A question like if I achieved the learning outcome for this module, for me that is like, I was able to do well in the exam. Yes, I feel like we can sit in modules and say it's interesting and all this, but realistically, we all want to come out with a good grade and that is what you're looking for at the end of the day… A lecturer could have learning objectives at the start and that's what they want you to do, but you could go into an exam thinking that you know all of them. For me, I could have learnt everything but still not have been able to answer the questions in the final exam."

2.13.3 Question on Teaching

Students reflected on the impact of lecturers on their learning:

"I think lecturers have to hold a lot of responsibility for our reactions. There are some brilliant lecturers, but there are also some very poor lecturers. And I don't think the prompt is strong enough to get engaged."

"The content can be brilliant, but the lecturer is such an important part of how you do. You might love a lecturer and the content mightn't be as good, but you'll be encouraged to learn and to study, but then if you have a really bad lecturer, you're just like, 'no, I don't want to do anything'."

"I want to go to lectures but then I arrive there and I see, okay, she is just reading the slides, I can do it at home, so I don't go."

"Some classes, all we did was: - we were given reading, you go there and she was like, 'go in groups, discuss the readings and go home', and she just stayed there watching us."

"Some lecturers will fully read their slides and then there's some which are so interactive and they'll fully point at you and ask questions. You're always so alert in those classes."

Students attending modules that had inputs from a number of different lecturers found it difficult to answer the question on teaching:

> "I had a module just last semester and it was done by two different lecturers, the first half by one, the second half the other. So one of them was really good and one of them was really bad. And they were like, 'Did you enjoy this module?' And you can't really say 'strongly disagree' even though you enjoyed the first half, so it's kind of hard to do it that way, when you're judging them both on the same thing."

> "A lot of modules will have up to five, six lecturers – for instance, one of mine, I have one lecturer for the first week, and then I have another one for another three weeks, and then somebody else for another few weeks. So you get five or six lecturers. And when it comes to a question like, 'The teaching on this module supported my learning', half the teaching might have been very good and half the teaching might have been very bad, so you don't want to be saying 'strongly disagree' but you don't want to be saying 'strongly agree', so people go for a very neutral answer. And then I think when people are giving a lot of neutral answers, it just looks like they're going through it as fast as they can."

> "I think that the teaching one, I have more than one lecturer for every single one of my modules. So one teacher could have been amazing, the other one I could have found boring. Or I feel like they didn't really help, I had to help myself kind of thing. You can't agree with only part, as they don't know what I'm agreeing with. Because all lecturers have different teaching styles."

> "Because each lecturer is different and they each do different things. You can't just lob them all together in the one, overall thing."

Some students suggested having additional comment boxes to identify what or who supported their learning through teaching:

> "It might be nice to have additional comment boxes here. Say like the teaching on the module supports the learning: I don't know if you'd be able to specifically mention the staff, the lecturers, the teaching assistants, supported the learning. A lot of the teaching, the slides and the books that were recommended supported the learning but I got absolutely nothing from the actual staff, the lecturers; their actual teaching ability did nothing."

> "I think it says, 'The teaching on this module supported my learning'. I think if it was more 'The lab-based work supported my learning', 'The project-based work on this module…'."

> "Maybe if you split it up, like if you said, 'How did you find the lecturers?' 'How did you find the tutorials?' because when you're saying, 'The teaching of this module' that's covering everything, and you might have had crap tutorials but an amazing lecturer. So maybe you could split it up a bit."

> "We don't get anything else about our tutors; some of our tutors are not great. They don't know what they're doing, essentially, and that is annoying. If you're there and you see the tutor has no clue what's going on, they're like, "Erm, erm." I know if I was in the same position, I'd want people to sympathise with me, and I do. But I'm also like, "Why haven't they been given this training? They're being paid whatever it is, €16, €17 an hour, or €20 an hour, whatever it is, for this, and yet they don't know what they're doing. It's just kind of annoying sometimes."

Some students offered the view that the university did not want feedback on lecturers:

> "I don't think the college as a whole would want you to feed back on the lecturers, but really only because a lot of the reasons they have these lecturers is because they're good at doing research for the college, so the lecturing is just a side thing for them."

Other students concurred with this view:

"I think a lot of lecturers end up getting into college because they're really good researchers, and then they stand up and you're like, 'Oh'."

"It seems to be nearly their prime job. So the teaching is just the side part that they don't really care too much about. Generally, the ones that are most passionate about their subjects will be back straight to their office to continue their actual research."

Students wanted to provide tangible constructive comments:

"I think that was one of the things that I was surprised about, was how short it was, that you weren't really given space to talk about people individually. You kind of had to cram everything in, so I felt really rushed in my feedback. You don't want to call people out, but at the same time you're like, well, this person was kind of bad and this person is way better. It's uncomfortable to do, so if you had separate ones for each person then you could say things in a nice way without feeling like you're putting them on the spot."

"Even 'How clear was the module taught? Did you find it was taught clearly? The approach.' Even the things you were saying on organisation as well: 'Do you feel that the lecturer was organised for this module? Do you get your notes on time?'"

"There is one question on the teaching and it was 'strongly disagree or agree'; if they are going to ask if you were happy with the lecture or not, there should really be sub questions that follow on from that, so, 'Yes or no, was it because they were a good communicator? Did they have good lecture notes?' and then, 'If no, poor communicator, unapproachable?' They need that feedback as well because if they're just getting feedback from 30 people and it says 'strongly disagree' that their teaching methods are sufficient, they don't know where to go with that either and they're not going to contact 30 people they don't teach anymore and be like, 'What was wrong?' They need to hear it as well."

"Each module is usually divided up into lectures, labs, tutorials, seminars, whatever. So if each component was given its own multiple choice or something…"

Students did not want to comment on lecturers as individuals:

"There is an onus on the student to be ethical in their response. I know of at least two lecturers, anecdotally, stories, where they were profoundly upset by scurrilous and really vicious feedback. So I think there are two things. The student needs to feel safe and the lecturer needs to feel safe."

"Actually, I don't think that it should be done on a personal level, because there are a lot of students here and let's say some of the classes have more than 200 students in them. It's a tough job to present your speech or your lecture in front of such a large amount of people. 200 people, so 200 different tastes."

"I think it shouldn't be characteristics. I think that would be again going into very dangerous territory. That's very personal, someone's characteristics."

"To someone you can be sympathetic, to another person you can feel the person is annoying you. It's like, I don't think it should be done on the personal level, because like the module, it's important and the lecturer is important. The lecturer is also important and to present it well, it's very, very important. It's just like, if you say something on a personal level, you would be saying that the person should change the lecture, should change the way they talk or something; it's nothing to do with the module, with the teaching."

"I don't want it to get too personal either. They are still doing their job at the end of the day; do you know what I mean? Sometimes students can get personal, a little bit nasty."

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"My intention would never be to offend the teacher, but that doesn't mean I don't have a really strong opinion about something that I liked or didn't like, but I might not say it because I don't want them to just think they're a terrible person and I hate them."

"You're more reluctant to talk about the lecturer themselves because you think you might offend them."

"'Your teaching style does not work for me', obviously that's so subjective. How do you criticise someone because the way they teach doesn't work for you but it works for 100 other people?"

Some students expressed the view that lecturers needed to be good communicators and be approachable:

"They need to have good communication and be able to use concise and clear language. And then I feel being able to respond to students' queries in a suitable timeframe, not leaving your student for a week not getting a reply on an email. And then also having clear and concise lecture notes or extra reading materials around the subject, that your students can refer to."

"Is the professor approachable? If he addresses your concerns and reaches out to you. I think that's really important, because everything boils down to that only. He should have a justification of what he's doing."

"Punctual. There are some lecturers that you know they're not going to be on time, so you show up five minutes late and then show up ten minutes late."

"Responsive. I mean, obviously not everybody meets up with their lecturers during the semester for office hours and whatever, but if you have, how responsive they were to your questions and stuff, if they actually helped."

"The more engagement the lecturer would have with the students, the more they have an idea of how much you actually would understand as well - the content. Whereas if the lecturer doesn't engage and doesn't care at all, they're not going to have any idea of how much you might even understand the material and how they can adjust to that."

A number of themes emerged in relation to questions about their teaching experiences. They felt constrained within the current survey to comment on their teaching experience. This was exacerbated by the number of lecturers, tutors or teaching assistants that contributed to their teaching. While they did not want to comment on the characteristics of lecturers, they felt that good communication skills and being approachable were very important.

2.13.4 Open text questions
For many students the open text questions were problematic:

"There are a lot of free text options. I hate the questions where it's name three things that you like, name three things that you don't hate. Maybe I don't have three things that I did or didn't like."

"As far as the open comments go, to just have one more open-ended comment section with maybe some suggestions of what you could put in. Because now, I was reading this, 'Identify up to three aspects', it's like an exam. I get almost nervous, I'm like, 'What if I can't?'"

"The two comment boxes don't really allow you to be critical. It is all focused on your learning, so three aspects that most helped your learning. Okay, so I was a bit confused by that, so I just said three things that I liked, but I don't know if that necessarily helped my learning. Then three changes that would increase your learning. How can you say, 'Oh if the lecturer was a much sounder person, then maybe I would have paid more attention'. Those types of things, because the answers you put in don't seem to exactly be answering the questions that are asked."

"It says, 'Pick three good things about the module', and there might not always be three things. And then they might say, 'Pick three bad things', and you might want to say more than that. It can be a bit strict on the format."

"I don't like the prescriptive of, 'Name three things you liked and three things you didn't like,' because it doesn't imply that they want constructive criticism. They're just asking you to list things like when you were in Primary school."

It was generally felt that the open text questions were prescriptive, and some students were unclear about what to say under the headings, especially with reference to their own learning.

2.14 Module Survey Suggestions

A number of students wanted the survey to be more module specific:

"More module-specific, and then break it down into the different things, because you might understand one section of the thing, and then another section of the module you might completely not understand. But here you have to say generally, and it just doesn't make sense."

"Each module is usually divided up into lectures, labs, tutorials, seminars, whatever. So if each component was given its own multiple choice or something."

Some students suggested specific questions that could be asked about individual modules:

"Did you enjoy this module? Is there anything that you would like to see included in this module in the future? Are there any topics that you don't feel you understand after this module?"

"With the module, could you have a question saying, "Does the module reflect what you thought you'd learn in the course?"

"Do you think this module fitted in with other modules and topics you are doing? Because then if it comes back that it's not, the lecturer could have a look and say what are these students doing outside my class – even to just mention them to put the lightbulb in your head so you think, oh yes, that's why we do this."

"If the question was like, say for example, that essay that we did was worth 20% on whatever, 'Was that relevant, do you think?' Or the presentation or something. Just to specialise and drum it home that this is for your specific module."

Some students wanted the opportunity to comment on the workload involved in a module:

"One problem I had with my modules was sometimes the workload for the amount of credits you're getting: I mean, I suppose you could say it in the comments, but there's no question specific to, 'Did you find that the workload for this course matched this or that?'"

"Maybe the workload as a whole. I don't know, I haven't encountered this yet, but I've heard at least in terms of my class, that a couple of the years are just brutal."

Other students were of the view that Schools should have a list of questions that related to each module:

"Whatever School you're in would have maybe a list of 50 or 70 questions, and the lecturer itself of the module coordinator would pick out whatever ones are relevant to them. So all of your module feedback is actually relevant to the module that you're doing."

"It would be ideal if each School – not each module, I think that's a bit excessive – but if each School set their own surveys: that would be quite nice."

"If you have a class on art and I have a class on science, how are we filling out the same form? We have two completely different semesters, different things to surmount, different tests and exams. How are we filling out the same form?"

"Overall school issues, like the thing I was saying with the labs, if that happens in five modules you're not going to write it five times."

Some students were open to having a course/programme-based feedback approach:

"Obviously we get these for each of the different modules, so let's say you said we were doing maybe five or six, it would be nice to have one for the course as a whole. A tailored one. Just as a whole [----------------] course, how are you finding it? Where does the course as a whole let you down? Because I know in my own, we did two different modules and basically, they were the same thing. If I have to hear about bystander effect one more time, I swear to God. And it's coming up again this semester, and I'm like, 'oh my goodness, is nobody taking this course with me that can see that we're doing the same topics over and over again?' I'm all for instilling and making sure they're listening, but three different modules!!"

"The structure of the course, maybe the importance of certain modules you do, the core modules you do. Different things like that."

"Even just in terms of a particular path you're going to – I have modules I specialise in foundations but I'm doing modules which I'm never ever going to do, so it's the applicability of it, how relevant it is, because obviously there are a lot of specialisms within each course."

"I think having all the different modules and then just one on the programme in general would be good, because I remember last year we had one issue that was about how the module fit in with another module, and then it gets into bigger issues, since the programme doesn't make sense as a whole. So sometimes it's a bit of a wider thing. As well, you'd be able to put in stuff that applies across the board to all your modules, it's just easier to just do it once."

"Probably a survey each semester asking the six modules you had to do, how relevant do you think they were? Because there are some modules that you're kind of like, 'Why did I even take this? I don't know how it's going to help me in the future'."

"I feel like the current module feedback doesn't relate to the programme at all. And you might be doing something that has no relation to your programme at all and doesn't reflect on your programme. This says nothing about your programme."

Others did not agree with this approach:

"You'd have to have a section for particular modules, because if you're to fill out one big survey it would be hard to, unless it was sectioned on which module you were filling out for. Because each module would be very different, I think."

"I think module and teacher both kind of sit into programme; they're like a subset of it. So I think they should be more concentrated on, because they're more specific. Because programmes is an overall [view], then you can actually talk about what you don't like in both those aspects."

Students were keen to have opportunities to report directly on their module learning experience and to include issues such as assessment and workload. It was also suggested that Schools develop a set of questions that were module specific so that feedback would be meaningful to each School. Students were in favour of a programme-based approach but could see a number of challenges associated with giving feedback in this way.

2.15 Mid-semester Feedback

Students were very keen to have the opportunity to provide mid-semester feedback on their modules:

"If you had feedback throughout the module I think it would be better. If you could give feedback to the lecturer or the module coordinator, maybe anonymously? With Menti-meter? Have a survey about what you want to go over and then people vote in the lecture?"

"I think it would be more useful if it was maybe half way through the module, because there were some modules that were new in my course, and they were very badly handled. Everyone was really upset about them but nothing was done, because our feedback wasn't taken seriously by the class rep, and then the final feedback, that's just for next year."

"A mid-semester check-in, so that you benefit from your own feedback. I mean hopefully, fingers crossed, if our results go okay, we're never going to get the results of that feedback, so it would be nice to know that if, a lecturer isn't turning up to their tutorials on time, we can say that before it's too late for us, so maybe a mid-semester check-in would be great, around October or so."

"After each lecture the continuous feedback is useful, as a lot of people are too afraid to say things to the lecturer if they have a problem. Writing it down on a piece of paper anonymously would help."

"You could do two. Half-way and then the half-way would be more assessment, classroom-based kind of thing, not, 'Are you satisfied with the module as a whole?' because you haven't finished it."

In terms of offering feedback mid semester, they suggested focusing on specific issues:

"Lecture quality, the room. The logistics of why are we sitting in a science lab when we're studying business or something?"

"I feel like if you had the opportunity to maybe, within your lecture, give feedbacks maybe half-way through, as a class, is this style of lecturing working? Or is this way of teaching working? …You know, that you have a chance, maybe even four weeks into the module or whatever, to give your opinion. That way if the lecturer is like, 'Okay, this isn't working for the class, maybe we'll try this instead', that then benefits you personally more, because you're having the opportunity to improve your learning, rather than it being for whoever comes next."

"Especially with project work. I know a lot of people have problems with project work. So maybe, 'How do you find the teamwork?', or something like that."

"Did you enjoy this module? Is there anything that you would like to see included in this module in the future? Are there any topics that you don't feel you understand after this module?"

Some students felt that a separate time should be allocated to giving feedback:

"I think setting a proper time that everybody can come and then they can do the feedback. That is the most important thing that may increase the frequency of that feedback. Like a separated window, a separate time. On that day, everybody will come and then they will have feedback in the college itself. They will come with a laptop or whatever, paper-based or whatever. Maybe you can have a paper-based survey as well, you don't want everybody to carry a laptop because those things have their own issues. So have a paper-based survey and a separate time should be set within the semester only."

"This is this person asking me directly, or not me only, but she's asking my class for something, and of course you're going to be as helpful as possible."

Students wanted to have the opportunity to provide module specific feedback and felt that mid-semester was a good time during which to provide such feedback. Some students felt that it was important to a have a specific time period allocated to offer feedback and were of the view that such requests should come directly from lecturers.

2.16 Follow up on student feedback

All of the students who participated in the consultation workshops were very keen to know how their feedback was acted upon:

"You could get an email after you complete the feedback saying: 'Your feedback is under review'."

"Just to let you know that it's not one of seven billion of the feedbacks going under the bus, they're actually being [used], 'Thank you for your feedback, your feedback is under review. We will send you an email when we have come to a conclusion or we've come to a decision about what will be changed.'"

"We'd like to know what impact it had, so if a lot of people are saying there's a big problem with the module, and if they are going to change the module then we'd want to know."

"Because I have not got the feedback on what happens after my feedback, I've not got any response. I took six modules, but I've not received the response, I don't know what happened."

"It is nice to know that our opinion does matter."

"I'd like the assurance in the email or whatever that you're going to be told how your feedback is going to be implemented, that summary email of: This is what we learnt, this is what's going to be changed.'"

"It makes you feel like it was worthwhile. I'd be more likely to do module feedback if I got an email from the lecturer saying, 'this is what people identified, this is what I'm going to do'."

"Perhaps an inclusion of results from last year to prove that. So: 'Here's an example from last year, these are the results from last year's survey, your results will also contribute to next year's changes.' Just to show that."

Some students wanted to know who was reading the feedback:

"We don't really know who gets this. What is it used for? I think if a student was really informed and, 'Look, this will affect your lecturer's ability to get promoted, to teach next year,' things like that. You do want to know it matters or not waste your time or something, but maybe students really think it's not getting [read]."

"It's an online portal, it's not like I'm sending an email or anything, so I don't know who is reading it, I don't know who is receiving it at all."

"If they said more specifically who would be reading the feedback. Like if you knew when you were filling it out where it was going, so that you knew that it was going to your module coordinator or your lecturer or whoever."

"I wish what would happen was, they got all the feedback and then in January they acknowledge the feedback. What was transparent, like this was the feedback we got from all the people in the course. So it's like, 'Okay, I know you've read it, I know you're hearing us'."

Other students were of the view that they should be told what changes were made as a result of getting student feedback:

"Just an email to people saying the outline of the module, so: 'This course code will be now in this way. 1) we're keeping the presentation; 2) we'll be scrapping the group,' whatever it is. And then you'll kind of say, 'Oh cool, that's not what I said, but I guess that was the majority of the feedback and at least I know something is being done and it's not just give you feedback that looks good'."

"Maybe an email follow-up in a few weeks from the lecturer saying, 'I'm taking on board this advice; this is how I'm going to somewhat change.' Although it might not satisfy a single person if the overall collective group had some sort of complaint or advice, maybe he could say that he takes it on board."

"You know the way they put up the tutorial slides or the lecture slides, they could also put up the module feedbacks as well onto it so you could click. I don't know if people would see it, but maybe that could help. At the end of the year."

Students clearly indicated that they wanted to know and be informed about how their feedback was used.

2.17 Conclusion

Students offered a range of perspectives with reference to their experience of the current feedback system. Their views were influenced by the context of large classes, inputs from a diverse number of lecturers on their modules and the perception that UCD was a competitive educational environment. Some students gave feedback in order to improve the experience of future students, if they felt aggrieved by a negative assessment experience and if they wanted a grade change. Other students were reluctant to give feedback as they did not view it as of direct benefit to their own learning, felt that it would not be taken on board, did not know what the outcome of their feedback would be and perceived it to be a very time-consuming process. They had been exposed to a range of different feedback approaches used by lecturers and schools. Some were viewed positively others less so. Other students reflected on negative personal interactions that they had with lecturers which they found upsetting.

Students were not clear about the purpose of the feedback survey. They were of the view that it was used to monitor lecturers and that the university was obliged to have a feedback system in place. In addition, they were not clear about who read their feedback and expressed reservations about the anonymity of the survey.

A general consensus emerged about the need to redesign the current survey. Students recommended a number of enhancements to make the survey more attractive and compatible with mobile devices. In general, students were negative about the current communication process used to promote the survey. This was linked to the fact that they felt overwhelmed by the number of surveys that they received from UCD about a range of issues. They complained about the frequency of the requests to complete the survey and the timing of these requests, especially around the examination period. They stressed the need for having clear guidelines about completing the survey and the need to incentivise responses through awarding additional marks and offering vouchers and additional UPoints on their current student cards.

A range of issues emerged with reference to the current survey questions. Students felt the questions were too generic and somewhat repetitive. They also found some questions difficult to answer, especially with reference to learning outcomes and the way in which teaching contributed to their learning. As they had many different lecturers within the one module, they felt that they did not have an opportunity to provide constructive feedback on individual lecturers, tutors or teaching assistants. They did not wish to provide feedback on individual lecturers or their characteristics but felt engagement, communication and approachability were important traits that contributed to their learning experience. Some students were unclear about what to say in the open text sections of the survey, when trying to relate it to their own learning.

Students were keen to have opportunities to report directly on their module learning experience, to include issues such as assessment and workload. It was also suggested that Schools develop a set of questions that were module-specific, so that feedback would be meaningful to each School. Students were in favour of a programme-based approach but could see a number of challenges associated with giving feedback in this way. Students wanted to have the opportunity to provide mid-semester feedback on modules and wanted to be informed about how their feedback was used when it was received.

Faculty perceptions of UCD Student Feedback System: Survey Findings

3.1　Introduction

Faculty were asked to consider the following elements of the current feedback system: the usefulness of the feedback; the role of the current system; their levels of satisfaction with the current system and if they used other feedback methods. Faculty were also asked to indicate their preferences in terms of changing the current system and areas that should be included in a future system.

3.1.1　Awareness of the Student Feedback System
The majority of faculty were aware of the Student Feedback on Modules System. Figure 4 illustrates the data.

Are you aware of the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System?

Response

Responded to question = 377
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 87%

No, I have no knowledge of the system	Yes, I am aware of it but haven't accessed it	Yes, I am/have been a module coordinator	Yes, I have had access to modules I am involved with
1%	2%	95%	3%
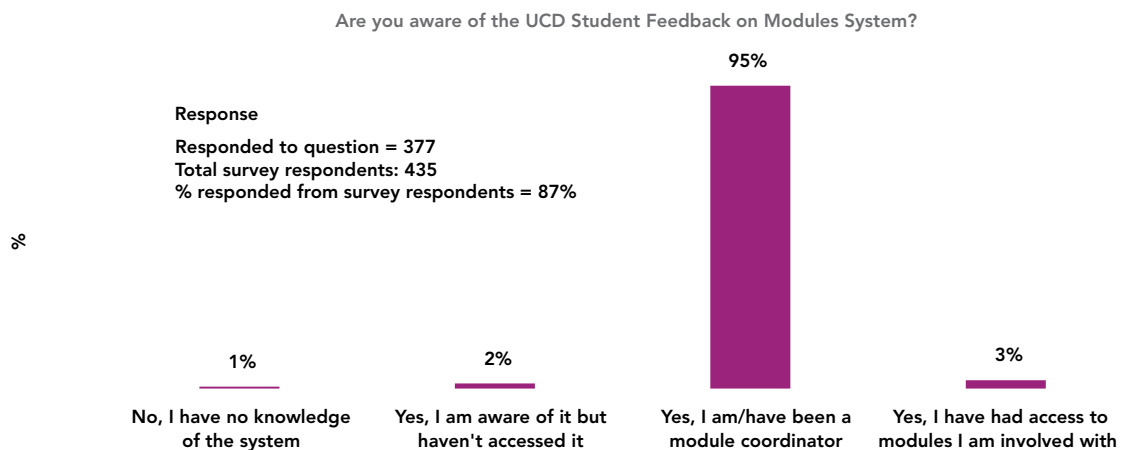
Figure 4 Awareness of the system.

3.1.2　Importance of receiving feedback
Over three quarters of faculty (81%) were of the view that student feedback was very important. Figure 5 illustrates the data.

How important is it to receive student feedback on modules

Response

Responded to question = 376
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 87%

Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
1%	3%	15%	46%	35%
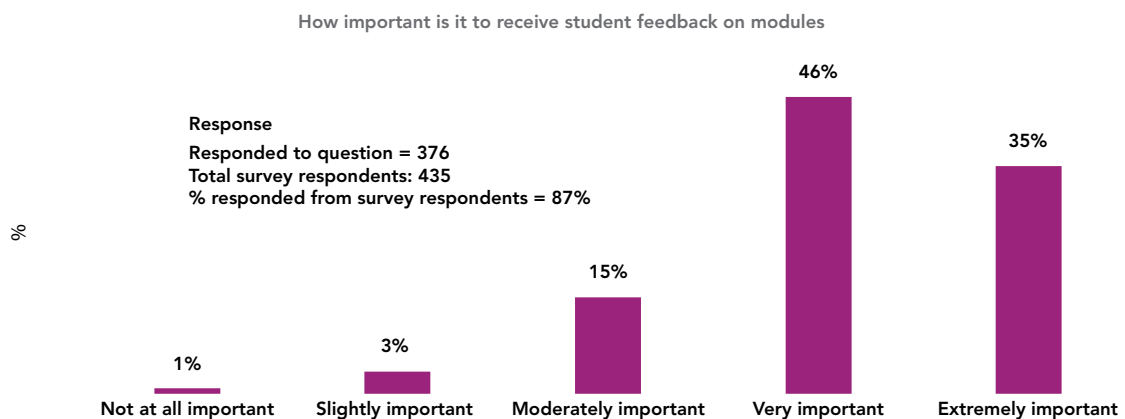
Figure 5 Importance of receiving student feedback.

A higher proportion of faculty in Health and Agricultural Sciences compared to faculty in other colleges indicated that receiving student feedback was important. This was also true of early career academics. No significant difference emerged among the different categories. Figure 6 illustrates the data.

How important is it to receive student feedback on modules
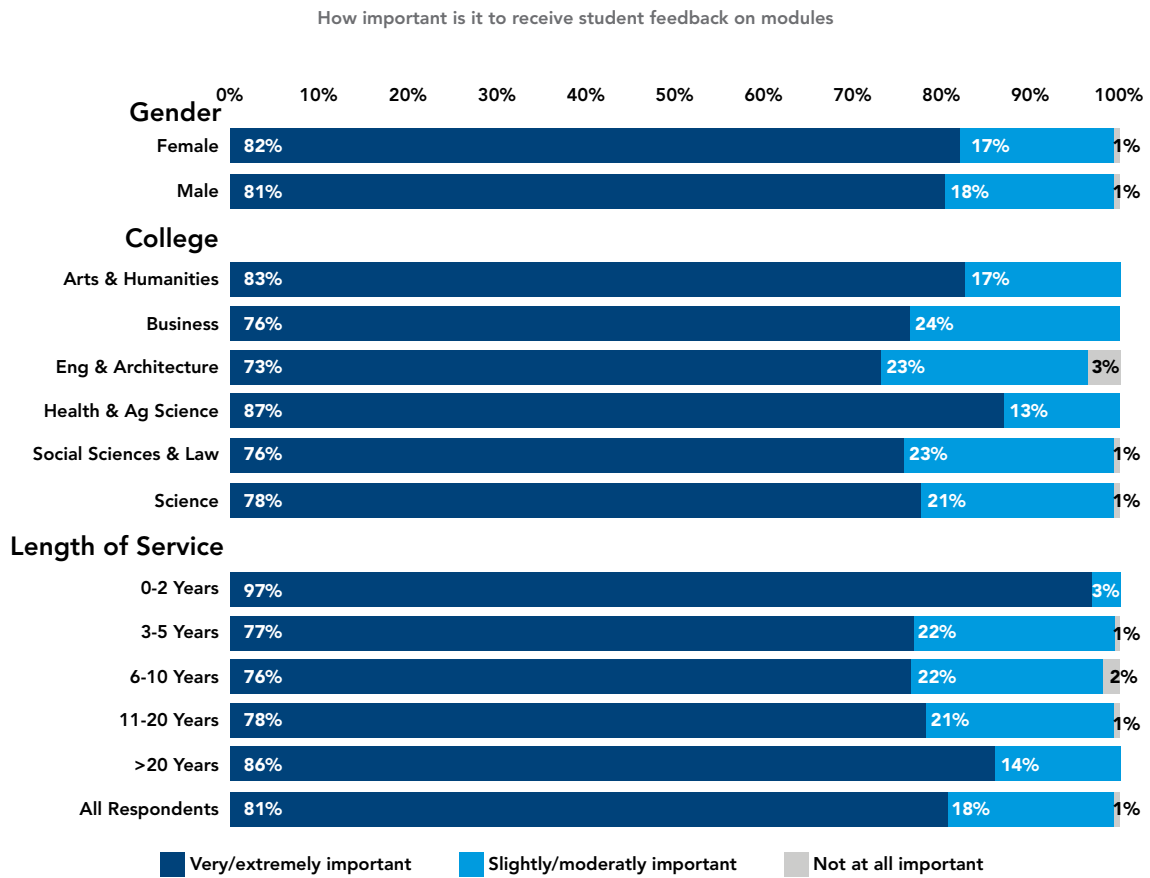
Figure 6 Importance of student feedback.

Over two thirds of faculty (73%) believed that students who gave feedback took the process seriously. Figure 7 illustrates the data.

Students who provide feedback take it seriously

Response

Responded to question = 376
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 87%
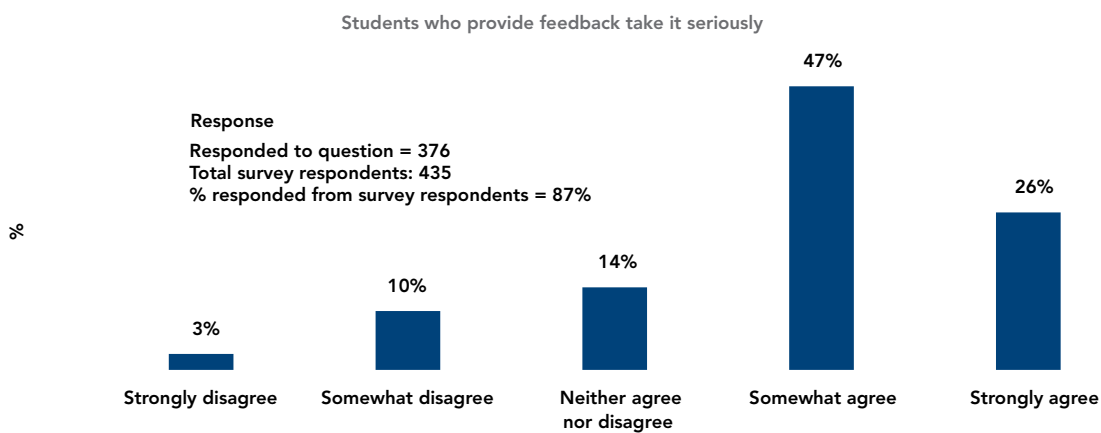
Figure 7 Students who provide feedback take it seriously - respondent breakdown.

A higher proportion of faculty in the College of Science and a higher proportion of faculty with over 20 years' experience expressed this view. Figure 8 illustrates the data.

How important is it to receive student feedback on modules
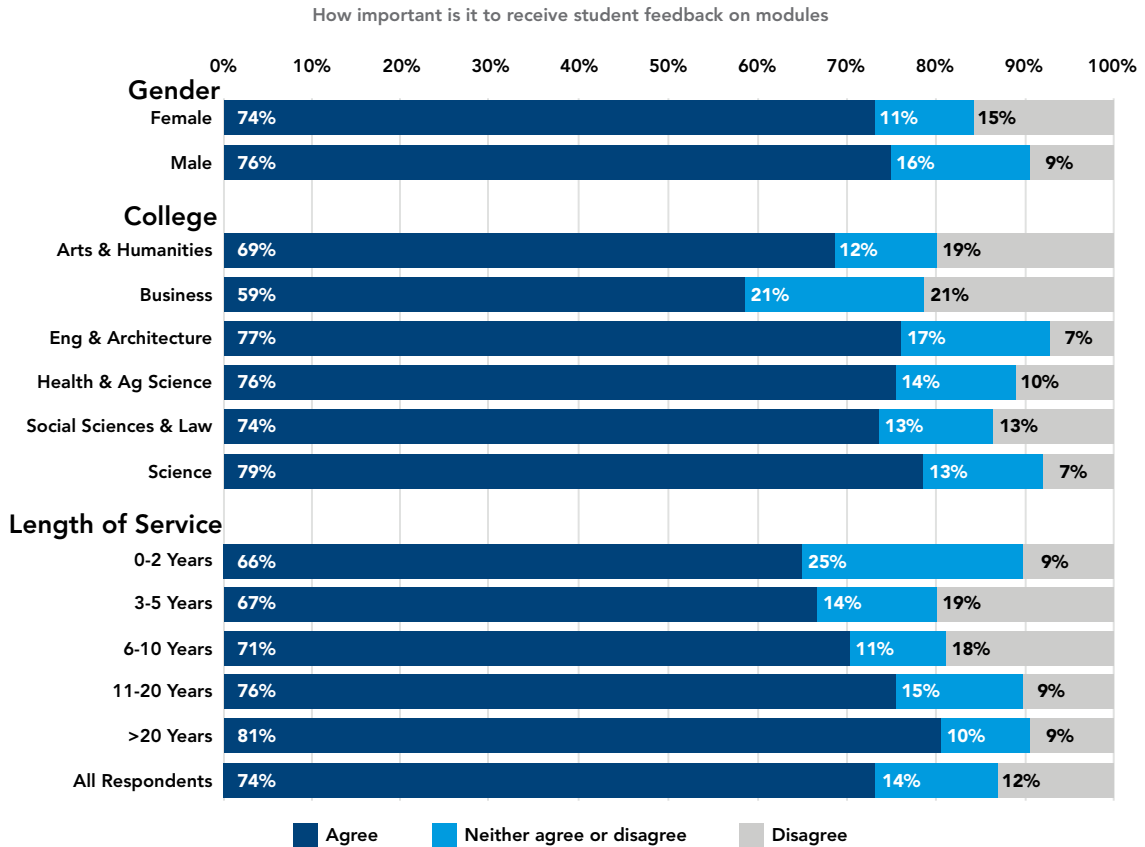
Figure 8 Students who provide feedback take it seriously - respondent breakdown.

3.2   Views about feedback received

A diversity of views emerged about the current questions used and feedback received. Figure 9 illustrates the data.

The current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System provides meaningful feedback to faculty through student responses to
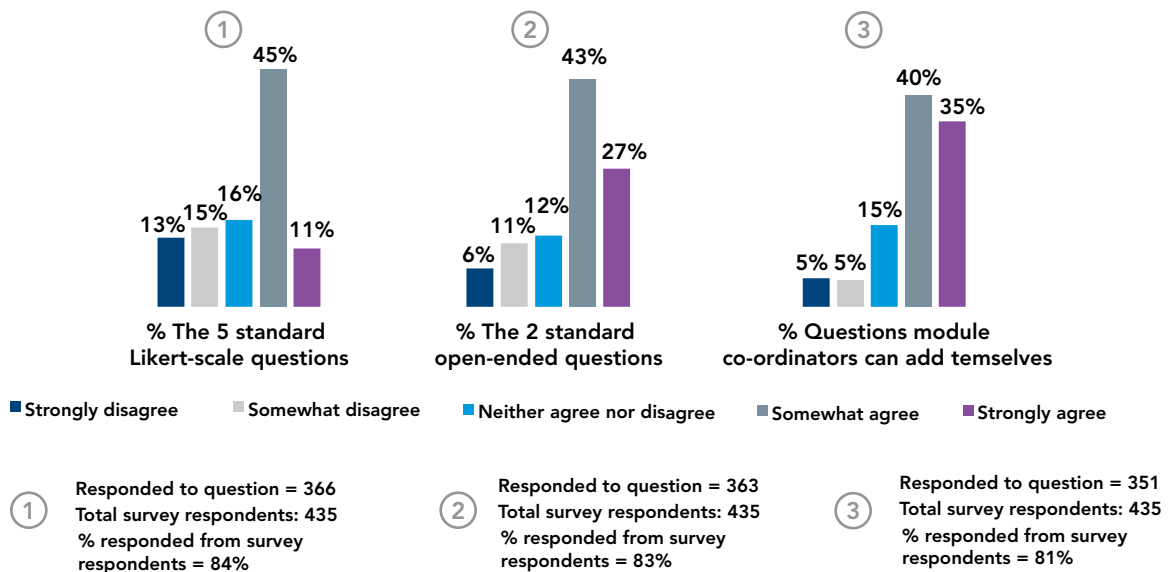
Figure 9 Views about feedback from survey questions.

Over two thirds (70%) indicated that the open-ended questions provided useful feedback and just over half (56%) were of the view that standard Likert-scale questions provided useful feedback, while half of respondents (75%) believed that the additional questions offered useful feedback.

A higher proportion of faculty in the Colleges of Engineering and Architecture and Health and Agricultural Sciences agreed with this view, compared to faculty in other Colleges. Figure 10 illustrates the data.

The 5 standard Likert-scale questions
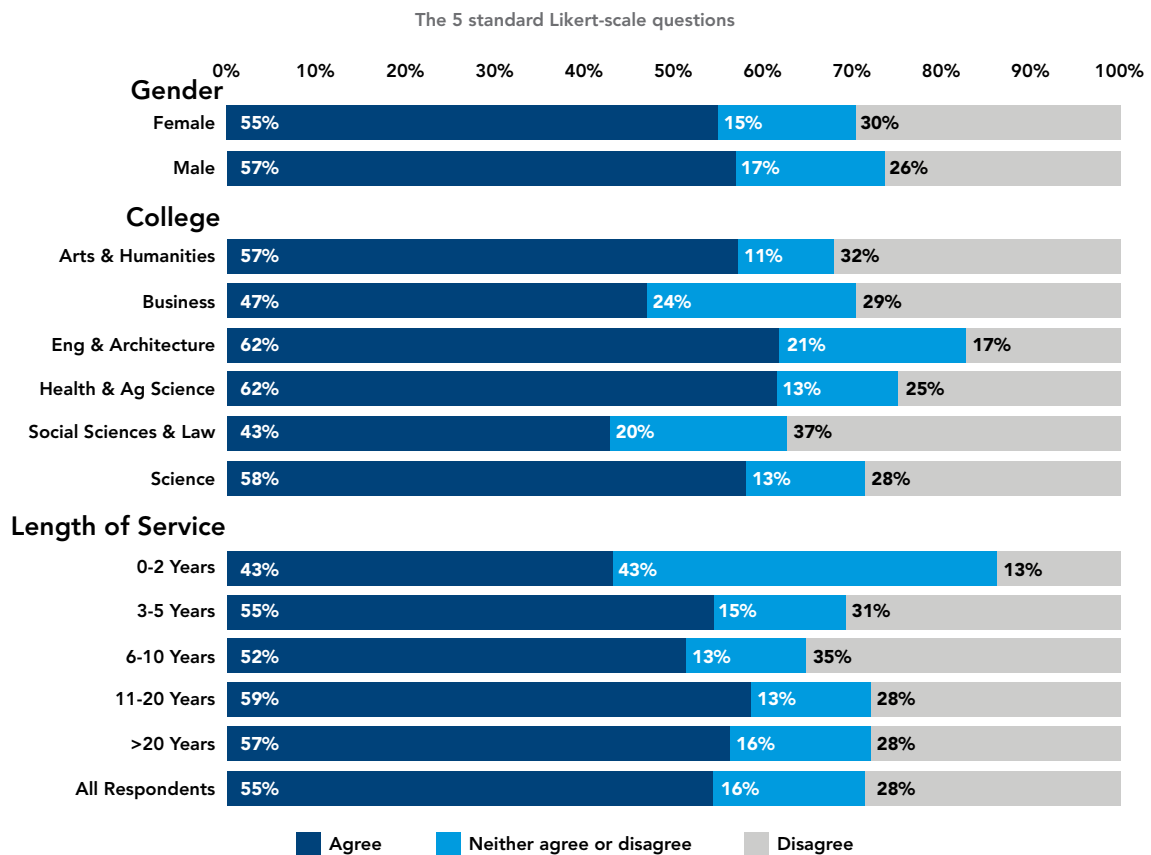
Figure 10 Likert-scale questions.

A higher proportion of males compared to females viewed the open-ended questions as providing helpful feedback, as did a higher proportion of faculty in the College of Arts and Humanities and faculty with over 10 years' experience. No significant difference emerged between the categories. Figure 11 illustrates the data.

The 2 standard open-ended questions

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Gender			
Female	68%	12%	20%
Male	72%	13%	16%
College			
Arts & Humanities	81%	11%	9%
Business	65%	15%	21%
Eng & Architecture	69%	17%	14%
Health & Ag Science	65%	11%	24%
Social Sciences & Law	66%	16%	18%
Science	74%	11%	15%
Length of Service			
0-2 Years	59%	24%	17%
3-5 Years	65%	16%	19%
6-10 Years	70%	6%	25%
11-20 Years	74%	9%	18%
>20 Years	70%	18%	12%
All Respondents	69%	13%	18%

■ Agree ■ Neither agree or disagree ■ Disagree

Figure 11 Open-ended questions.

In the open commentary, faculty articulated a number of views about the questions and the feedback that they generated. Figure 12 illustrates the data.

Q4. The current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System provides meaningful feedback to faculty through student responses

Category	No of responses
5 Standard Qs not helpful	36
2 Open Qs helpful	19
Questions MC can add helpful	16
5 standard questions helpful	10
2 open qs not helpful	9
Questions MC can add not helpful	4
Neutral	2
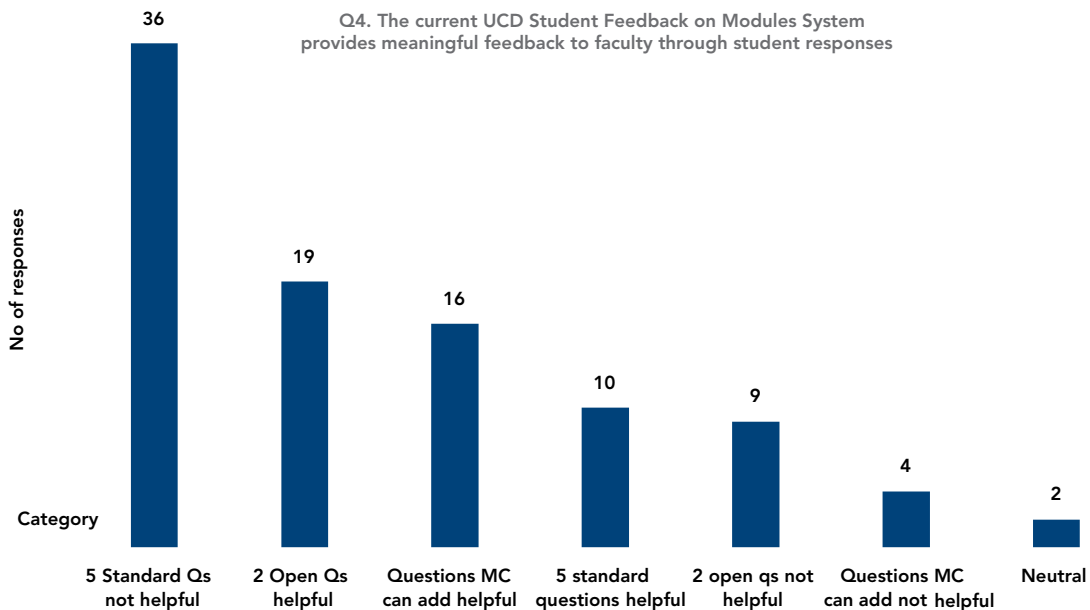
Figure 12 Comments on meaningfulness of the feedback received.

Ninety six members of faculty provided comments in relation to the questions used in the current system.

3.2.1   Standard questions not helpful

Thirty-six faculty (38%, n=96) indicated that they did not find the standard questions helpful. They offered a number of reasons for this. For many faculty members, the Likert scale results were calculated incorrectly and reflected a crude approach. The following comments illustrates this view:

"Calculating averages as if they are scale variables is not appropriate."

"The Likert-scale questions are fundamentally flawed. Each response is given a numerical value and responses are then treated as mathematical values. This completely contravenes the nature of the data. These are qualitative, not quantitative, data. They are ordinal, not interval, i.e. the responses lie in a hierarchical order relative to each other, but there is not a fixed, definable, mathematical interval between them to make them suitable for application of the mathematical process of adding, averaging and providing standard deviations. The potential consequence is of inappropriately representing results. This has to be changed."

"The Likert scale questions are hard to use because of the calibration issues."

"Scales have little meaning."

"The Likert scale is very crude, to be honest, and is only valuable to spot the really good or the really bad teachers."

"The five standard questions are bad questions to ask students, presupposing a quasi-contractual and formalistic engagement with education according to 'aims, objectives and outcomes', as though undertaking a degree was akin to enrolling on a corporate management training course."

Other faculty members were of the view that Likert scales measured the popularity of modules and lecturers, which allowed bias to develop:

"The Likert scale questions only serve to highlight an extremely popular module (preponderance of 5s) or one with which there is some problem in delivery (preponderance of 1s). Otherwise it does not provide the kind of useful and actionable information that comes from the open-ended and bespoke questions."

"There is lots of peer-reviewed literature out there highlighting the flaws in the use of Likert scales for student feedback, not least the way that students rate their lecturers differently according to gender, etc. Likerts are at best a measure of likeability. I am there to challenge my students sufficiently for them to grow without stunting their development or monopolising their time (not for them to like me)."

"I think the standard Likert-scale question model is inherently flawed because of unintentional, unconscious and/or inherent bias. Several studies show that female lecturers usually score lower on such tests because of the patriarchal nature of any given society. And the same goes for lecturers of colour or other minority lecturers. Also, some students who have not done well on the module for any variety of reasons (late or no submission of assignments, or a low grade on an assignment being just two examples) are prone to giving low scores on the Likert-scale questions because they feel the module did not serve them well when, in fact, the reality of the situation is that the student did not put in the required work on the module. People in general, and not just students, rarely ask themselves if they had any part of blame when any situation, including a university module, does not produce a favourable outcome for them. And therefore the natural human response with a university module is for the poor-performing student to pass blame for their lack of engagement with the module onto the lecturer or the syllabus that the lecturer designed."

"The quality of feedback using a Likert scale is questionable. The online survey is biased in the first instance as it only captures responders. Their responses in turn can be influenced by so many factors

(including the weather, their mood etc), and the distinction between the Likert items is relative in any case. The format likens education to a commodity for rating in a TripAdvisor fashion."

Some faculty expressed the view that students did not understand what the five standard questions were asking, particularly with reference to learning outcomes:

"Some of the five generic questions are not very well understood by students."

"Students don't know what the learning outcomes of modules are, so no point asking them that."

"Think that the five standard/default questions included, such as 'have learning objectives been met' are confusing for many if not most students. They would need to be rephrased using words that are understood better by students, so the results can be more meaningful."

"I don't think the students fully understand the wording of the Likert-scale questions - many don't know what their learning outcomes on a module are (even if we provide them with this information, they mostly aren't interested), or how to tell whether they have met them."

Reflecting a similar theme, it was the opinion of some faculty members that students did not want to answer the question on learning objectives until they had received their results:

"In my modules, the third question on whether students have achieved the objectives of the module always gets a lower score than the other questions; I've discussed this with students and the reason for this is because they do now know how well they have done (Final module grade) when they fill it in and are hedging their bets; it doesn't seem to make any difference that they are doing well in continuous assessment; until they know the end result, they are reluctant to say they have achieved the objectives."

"The five standard questions might be better phrased, e.g. it does not seem likely that many students would 'Strongly disagree' with 'I have a better understanding of the subject after completing this module', and it's not entirely clear how students should respond to 'I achieved the learning outcomes for this module' when very few will have achieved all the learning outcomes."

Two faculty members (2%, n=96) suggested that the default questions should be rephrased:

"Questions should be asked in a different way. Students are not in the position to truly evaluate whether a course was well designed or whether the lecturer knew a lot about the topic or whether the assignments helped their learning. What they can do is evaluate their own feelings. So, instead of asking if 'The assignment helped my learning', it should be asked if 'I feel like the assignment helped my learning' (or similar). It also encourages students to be more self-critical and take responsibility, instead of just blaming the professor."

"I feel the questions we cannot change need to be revised, as they are not very informative."

3.2.2 Standard questions helpful

Ten faculty members (10%, n=96) faculty members expressed the view that the standard questions provided meaningful feedback. They offered a number of reasons for this. Some liked the balance between quantitative and qualitative feedback:

"I like a balance between quantitative and qualitative feedback - the former is an early warning system (especially for head of school taking wider view)."

"These two components - standard questions with numerical scale, and open-ended wording questions, should be maintained in any new system!"

"Questions are fine."

For others, the Likert scale questions provided a good sense of the student experience:

"The Likert scale questions give a good general idea of students' experience."

"It gives you a general sense of how students are reacting to the module."

"I believe that standardised rating scale and open-ended questions are both valid and reliable methods of gaining feedback, but all measurement methods have limitations. I have seen changes in ratings from year to year, but whether these are due to changes in teaching method, lecturer or just the student variability itself cannot be unpicked."

3.2.3   Open-ended questions provide meaningful feedback
Nineteen faculty members (20%, n=96) felt that the open questions provided meaningful feedback and provided an opportunity to reflect on practice:

"It is my critical and researched opinion that open-ended questions will produce much better feedback that is far more helpful to us as educators because 1] we can read between the lines with students who are passing blame for their own lack of engagement with the module onto the lecturer; 2] the open-ended free-form written answer is extremely helpful to us lecturers when we engage in reflexive pedagogical practice in order to improve and enhance our modules for their next offering."

"The answers to open-ended questions enable to reflect on particular aspects of module delivery."

"Qualitative feedback is invaluable for module enhancement and improvement."

"Students who respond to the open-ended questions provide considered feedback, which provides the module coordinator with more detailed information to inform enhancement."

Two faculty members (2%, n=96) felt that the open-ended questions offered reasons as to why students rated the standard questions as they did:

"The open-ended questions are the most useful, as it is then possible to see why people disagree/strongly disagree to the five questions."

"A good questionnaire should not only identify that there is a problem but also identify what that problem is. Open-ended questions are more useful from that point of view."

Two faculty members (2%, n=96) were of the view that the open-ended questions focused on the individual module, which was considered important:

"Open-ended ones to tailor questions to each individual module and the areas I feel will most benefit from feedback."

"Students' commentary in their own prose on modules is by far the most useful to module coordinators."

3.2.4   Open-ended questions do not provide meaningful feedback
Nine faculty members (9%, n=96) expressed the view that open-ended questions did not provide meaningful feedback. For some, this was linked to the nature of the comments made by students who do so anonymously:

"The open-ended questions have given a platform to some individuals who are protected by anonymity. Derogatory comments, rude remarks and unprofessionalism are now the norm. I do not think it is fair that student comments are anonymous. Anonymised for the module coordinator, yes, but completely anonymous? No."

"Unfortunately, the open-ended questions lead to personal comments on staff members, despite being advised not to do so."

"The open-ended questions appear to allow for individual grievances, so answers cannot always be considered typical of a number of students."

"Open-ended questions can be skewed by extreme opinions either way."

Other faculty referred to the fact that students did not complete the open-ended questions:

"I have never received any replies to the online open-ended questions."

"Most students just complete the five standard questions and do not move on to others."

For one faculty member, it was extremely difficult to analyse the qualitative data:

"It is extremely hard to analyse qualitative feedback, especially for large modules. So while there is lots of useful information available, it is very hard to make sense of it."

3.2.5 Additional questions and meaningful feedback

Sixteen faculty members (17%, n=96) commented on the additional questions. For some, the additional questions allowed module coordinators to focus on innovative teaching:

"The flexible questions are better as they can be tailored to evaluate a particular innovation in the teaching of the module."

"I always add several text-based questions, which are much more useful: what was the most interesting / least interesting text? What topics should be expanded / omitted next year? What assessment structure and components would you recommend?"

"If I implement a particular initiative or form of assessment into my module, I like to ask specifically about that. I also like to ask about the amount of time students needed for my module relative to others."

"Adding own questions can at least steer it towards the specific mode of teaching, eg online/debates etc."

"The questions module coordinators can add themselves can be a very valuable tool not only to obtain student feedback, but to gauge the impact of teaching innovations introduced in the preceding semester."

For other faculty members, the opportunity to add in questions allowed them to target specific areas of the module:

"Most meaningful information I have received has come from the feedback on specific issues via the open-ended questions I add myself."

"The option to provide your own questions is critical as it ensures feedback on targeted points."

3.2.6 Additional questions not providing meaningful feedback

Four faculty members (4%, n=96) did not feel that additional questions provided meaningful feedback, mainly due to the limited number of questions that they could add to the survey:

> "The questions coordinators can add themselves are limited in number. One size does not fit all. Different questions are required for History as opposed to Chemistry."

> "The number of questions that module coordinators can add themselves is ridiculously low and a joke when one considers that the figure is part of an already very limited amount (six) of optional questions."

> "To be honest, I have felt restricted in the max number of questions allowed, particularly when one wants to ask re: online, practical activities."

3.3   The role of the current system

Faculty were asked about the role of the current student feedback system. Figure 13 illustrates the data.

In your opinion, what do you feel the role of the current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System is?

Strongly disagree ■   **Somewhat disagree** ■   **Neither agree nor disagree** ■   **Somewhat agree** ■   **Strongly agree** ■

1. Responded to question = 367
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 84%

2. Responded to question = 369
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 85%

3. Responded to question = 360
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 83%

4. Responded to question = 360
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 83%

5. Responded to question = 368
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 85%

6. Responded to question = 369
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 85%

Figure 13 Role of the current system.

Sixty five per cent of faculty were of the view that the role of the current system was to improve module content. Less than three quarters (73%) indicated that the system was there to satisfy institutional requirements and (72%) suggested that the system sought to improve teaching. Just over two thirds (68%) indicated that the role was to improve students' learning experience. Over half (51%) referred to the role of the system in the promotions process.

A higher proportion of females compared to males felt that the purpose of the current system was to improve module content. This was also true in the College of Engineering and Architecture and for faculty with over 10 years' service. No significant difference emerged between the categories. Figure 14 illustrates the data.

To improve module content

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Gender			
Female	68%	16%	16%
Male	63%	15%	22%
College			
Arts & Humanities	65%	10%	25%
Business	50%	19%	31%
Eng & Architecture	74%	7%	19%
Health & Ag Science	68%	17%	14%
Social Sciences & Law	58%	17%	25%
Science	68%	13%	19%
Length of Service			
0-2 Years	67%	23%	10%
3-5 Years	64%	11%	25%
6-10 Years	51%	25%	24%
11-20 Years	70%	11%	19%
>20 Years	64%	17%	19%
All Respondents	65%	15%	20%

Legend: Agree ■ | Neither agree or disagree ■ | Disagree ■

Figure 14 Role of system to improve module content.

A higher proportion of females compared to males were of the view that the system was to satisfy institutional requirements, as did faculty in College of Engineering and Architecture and faculty who had between three and five years' service. Figure 15 illustrates the data.

To improve module content

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Gender			
Female	81%	10%	9%
Male	65%	24%	11%
College			
Arts & Humanities	71%	12%	18%
Business	75%	16%	9%
Eng & Architecture	69%	24%	7%
Health & Ag Science	78%	16%	6%
Social Sciences & Law	68%	15%	17%
Science	74%	22%	5%
Length of Service			
0-2 Years	74%	19%	6%
3-5 Years	80%	15%	5%
6-10 Years	75%	13%	13%
11-20 Years	69%	19%	12%
>20 Years	75%	17%	8%
All Respondents	73%	17%	10%
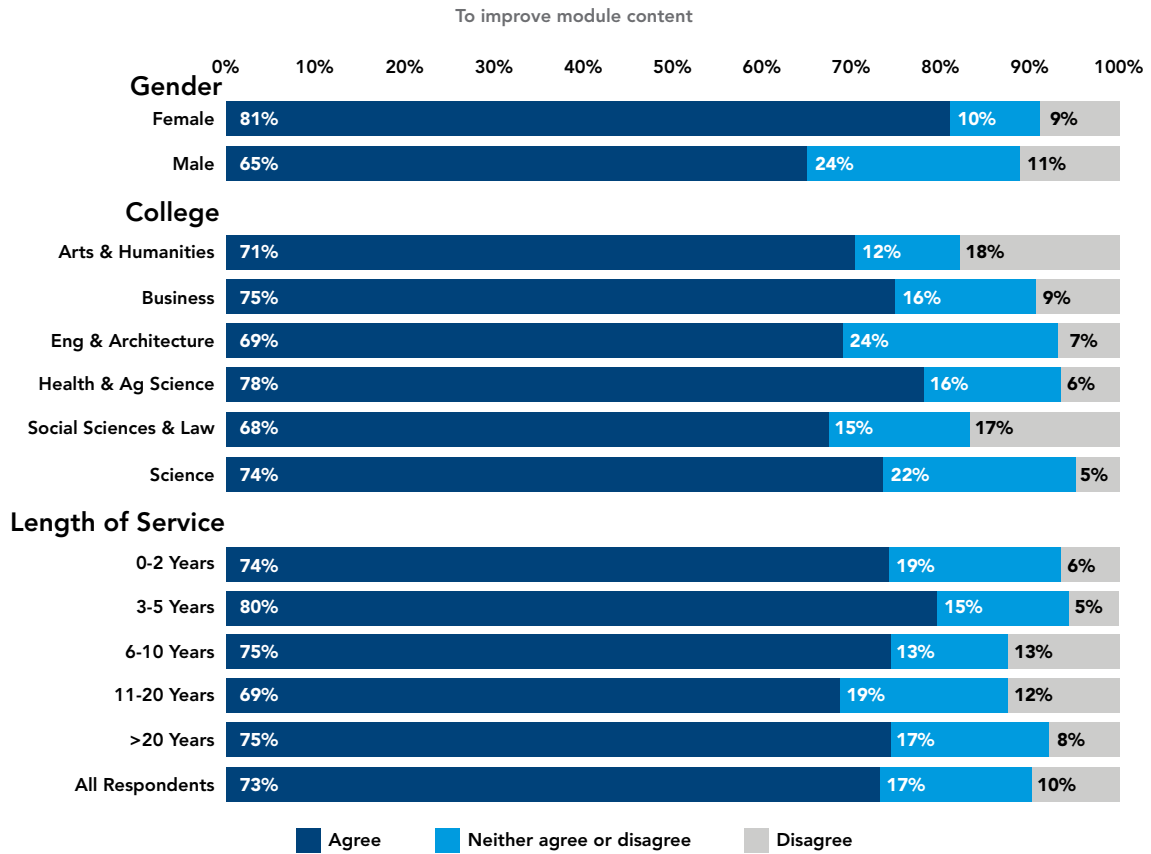
Figure 15 Role of system to satisfy institutional requirements.

A higher proportion of faculty in the College of Science felt that the role of the system was to improve the quality of teaching compared to faculty in other Colleges, as did faculty with over 20 years of service. Figure 16 illustrates the data.

To improve the quality of teaching

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Gender			
Female	72%	13%	15%
Male	74%	10%	17%
College			
Arts & Humanities	74%	8%	18%
Business	61%	12%	27%
Eng & Architecture	72%	7%	21%
Health & Ag Science	76%	12%	13%
Social Sciences & Law	65%	15%	20%
Science	79%	11%	11%
Length of Service			
0-2 Years	65%	16%	19%
3-5 Years	74%	6%	21%
6-10 Years	64%	16%	20%
11-20 Years	74%	12%	14%
>20 Years	77%	9%	14%
All Respondents	72%	11%	16%

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Neither agree or disagree ▢ Disagree

Figure 16 Role of the system to improve the quality of teaching.

71

A significant difference emerged between females and males with reference to the role of the system in providing evidence as part of the promotions process [χ^2 8.067, df 2, p=.018]. A higher proportion of females agreed with this view compared to males. This view was also held by early career faculty who had two years of service compared to those who were in UCD for a longer period. Figure 17 illustrates the data.

To provide evidence for promotion

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Gender			
Female	58%	24%	18%
Male	44%	30%	26%
College			
Arts & Humanities	55%	20%	25%
Business	53%	19%	28%
Eng & Architecture	45%	31%	24%
Health & Ag Science	50%	29%	21%
Social Sciences & Law	55%	24%	21%
Science	55%	31%	13%
Length of Service			
0-2 Years	68%	19%	13%
3-5 Years	61%	20%	19%
6-10 Years	40%	29%	31%
11-20 Years	47%	29%	24%
>20 Years	53%	31%	16%
All Respondents	52%	27%	22%

Figure 17 Role of system to provide evidence for promotion.

Eighty faculty members provided additional commentary about the role of the current feedback system. Figure 18 illustrates the data.
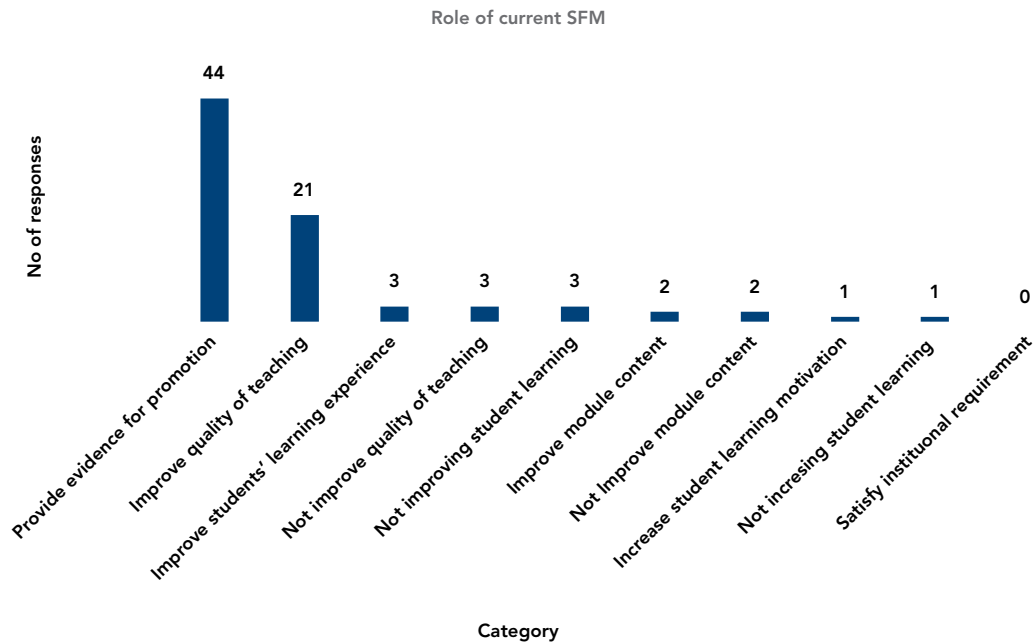
Figure 18 Faculty commentary on role of the current system.

3.3.1 Role in promotions process

Forty-four faculty members (55%, n=80) viewed the system as playing a significant role in promotions. The following comments illustrates this view:

"My understanding is that the module feedback mechanism can be set to 'hidden' by those wishing to do so on the system when applying for promotion. This is wrong and needs to be changed. If we are to pay more than lip service to the value we place on teaching our students, then T&L needs to become a larger part of the promotion process and module evaluations and low response rates should be large indicators of reaching satisfactory or excellence in the teaching criteria for promotion."

"Using the outputs as part of promotion might make the system more valued (feared)."
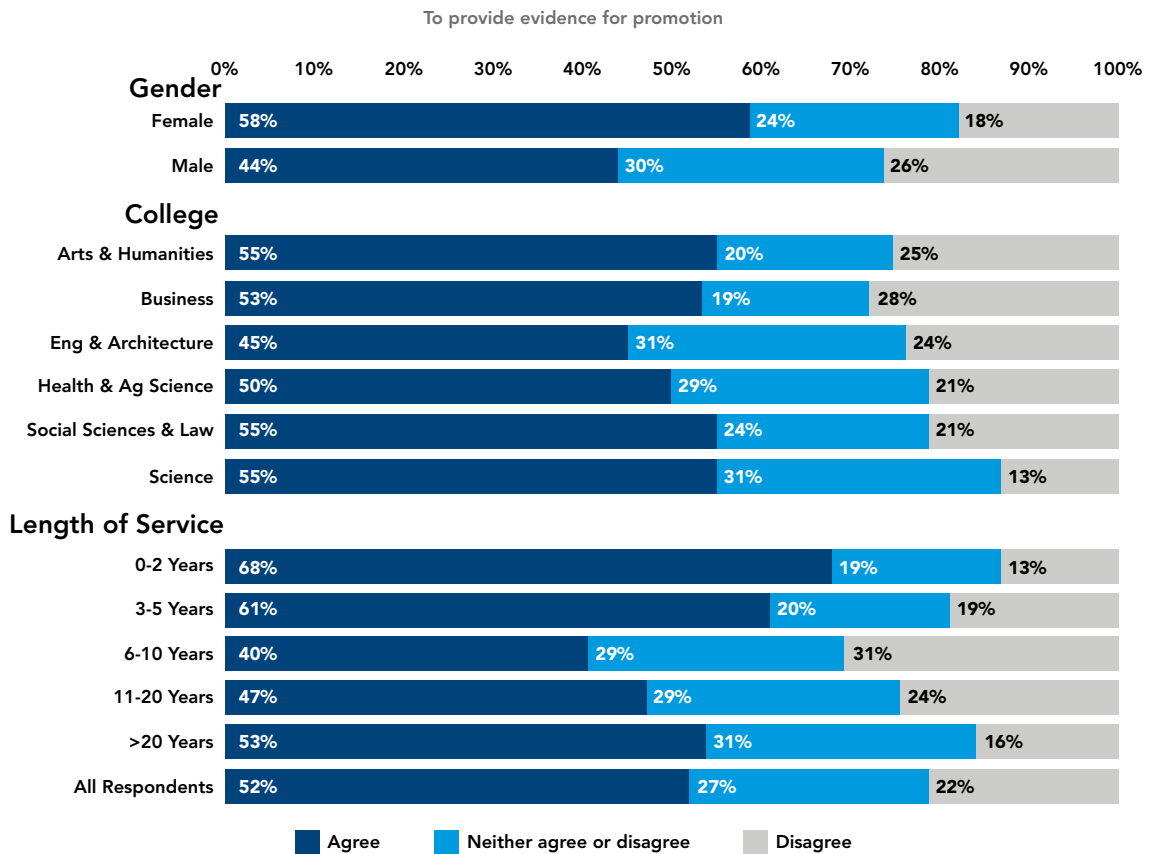
"It would make sense to use the students' comments to provide evidence for promotion, as students who give feedback do so to acknowledge good practice and/or demonstrate that they believe in their lecturers' willingness to take their views on board. This is in itself an indication of their confidence in their lecturer (and tutors, if applicable). Consistently low response percentages, for instances, are likely to indicate that a member of staff is not regarded as approachable or likely to change his/her approach, and this insularity is something UCD should not reward with a promotion."

"Promotion applications should have evaluation records, including comments, as mandatory in promotion applications. It is all too often that academics that concentrate on their research but get rubbish feedback from students get promoted because the academics choose for the feedback to not be included in their promotion application."

"Do not allow student feedback module information to be hidden or ignored in promotional protocols. This should be the main metric by which a lecturer is evaluated on their T&L activities."

Other faculty members pointed to the fact that when the system was first introduced, faculty were assured that it would not be used as part of the promotion process and felt aggrieved that this commitment was not adhered to:

> "Even though academic staff were told that student feedback would not be used in promotion, I have written evidence that it is used for promotion. Therefore, I am inclined to be cynical."

> "Unfortunately, the current online system is compromised by being made a part of promotion when it had been promised that it would not be. The refusal to consider other means of feedback gathered over previous years by schools was insensitive to long-established and valuable systems of gathering meaningful and useful feedback that reflected well on staff and their hard work over many years."

> "It has also become a box to tick on the promotional forms, even though when it was being introduced by teaching and learning at the start it was guaranteed not to become part of the process........."

> "To provide evidence for promotion - this was not what the system was developed to do."

> "It was never meant to collect student feedback, but rather as a crude way of measuring lecturer's teaching ability. It is well-documented by now that the system has been abused in recent promotion rounds, despite reassurances that this would not happen."

> "The fact that it is reportedly being used in this way is a breach of trust that affects how other new departures (P4G) are viewed."

Some faculty members pointed to the inadequacy of the system as a reason not to include it as part of the promotions process. Having multiple lecturers on programmes added a significant layer of complexity that is not recognised by the current system:

> "My understanding is that they inform the promotion process and in my view, this can be problematic. It is fine if the module coordinator is the main contributor and has potential to run the module as they view appropriate. If there are a lot of contributors, the mark is not necessarily reflective of them or their ability to influence the situation."

> "Evidence for promotion is frustrating: again in a module with multiple lecturers, poor comments relating to single staff members result in overall low scores, and this is then used in my promotion. Frustrating, especially when poor comments in this case often relate to more senior academic staff members."

> "I believe that when the student feedback is used for promotional purposes, it is used incorrectly. Firstly, module coordinators do not teach all the module content and in some cases, other lecturers teach between 30-50% of the content. As an example, I was involved in the design of a module with the module coordinator and another colleague; we each deliver a third of the content; we all see students to support them with their assignments; we all grade their assignments and input our marks into grade book; we also see the students whose assignments we corrected for feedback. The module coordinator has overall responsibility for the module; however, when the feedback is used as part of the promotion, the only person who gains from the metric is the module coordinator, as this module feedback does not feature on the workspace. A second point is that in the promotion process, the student feedback is viewed as an important metric by the promotion committee, but little regard is given to whether the feedback is from 20% or 30% of the students and as such should be viewed with caution, as with any form of measurement, and therefore should question its role in the process."

> "I would be very reluctant to accord it significant status in promotion applications, as other forms of assessment of teaching should be taken (and are) into account, from teaching awards to student progression in a particular field of study."

Others referred to the poor response rates and not having the opportunity to respond to students' comments:

"The evidence for promotion is not very strong, especially when the sample sizes are typically small (in my case, around 20%)."

"In relation to providing evidence for promotion, the problem with the current system is that there is no opportunity for staff to respond to totally unfair criticism entered by a student, perhaps with mental health issues. In cases where 'vitriol' is unleashed unjustifiably, this remains online and could damage chances of promotion. Such a case arose recently and there appeared to be no opportunity for redress, resulting in anxiety about promotion chances from an otherwise highly respected lecturer."

"The use of feedback for promotion applications is flawed because of the very poor response rate, plus the fact that students may not assess the module under the same criteria as the UCD Promotions Committee. "

"The students don't fill in the survey because they don't think it matters. And since this data does not appear to be used for anything other than promotion and to allow T&L to say they are doing something, it is hard to disagree with the students."

"It should not be used for promotion purposes as the surveys relate to different types of module and the student response rate is typically low (10-20%), meaning that the results do not give a comprehensive picture of student satisfaction with teaching. It would, therefore, be patently unfair to treat them as such and to evaluate performance on this basis."

A number of faculty members referred to the lack of clarity surrounding the use of student feedback as part of the promotions process:

"People are very cynical about it for the most part - and there is no clarity or transparency about how it is used for the promotions process."

"It would be useful if there was a policy explaining how this is/is not taken into account."

"How exactly the student feedback is taken into account during the promotion process is unclear to me."

"I am not sure of the (formal) role that feedback takes in promotion, but most people (I hope) know that it is not a reliable indicator of learning, or of teaching."

"Teaching staff tend to distrust the current feedback system vis a vis evidence for promotion, as the criteria for promotion are far from transparent in UCD."

For some faculty, using the system for promotion purposes would not improve the teaching experience:

"Using student module feedback for promotion provides a motivation to teachers to make modules more appealing to students. This does not necessarily make these modules better examples of teaching."

"This feedback should be purely to allow a coordinator to improve their module, thereby allowing them to improve the student learning experience. If used for promotion, there is a risk that coordinators will be unwilling to try new things."

3.3.2   Enhancement of teaching and learning

Twenty-one faculty members (26%, n=80) felt that the role current system was to enhance teaching and learning:

> "I think when used correctly, that it is a good system and relatively fair. I find it useful and have tailored all of my modules to accommodate a lot of what student have suggested."

> "I believe the system is very valuable for improving the quality of teaching and student learning if used correctly."

> "The answers to the questions I set myself are usually useful and are answered by either very enthusiastic students or those who are unhappy with their grade; it is also useful to hear from the latter group to help provide more support in future and identify where more supporting materials, for example, could be provided."

> "It allows students to reflect on their learning experience."

> "I think that it improves student learning experience for future students but perhaps not the student completing the feedback."

> "I find it useful really for the comments about how the module is delivered, whether lectures or tutorials, and I often ask about which topics they found interesting, so for me it's a way of making sure that I what am doing is done well and engages the students."

> "I use the feedback to make changes each year e.g. this year I will change assessment based on feedback received. However, sometimes feedback on the exact same issue (e.g. class participation) can vary from year to year."

> "The feedback helps improve the module, and the content of the lectures."

Three faculty members (4%, n=80) who commented did not think that the current system enhanced teaching and learning:

> "Of the core questions, only one relates to teaching, and this is asked by way of whether the teaching supported the student's learning. The other questions relate to understanding of the subject, assessment, achieving the learning outcomes and overall satisfaction."

> "Students are not provided with an opportunity to provide feedback to support enhancement of teaching quality."

> "Utterly biased system that requires no thought process from hierarchy to judge teaching by. The most demanding teaching will elicit strong negative views from some students who are looking to pass their exam without achieving in-depth learning."

3.4   Satisfaction with aspects of the current system

Faculty were asked to indicate their satisfaction levels with different elements of the system; the ability to add extra questions; the capacity to monitor response rates and the quality of reports produced. A range of views emerged. Figure 19 illustrates the data.

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System?
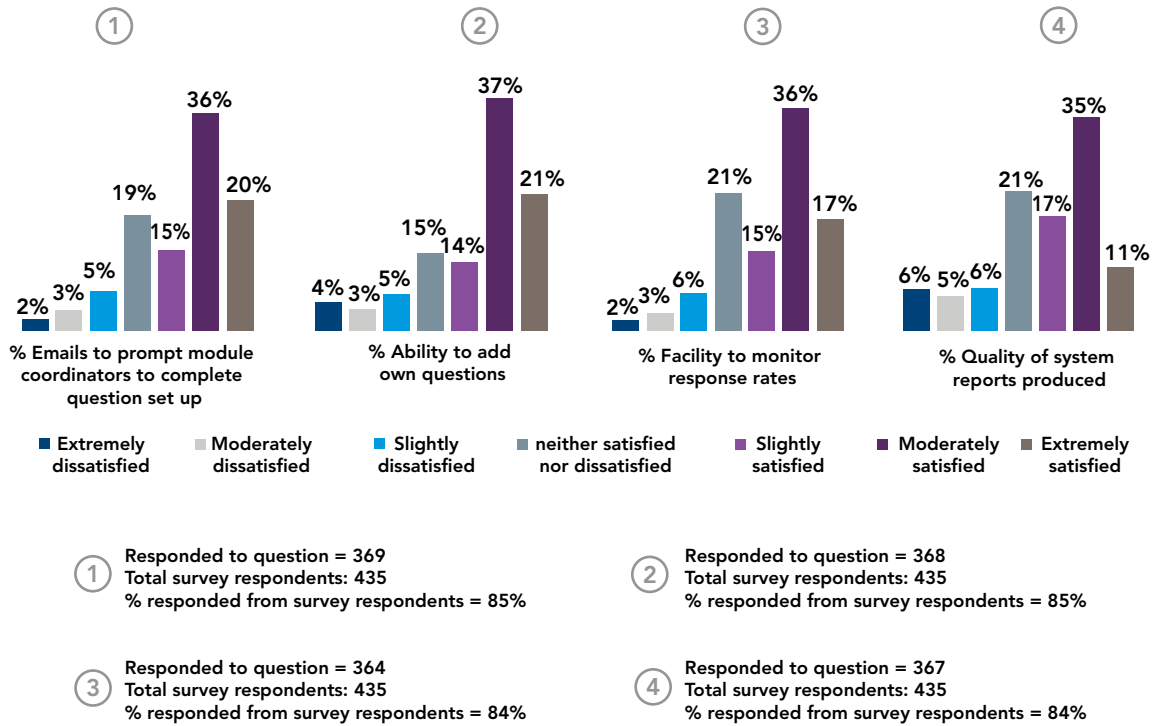
Figure 19 Level of satisfaction with current system.

Over half (58%) were satisfied with the additional questions element and (56%) were satisfied with the notification emails to module coordinators to set up questions. Just over half (53%) were satisfied with the ability to monitor response rates. Over two fifths (46%) were satisfied with the quality of reports produced by the system.

A significant difference emerged between females and males with reference to additional questions [χ^2 7.759, df 2, p=.021]. A higher proportion of females were happy with the facility to add extra questions on the system. A higher proportion of faculty in the College of Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences and Law were satisfied with this aspect of the system as were faculty who had more than 20 years' of service. Figure 20 illustrates the data.

Questions module co-ordinators can add themselves
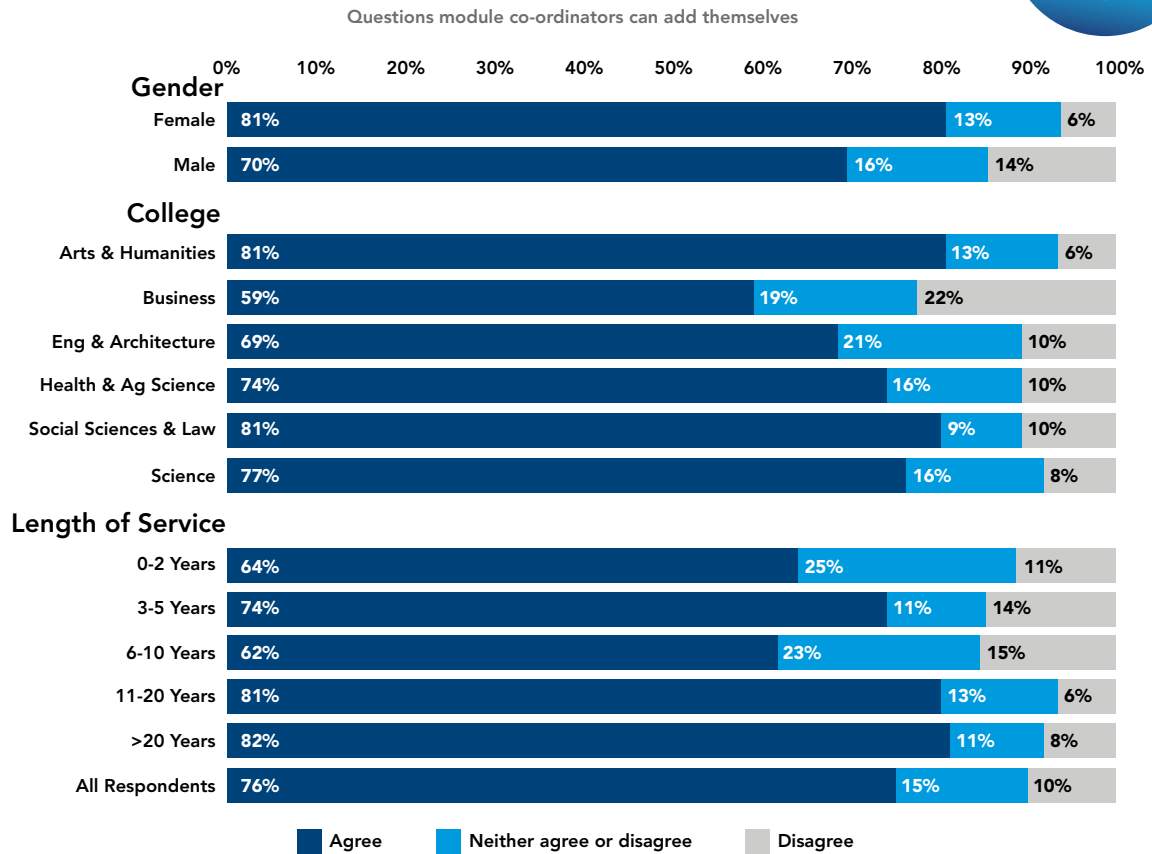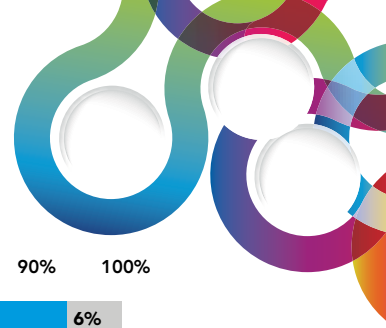
Figure 20 Satisfaction with capacity to include additional questions.

A higher proportion of males compared to females were satisfied with email reminders to set up questions, as were faculty from the College of Arts and Humanities and faculty with less than two years of service. No significant difference emerged between the categories. Figure 21 illustrates the data.

Emails to prompt module coordinators to complete question set up
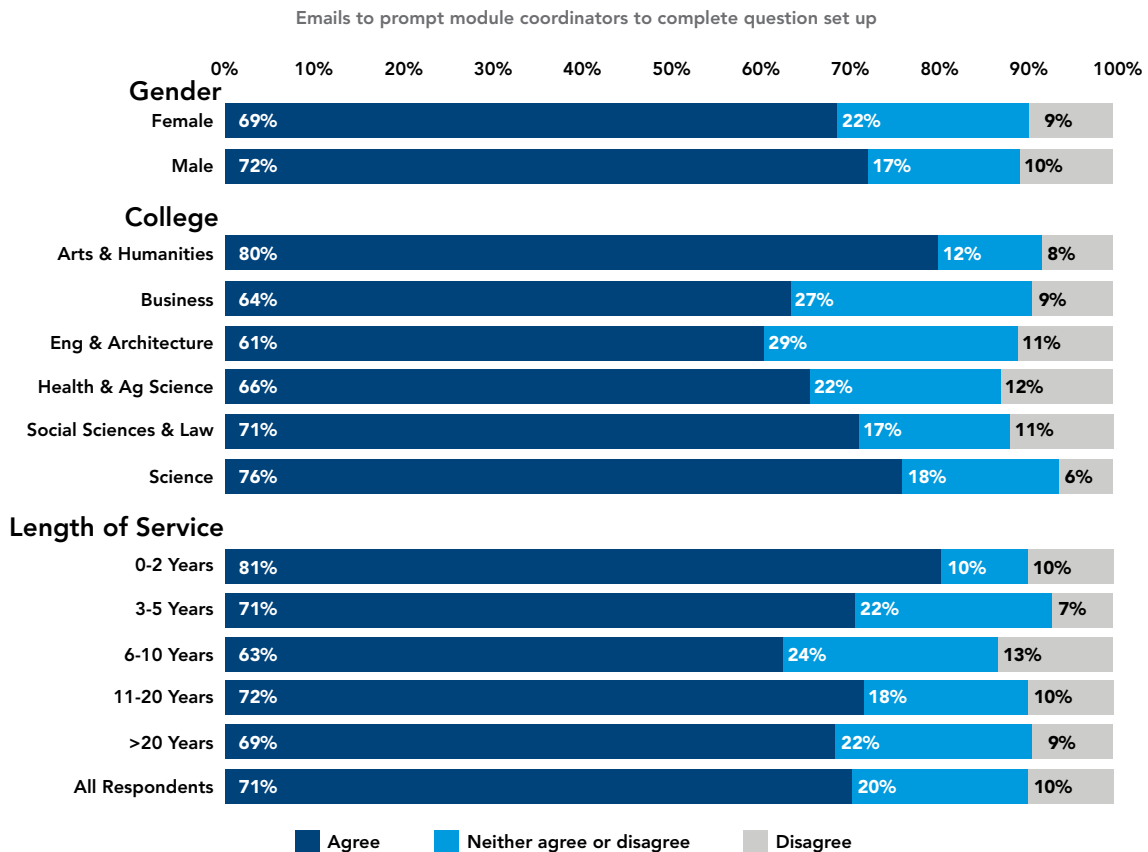
Figure 21 Satisfaction with email prompts

Thirty one faculty members commented on their satisfaction levels with different aspects of the current system. Figure 22 illustrates the data.

Satisfaction with elements of current system
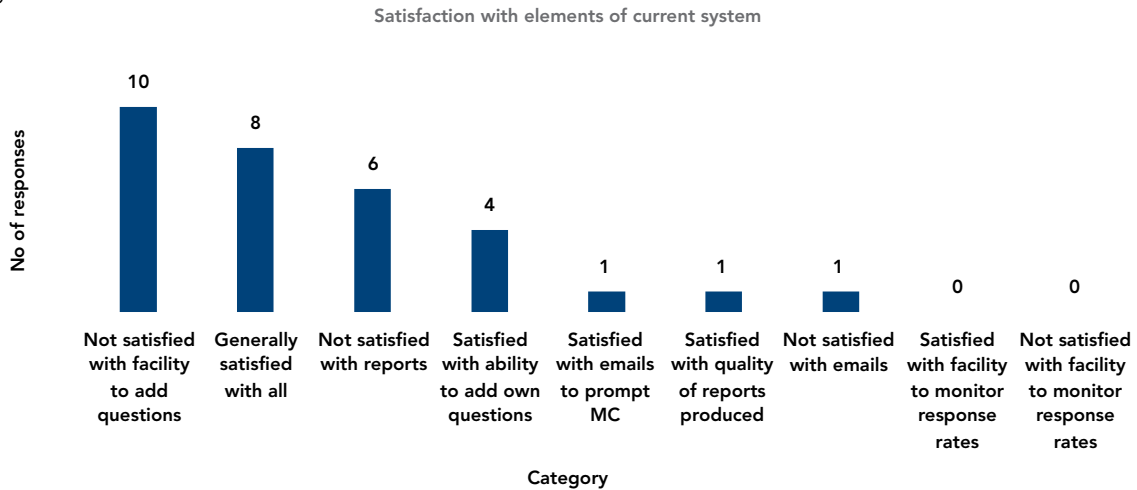
Figure 22 Faculty commentary on satisfaction levels.

3.4.1   Not satisfied with additional questions

Ten faculty members (32%, n=31) were not satisfied with the facility to add questions. Some faculty encountered difficulties when including additional questions:

"System forgets which questions were asked the previous time - very annoying if you want to use the same questions again."

"None of the questions I have attempted to add to my feedback questionnaires, as module coordinator, have ever actually appeared for the students. I put considerable amount of time into this a few years ago, and the system failed me."

"Adding questions on to the current descriptor has been a nightmare - I now avoid it - since when I have done it, the feedback system in its entirety was disabled (I was informed by some committed students) and it could not be fixed by IT- and I received 0 feedback for two final year intense teaching seminars that spring semester."

Other faculty members suggested that module coordinators should have the opportunity to tailor questions using free text questions:

"The module coordinator should be able to tailor the survey much more by writing in free text questions relevant to the module. While I understand that there need to be some common questions for comparison purposes, the current format is far too inflexible."

"In the past I have added my own questions, but since it is only possible to choose from a limited set (many of which overlap with the standard questions), I did not learn much more from this."

"Module Coordinators should be able to add more than two questions, so that we can tease out the information we want to know from the students about our and our lecturers' performance and quality of learning and assessment in our modules."

"Staff should not be limited to only six of their own questions."

3.4.2   Reports from the system – not satisfied
Six faculty members (19%, n=31) suggested that it was difficult to monitor the reports from year to year:

"The reporting is good, but would be good to be able to download all data ourselves, for analysis."

"The way the reports are presented does not allow a comparison of scores year-on-year without downloading/creating separate spreadsheets."

Some faculty commented on the poor presentation of the reports:

"PDFs of feedback are not prepared properly by the system - it looks terrible and information is often cut off."

"Didn't know you could monitor response rates, quality of reports is terrible - hard to figure out what to click or save."

"Tricky to find your way around the reports - basically, I want everything to appear in a single spreadsheet, whether it is numeric or text."

"The presentation of the results could be more visually instructive. For example, for the Likert scale results a graphic representation would be helpful."

3.4.3   Generally satisfied with elements of the system
Eight faculty members (26%, n=31) were generally satisfied with all elements of the current system. The following comments illustrate the general view:

"All good."

"I think the system is necessary and operates satisfactory."

"Feedback system works. Academics need time to properly respond."

"The system itself is not bad; it's just that we need to get more students to fill this out to be of relevance."

"Easy to use system."

"These are all fine - probably can be improved, but the real issue is student take-up."

"Seems like a good and efficient system, even if rates of response are low."

"It's pretty good - I'm not entirely convinced that the standard questions really get to the heart of the matter and I would like to be able [to include] more of my own, but on the whole, it's a good system."

3.5   Ways in which faculty use feedback

Faculty were asked to indicate the ways in which they use feedback from the current system. Figure 23 illustrates the data.

How do you currently use the feedback that you receive from the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System?

Legend: Never | Sometimes | About half the time | Most of the time | Always

① Responded to question = 344
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 79%

② Responded to question = 343
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 79%

③ Responded to question = 344
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 79%

④ Responded to question = 338
Total suvey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 78%

⑤ Responded to question = 337
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 78%

⑥ Responded to question = 342
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 79%

⑦ Responded to question = 340
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 78%

⑧ Responded to question = 336
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 77%

⑨ Responded to question = 338
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 78%

Figure 23 Ways in which faculty use feedback.

Just under a third (32%) of faculty used feedback to review notes and module materials. Over a quarter of faculty (29%) used feedback to review assessment and a quarter (25%) used feedback to review the provision of tutorials, seminars, labs and practicals. Just under a quarter (23%) reviewed student workload as a result of feedback. Slightly over a fifth (22%) changed their teaching methods, reviewed the way they provided feedback to students and reflected on their accessibility to students. A higher proportion of faculty from the College of Business never used student feedback to change course content, compared to faculty from other Colleges. Figure 24 illustrates the data.
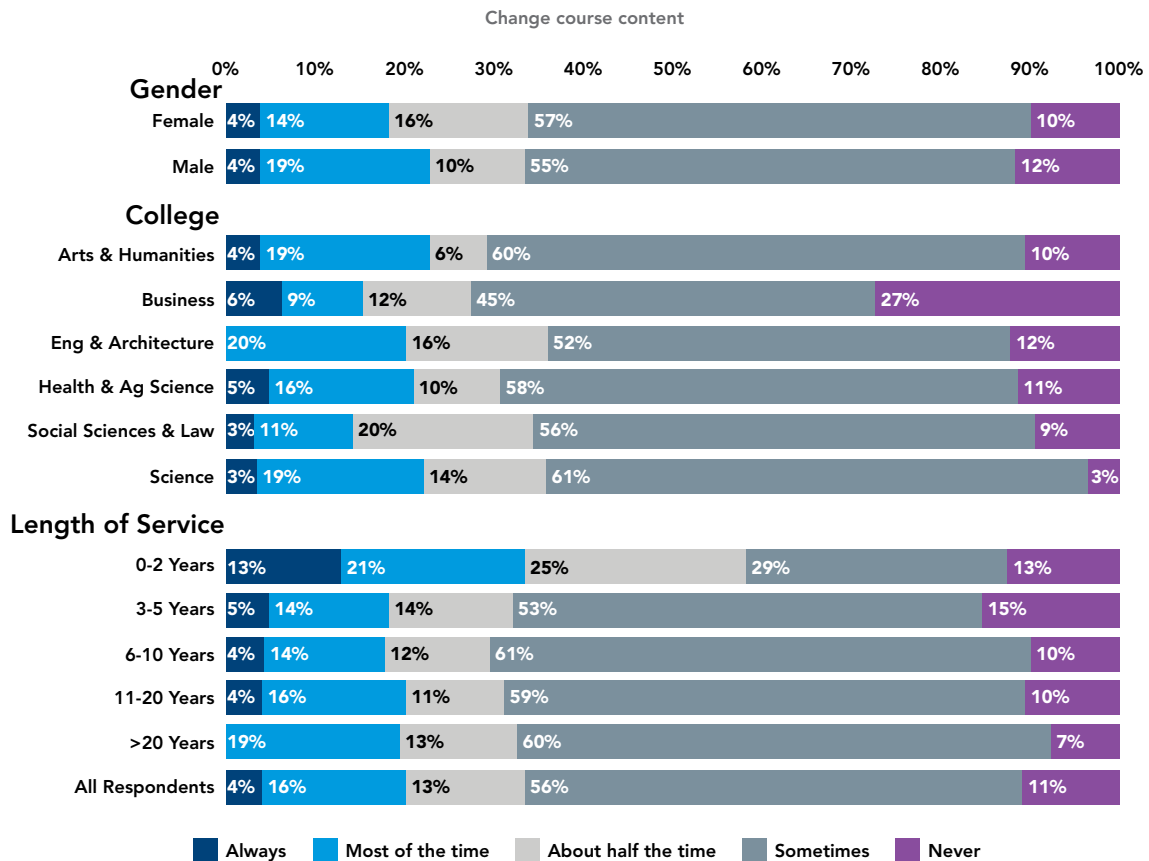
Figure 24 Using feedback to change course content.

A higher proportion of faculty from the College of Engineering and Architecture changed teaching methods based on student feedback, as did faculty with less than two years' experience. Figure 25 illustrates the data.

Change teaching methods/style

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Sometimes	Never
Gender					
Female	5%	17%	14%	55%	8%
Male	5%	18%	10%	56%	11%
College					
Arts & Humanities	6%	19%	4%	54%	17%
Business	11%	9%	11%	51%	17%
Eng & Architecture	4%	28%	16%	44%	8%
Health & Ag Science	5%	16%	15%	58%	7%
Social Sciences & Law	5%	14%	14%	60%	6%
Science	3%	20%	8%	59%	8%
Length of Service					
0-2 Years	21%	25%	13%	42%	
3-5 Years	5%	18%	17%	52%	9%
6-10 Years	4%	8%	14%	63%	10%
11-20 Years	4%	17%	9%	57%	12%
>20 Years	19%		12%	57%	9%
All Respondents	4%	17%	12%	56%	10%

Figure 25 Using feedback to change teaching methods and style.

84

A higher proportion of faculty from Engineering and Architecture indicated that they reviewed student workload as a result of student feedback compared to faculty from other Colleges, as did faculty with less than two years' service. Figure 26 illustrates the data.
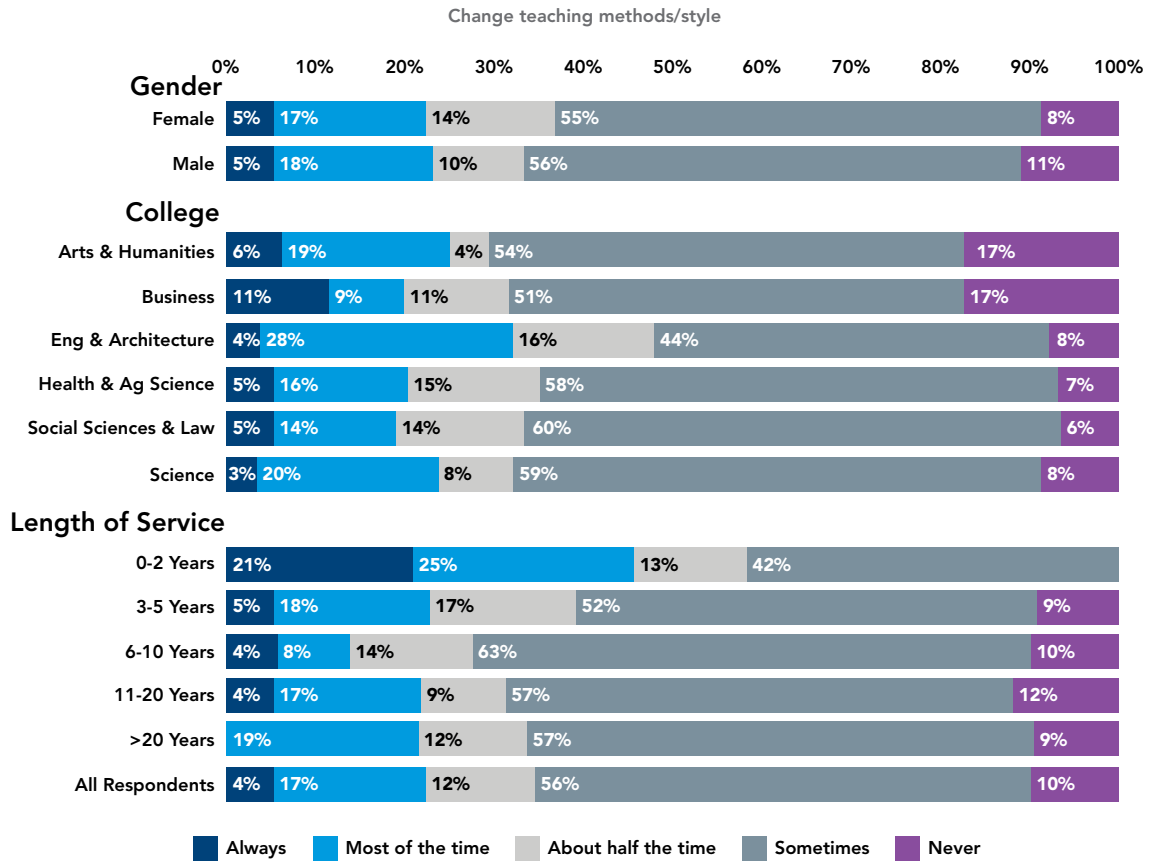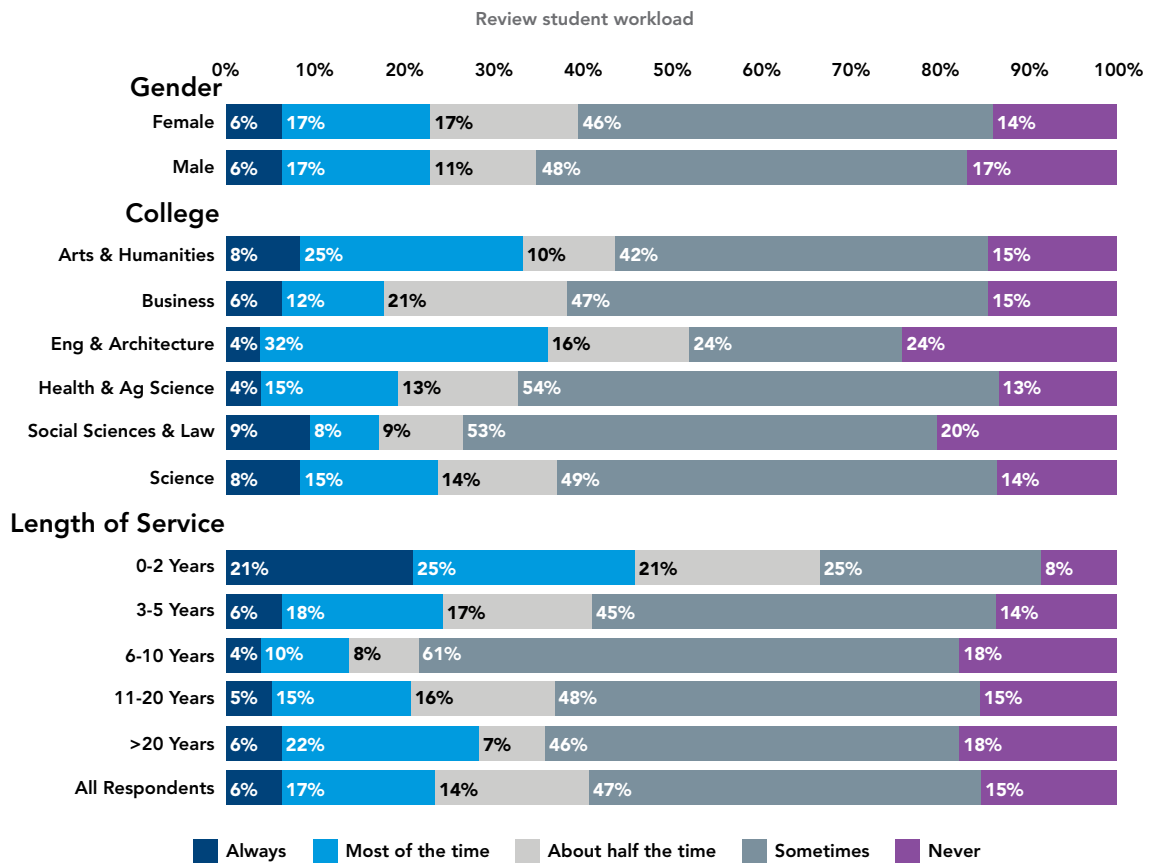
Review student workload

Figure 26 Using feedback to review student workload.

A higher proportion of faculty from the College of Engineering and Architecture reviewed assessment approaches compared to colleagues from other Colleges, as did faculty with less than two years' experience. Figure 27 illustrates the data.

Review assessment

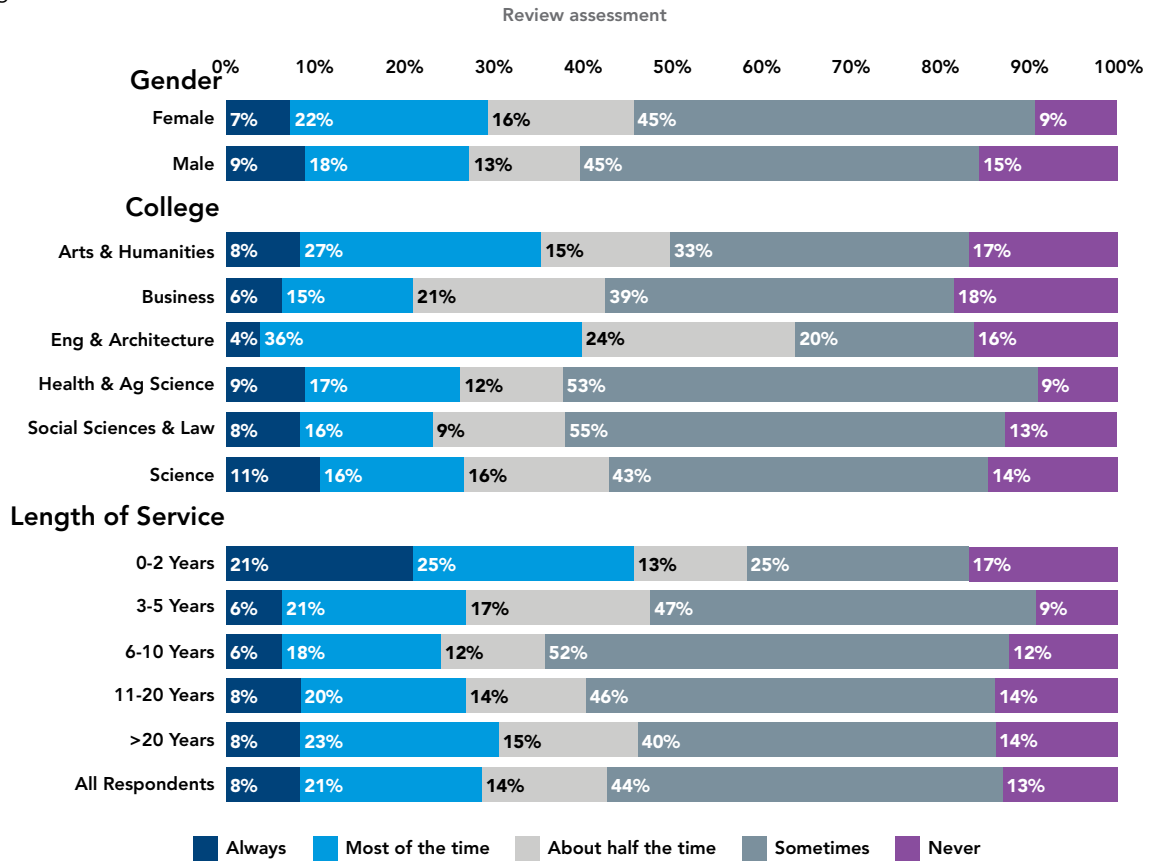|	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Sometimes	Never
Gender					
Female	7%	22%	16%	45%	9%
Male	9%	18%	13%	45%	15%
College					
Arts & Humanities	8%	27%	15%	33%	17%
Business	6%	15%	21%	39%	18%
Eng & Architecture	4%	36%	24%	20%	16%
Health & Ag Science	9%	17%	12%	53%	9%
Social Sciences & Law	8%	16%	9%	55%	13%
Science	11%	16%	16%	43%	14%
Length of Service					
0-2 Years	21%	25%	13%	25%	17%
3-5 Years	6%	21%	17%	47%	9%
6-10 Years	6%	18%	12%	52%	12%
11-20 Years	8%	20%	14%	46%	14%
>20 Years	8%	23%	15%	40%	14%
All Respondents	8%	21%	14%	44%	13%

Figure 27 Using student feedback to review assessment.

A higher proportion of faculty in the College of Engineering and Architecture reviewed their notes and module materials based on student feedback compared to faculty from other Colleges, as did faculty with less than two years' experience. Figure 28 illustrates the data.

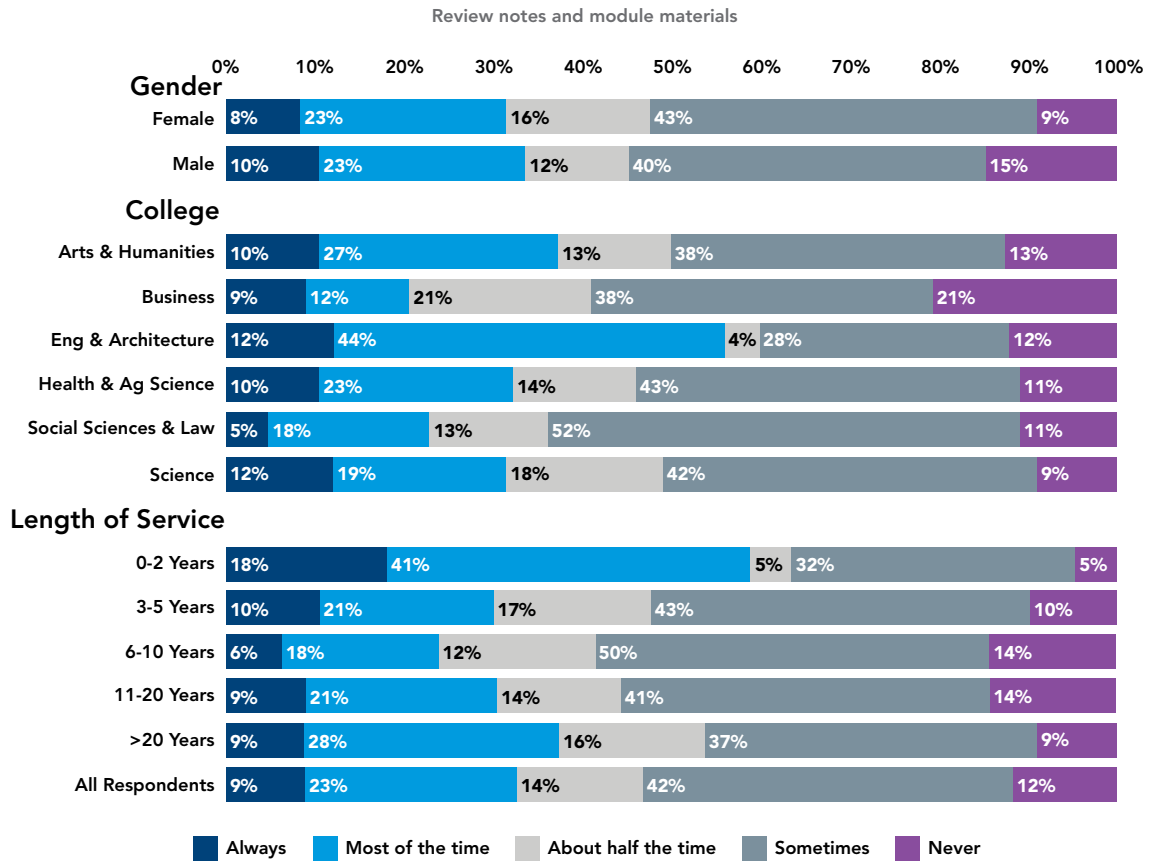Review notes and module materials

Figure 28 Using feedback to review notes and module materials.

A significant difference emerged between the College of Engineering and Architecture and other Colleges with reference to changing the way they gave student feedback [χ^2 35.621, df 20, p=.017]. A higher proportion of faculty in this College did this, compared to faculty in other colleges. Figure 29 illustrates the data.

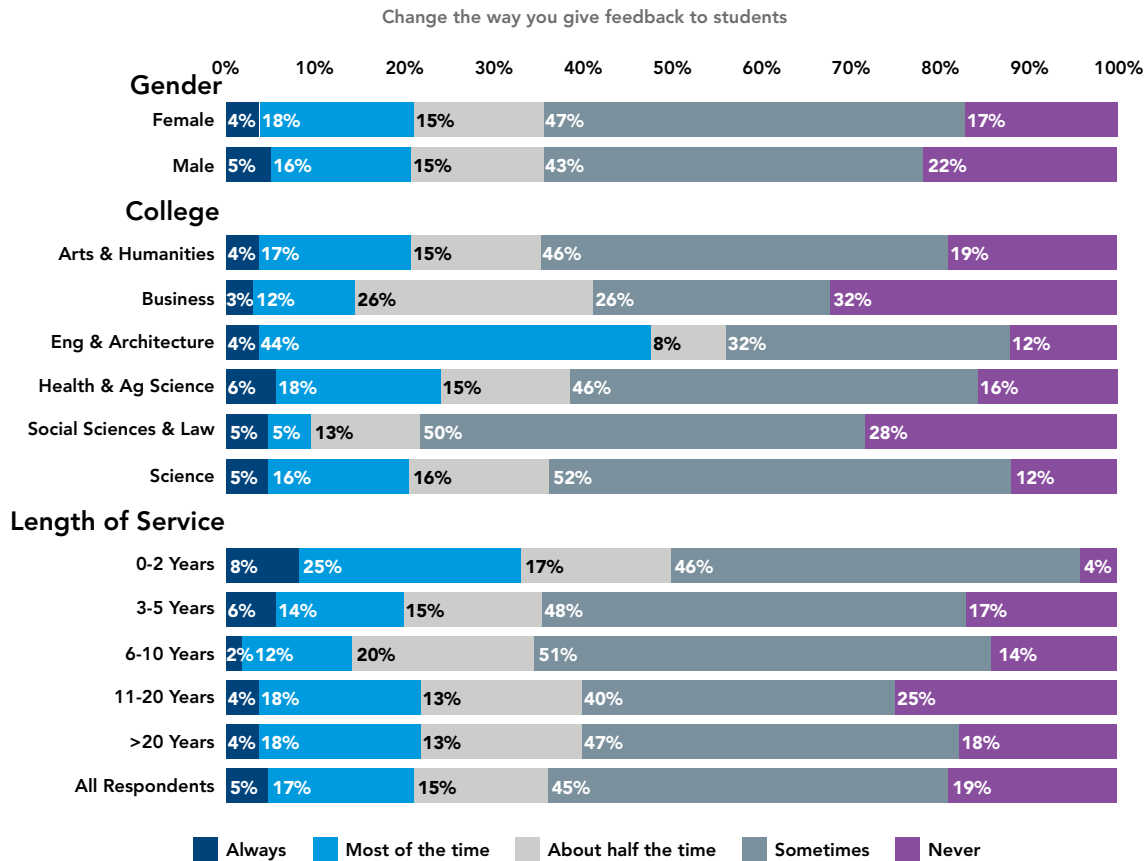Change the way you give feedback to students

Figure 29 Using the feedback system to change the way of giving feedback to students.

A higher proportion of faculty in Engineering and Architecture reviewed their accessibility to students based on feedback compared to faculty in other Colleges, as did faculty with less than two years' experience. Figure 30 illustrates the data.
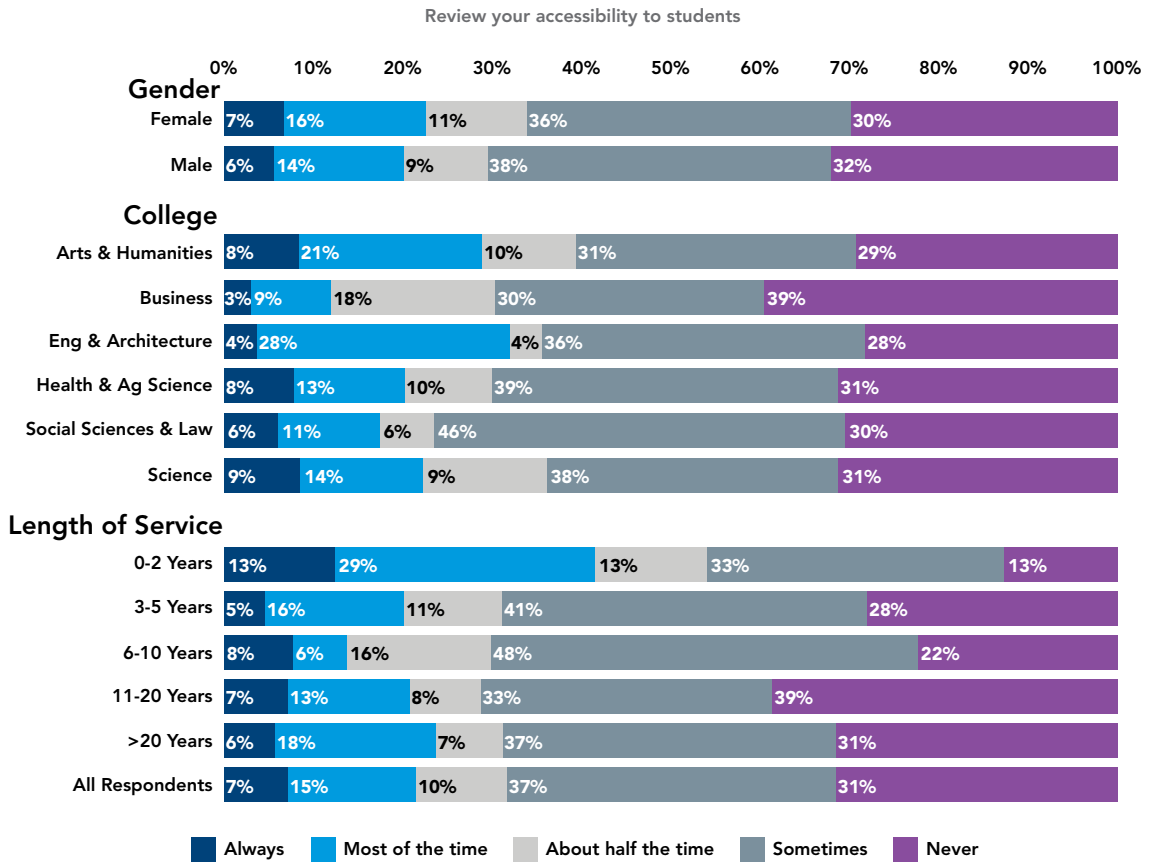
Review your accessibility to students

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Sometimes	Never
Gender					
Female	7%	16%	11%	36%	30%
Male	6%	14%	9%	38%	32%
College					
Arts & Humanities	8%	21%	10%	31%	29%
Business	3%	9%	18%	30%	39%
Eng & Architecture	4%	28%	4%	36%	28%
Health & Ag Science	8%	13%	10%	39%	31%
Social Sciences & Law	6%	11%	6%	46%	30%
Science	9%	14%	9%	38%	31%
Length of Service					
0-2 Years	13%	29%	13%	33%	13%
3-5 Years	5%	16%	11%	41%	28%
6-10 Years	8%	6%	16%	48%	22%
11-20 Years	7%	13%	8%	33%	39%
>20 Years	6%	18%	7%	37%	31%
All Respondents	7%	15%	10%	37%	31%

Figure 30 Using the feedback system to review accessibility to students.

90

A higher proportion of faculty from Engineering and Architecture reviewed the provision of tutorials, labs and seminars based on student feedback compared to faculty in other Colleges, as did faculty with less than two years' experience. Figure 31 illustrates the data.

Review provision on tutorials/seminars/labs/practicals

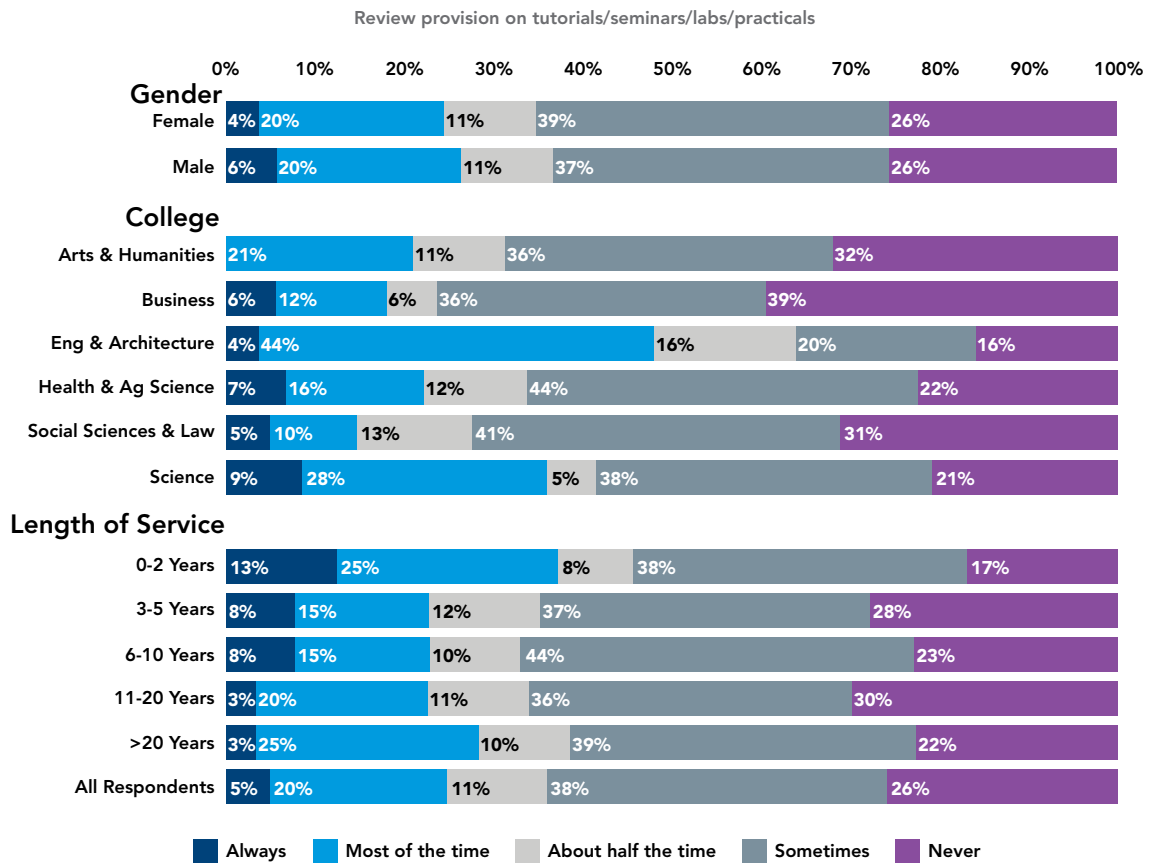|	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Sometimes	Never
Gender					
Female	4%	20%	11%	39%	26%
Male	6%	20%	11%	37%	26%
College					
Arts & Humanities		21%	11%	36%	32%
Business	6%	12%	6%	36%	39%
Eng & Architecture	4%	44%	16%	20%	16%
Health & Ag Science	7%	16%	12%	44%	22%
Social Sciences & Law	5%	10%	13%	41%	31%
Science	9%	28%	5%	38%	21%
Length of Service					
0-2 Years	13%	25%	8%	38%	17%
3-5 Years	8%	15%	12%	37%	28%
6-10 Years	8%	15%	10%	44%	23%
11-20 Years	3%	20%	11%	36%	30%
>20 Years	3%	25%	10%	39%	22%
All Respondents	5%	20%	11%	38%	26%

Figure 31 Using feedback to review provision of tutorials/seminars/labs/practicals.

One hundred and eight faculty members offered comments referencing the ways in which they used student feedback from the system. Figure 32 illustrates the data.
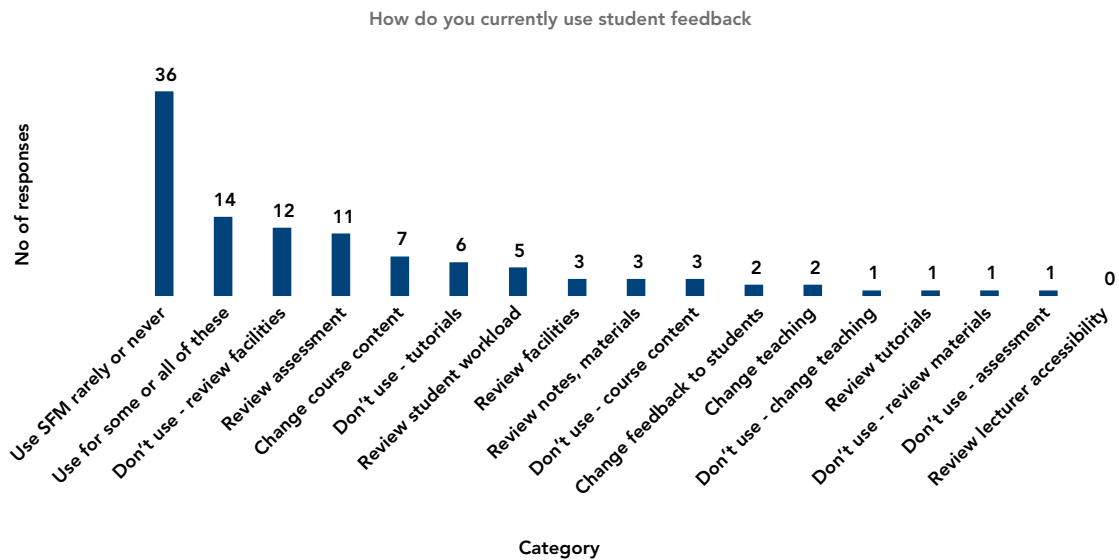
How do you currently use student feedback

Figure 32 Faculty commentary on how they use feedback from the system.

3.5.1   Rarely or never use feedback from the system

Thirty-six faculty (33%, n=108) commented rarely or never used feedback from the system. For some the current system did not have any value:

"The system has no value."

"I'd be a lousy teacher if I relied on such a deeply flawed system to determine how my students were doing, what aspects of my teaching were successful and what were not, etc. The assumption behind the module feedback system seems to be that lecturers are completely ignorant of the student experience."

"The feedback system is useless. It undermines the value of the degrees. This is obvious. Any serious US university professor (MIT etc....) would consider what we do a joke. If what's going on becomes public, our chances to place students in international Master/PhD degrees will be lower for the next 10 years. We are risking permanent reputation damage. It's an absolute joke."

"I have a fundamental issue with people who would change their teaching based on what we know from most of the scholarship on the subject to be highly subjective opinions by students that relate to how they expect to perform. I have known a lot of dreadful teachers who have changed their teaching styles (usually not for the better) in attempts to be more popular. I have no experience of anyone having improved their teaching because of them. The teachers I have respected throughout my career have to a person dismissed the results of such surveys as beauty contests (which they quite literally are, since the one time I knew a good teacher who got improved marks after responding was a woman who bought a new wardrobe and got a new haircut)."

"It is obvious that the course evaluation system currently offered is not at all reliable or useful. The means of collecting the data is antagonistic to both the quality and quantity of data gathered. The old system of paper forms filled in anonymously in class, and returned to the school office in a sealed envelope, with specific time set aside for the process, offered a great yield and range of responses, and around 80-90% uptake across the board - we should return to this, and have the forms submitted to an internal review, as well as being accessible to a higher college authority if necessary. This would return the course evaluations to a state that is fit for the purpose intended. The current system seems designed to centrally gather eccentric information on lecturers and schools in a way that almost verges on the Orwellian, rather than to encourage a meaningful review of teaching and learning practices."

"The system is too crude. I would prefer to return to my own system that I used prior to this system being forced down our throats."

"Not sure this question adds much to the survey... I could use student feedback via this system to inform my content, student workload etc... but only if issues are flagged there; if the course is broadly satisfactory to students, it may not make sense for me to alter content based on it and so 'about half the time' makes no sense - it takes no account of whether half my modules actually warrant change in that regard or not."

Others referred to using their own systems:

"The poor response rate undermines the meaningfulness of feedback and may not be representative of the class."

"I don't really use the feedback, since I am conducting my own anonymous survey which also has a higher participation rate."

"I use my own feedback system for this mostly, but I do check for additional information."

"I don't use it that much and prefer to use my own approach with students and colleagues."

"I use my own, paper-based, feedback form, which I get students to complete in the last class. That gives me the granular information I require with excellent response rates. The online UCD system is much less important for me."

"I have never made major changes in response to official student feedback alone, although I have made changes in response to mid-semester feedback that I run myself, as well as my own sense of how things are going."

"I collect my own feedback half-way through new modules and make changes if necessary."

"I rarely make changes to modules based on end of semester feedback. It usually just confirms how I thought the module was going."

"I tend to gather feedback from the students in class and I do use this feedback to improve module content and delivery."

Some faculty did not use feedback from the system due to the low response rates:

"Student participation in completing the feedback is low, resulting in questions as to relevance. Currently I use feedback to provide print-out to external examiner."

"Given the low response rate and limited information on other courses, I will respond to feedback if it is consistent or the comments are clear. But the system does not produce valid or reliable outputs so it is hard to use."

"The response rate is low and the weaker students are often motivated to complete it to complain about the workload or the difficulty of the subject. On core modules that is par for the course. Comments have to be taken with a grain of salt when response rates are so low."

"Because only the extremely dissatisfied students provide feedback, all of it is usually extremely bad and does not provide any useful information. Only a very small share of students provide feedback. With the very low attendance rates, these students probably have even not attended most classes."

For some, feedback was more useful when modules were newly established but as modules developed over a period of time, feedback was considered less useful:

"At this stage, the modules I coordinate have been running for some years. In the first few years, the feedback from students was valuable for informing changes that could be made, but unless I make major changes, the feedback is now less important."

"As many of my modules are well established, there are often no major issues."

"I review all these things anyway, so the feedback only really impacts if something very specific is mentioned, e.g. a topic everyone disliked, or a complaint about availability of module materials."

One faculty member referred to not having access to student feedback from the module:

"I have not had direct access to feedback and only partial second-hand knowledge of some feedback, so therefore no means to use it."

3.5.2 Use feedback in a variety of ways

Fourteen faculty members (13%, n=108) indicated that they used feedback from the system in a number of different ways:

"The things I never change are the things that the students always say are good. I look at anything that students perceive negatively, and change if I think they are right."

"I use the feedback to review all of these things, but it varies from module to module as to what might need to be reviewed or changed. Sometimes, they are happy with it all, so there is no need for change just for the sake of it."

"I don't change everything every year but have taken steps at different times to address issues raised."

"My feedback has been generally very positive so I make changes at the margins if a particular assignment or reading didn't really work out as planned."

"I review my modules independently of the student feedback - taking on board the comments at the end of the module is a small part of my annual review."

"After many cycles of feedback in most of my modules, the frequency of making changes has decreased, but I carefully reflect on the feedback every semester."

"This is a good question and student feedback on modules should be the basis by which teaching staff learn from their students to pivot their modules appropriately. This includes all of the factors mentioned in the question & answer choices above."

"Sometimes for all of the above as it varies from module to module, student cohort, whether prescribed content for accreditation etc."

3.5.3 Use feedback to review facilities

Twelve faculty members (11%, n=108) indicated that they did not use feedback if it referred to rooms, resources and facilities, as they felt these areas were outside of their control:

"Changes to inadequate rooms and facilities are beyond my ability to influence."

"As far as I can make out, I have no control over room allocations."

"Regularly am assigned small lecture theatre when have requested room for group work and workshop."

Faculty also referred to the issue of resourcing in a wider context:

"Unfortunately, I do not have a say on things like room provision. I already complained about it but there are not good facilities in all the rooms, so someone has to get the bad rooms as well. I would love to have the people to offer more seminars and tutorials but we do not have the staff to do it."

"Student workload needs to be reviewed at programme level, and there are far more fundamental logistical issues with altering that. We have never had the time and space to properly review that."

3.5.4 Use feedback to review assessment

Eleven faculty members (10%, n=108) used feedback to review assessment approaches:

"I have amended my module content, delivery and assessment as a result of the feedback received and following subsequent discussions with students."

"I have used feedback in the past to tweak aspects of assessment, content, workload etc."

"I ask about assessment weighting and time spent on the module; these are measurable things and not opinions. I use that information to adjust weighting as needed."

"Close monitoring of student feedback allows me to sometimes make the small changes necessary to try and continually improve the content, forms of assessment etc."

"I have been teaching for (too) many years and as my ratings are high, I feel pretty satisfied with the feedback I get and how I teach. I have probably used feedback to modify aspects of assessment, tutorials etc in the past."

"This is the first time that I have used the student feedback system, but I would hope to use the results in making constructive changes to my module content and to review my assessment and feedback strategy."

"Really depends on the issues raised by the students, but as a general rule, the most useful feedback from students is around teaching methods/style, on workload, on feedback on assessment and on facilities."

"I considered getting rid of a small component of assessment; student feedback indicated they enjoyed this so I retained it."

"The student comments on assessment tend to be fair. However, a few always want forms of assessment that are, correctly, perceived to be easier. This is understandable but should not be used as a guide to future assessment."

"I often make changes to assessment and workload directly as a result of comments made in student feedback."

3.5.5   Use feedback to change content

Seven faculty members (6%, n=108) used feedback to change content:

> "I have amended my module content, delivery and assessment as a result of the feedback received and following subsequent discussions with students."

> "I review all these things anyway, so the feedback only really impacts if something very specific is mentioned, e.g. a topic everyone disliked, or a complaint about availability of module materials."

One faculty member expressed reservations about changing content based on suggestions from students in previous years:

> "Do not have impact on the content of the course. I can only change the content of my module. My evaluations are well above average and I know from experience that changes introduced based on past students' suggestions may actually not be what current students want, so it makes very little sense to be changing anything based on those evaluations."

3.6   Other feedback methods employed

Faculty were asked if they used other approaches or methods to get feedback from students. Figure 33 illustrates the data.

Do you use any other mechanisms to gather feedback from students?

Responded to question = 350
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 80%

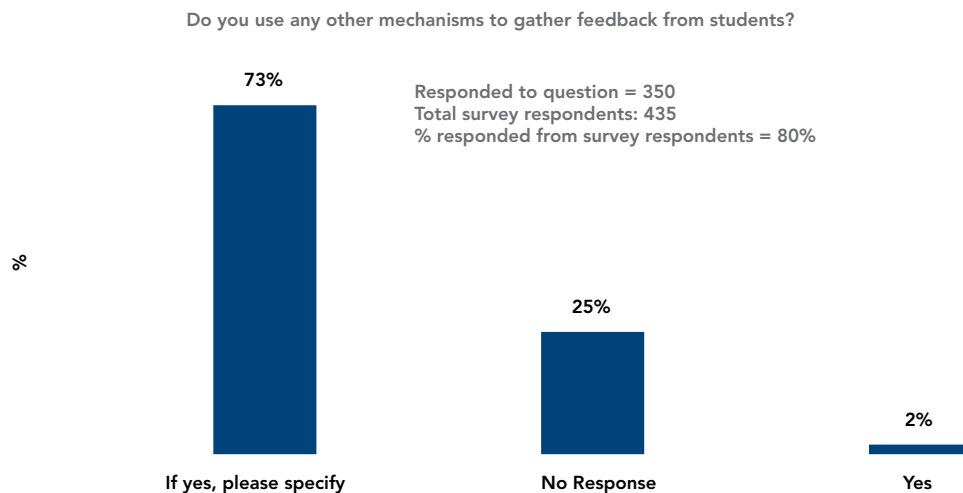73% — If yes, please specify
25% — No Response
2% — Yes

%

Figure 33 Other ways of getting student feedback.

Almost three quarters (73%) indicated that they did so. A higher proportion of faculty in the College of Engineering and Architecture used other mechanisms to gather feedback from students compared to faculty in other Colleges, as did faculty who had more than 20 years' service. No significant difference emerged among the categories. Figure 34 illustrates the data.

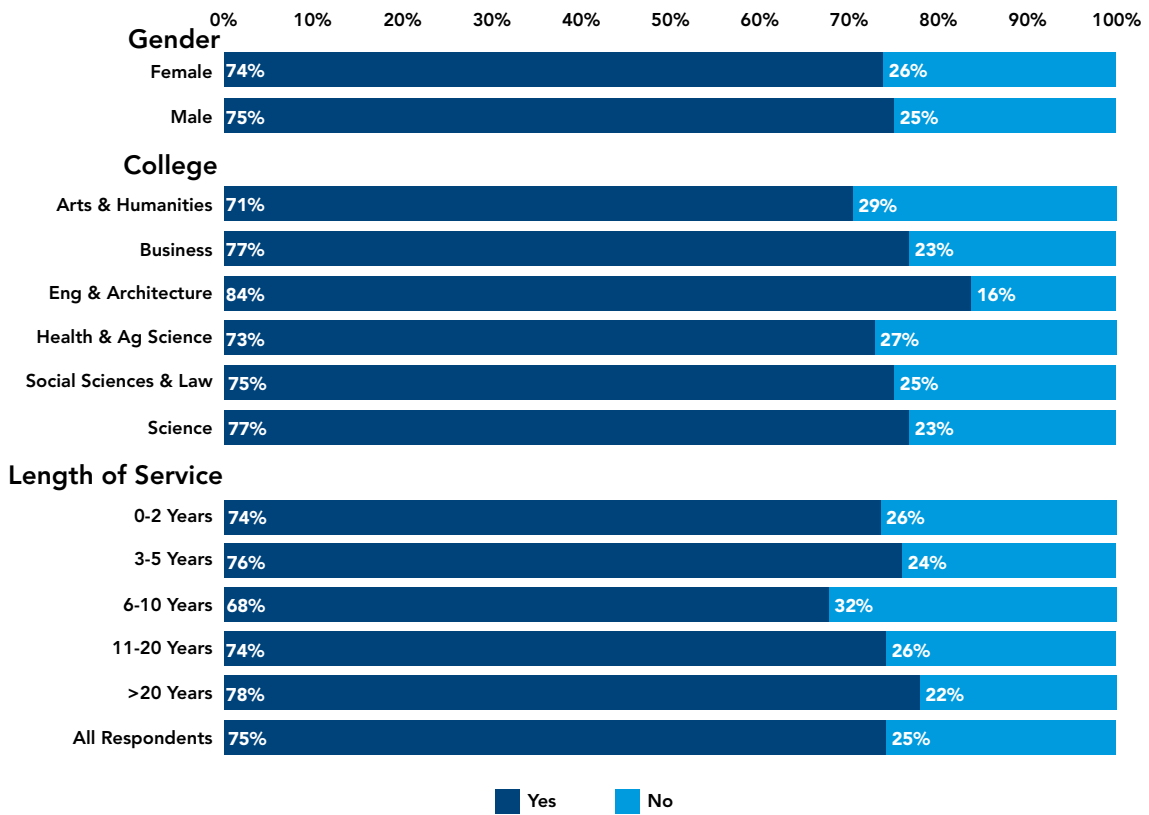**Do you use any other mechanisms to gather feedback from stucdents?**

Figure 34 Using other mechanisms to get student feedback.

Three hundred and twenty faculty members commented on the different methods that they used to get feedback from students. Figure 35 illustrates the data.
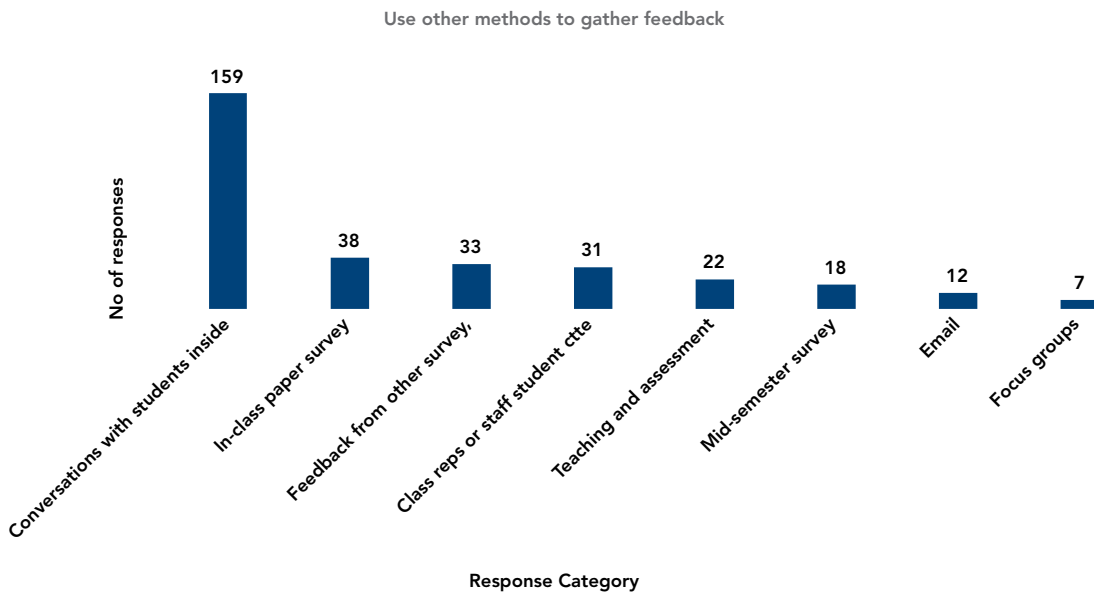
Use other methods to gather feedback

Figure 35 Faculty commentary on activities used to get student feedback.

3.6.1   Conversations with students inside and outside of class

One hundred and fifty-nine faculty members (50%, n=320) indicated that conversations with students was their preferred approach:

"Sometimes students give unprompted oral feedback."

"Discussions with students."

"I SPEAK with them."

"Informal feedback as the semester progresses."

"I talk to them. Imagine!"

"Informal chats, in-class Mentimeter."

"During last session and when students come to my office hour."

"Attend social gatherings, encourage 'office hours', specifically ask students for input."

"Whenever you meet them e.g in the restaurant."

Other faculty used in-class discussion as a way of getting feedback:

"Open class discussion."

"I solicit regular feedback throughout the semester during lectures and in practicals, and from my demonstrators so that I can improve my practice throughout the module, not only for the next year."

"Communication with the students during lectures is far more important than the student feedback form. The form is not the class representation and too late in the system to make changes."

"Informal after-class questions."

"I find I get more detailed feedback about module content etc. by asking the students in class and this informs the changes I make to my modules and hopefully improves students' learning experience. However, I do find it useful to get the anonymous feedback also."

"Do not put much store in the system for generating actionable feedback. I seek out opinion from students in the class."

"Session at end of module or at beginning of module to assess needs for course prior to starting."

Some faculty members ran focus group or conducted group interviews with students to get feedback:

"The most useful feedback tends to come from focus groups / discussions in class on what is working for students, and student needs can vary from year to year."

"Response rates do not capture any aspect of student engagement in the module or with the module coordinator - and there is therefore no context to the responses given. I always run my own focus groups with a range of students who actually attend to inform my teaching and assessment changes."

"I have used structured group feedback sessions in the past."

"Have used focus groups plus informal feedback."

99

"End of semester evaluation / feedback sessions across stages."

The tutorial system was also used as a forum to get feedback:

"Feedback from teaching or tutorial."

"I get a sense of what the students think of the module when I take tutorials (I take tutorials for one of the weeks)."

"With a small cohort of students and studio based learning, feedback mechanisms work 'automatically' in both directions from staff to students and vice versa."

"Weekly feedback on lab sessions."

"I just chat to them in tutorials sometimes, especially about their views on assessments."

"Informal opportunistic discussions in tutorials or when students have moved to next stage."

"Informal questions to individuals in practicals or tutorials. It's not scientific (they tend to be too polite and positive) but it is very immediate."

Some faculty used emails, reviewing student performance and looking at evidence of engagement:

"Generally, I find students' emails, participation in classroom discussions, and marking essays and other work are as valuable in garnering feedback from students as the survey. These provide in-semester forms of feedback and I can make notes about what works and does not work in teaching situations."

"Attendance and engagement evidence."

"Multiple anonymous in-class feedback sessions during term to try and solve problems before the end of the term."

"I use a suite of techniques from gauging how the current iteration is running, asking the class for direct feedback on assessment type and timing and involving the class in negotiated learning techniques - these methods are less of a box ticking exercise and provide more actionable consensus driven responses."

"I collect notecards with feedback on the last day of class. This ensures I get my specific questions answered months before I would normally see student feedback from the system. To change an assessment requires quite a bit of paperwork, same for changing readings and adjusting a module outline."

3.6.2 In-class paper survey

Thirty-eight faculty members (12%, n=320) used in-class paper surveys or evaluation forms to get feedback from students:

"In class surveys."

"Anonymous written feedback distributed in class."

"Written feedback from students, my own evaluation sheets."

"I evaluate small group teaching and skills lab with a paper evaluation form."

"Paper copies of surveys - response rate higher."

"60-second paper at the end of lecture."

"In-class comment sheets."

"In-class feedback sheets."

"I use paper feedback questionnaires in class because I generally get 90% responses that I find more helpful for module development."

"Hard copies of feedback questionnaire handed out, generates a much higher response rate, so feedback more meaningful."

"I hand out anonymous questionnaires in class at the end of the module."

"Collect anonymous written feedback from students throughout module. Collect verbal feedback from students during module review lectures."

"My own paper-based, customised survey."

"Survey (HREC exemption)."

"Questionnaires on specific aspects of the module."

"I had my own questionnaires too for individual lecture evaluation but in a previous promotion round, I was told they were of no use because I gave them out, so I stopped."

"We have always (for over 20 years) received manual feedback in the form of the questionnaire for every session taught. We therefore receive very specific feedback from students and this feedback is sought every few weeks."

"Mentimeter in class."

"In class and in practical feedback forms."

3.6.3   Feedback using other approaches

Thirty-three faculty members (10%, n=320) got feedback from other sources. A range of examples were provided:

"Blackboard discussion boards."

"VLE quiz."

"Open discussion boards in VLE."

"I also have an online discussion platform for every student and they interact there daily."

"Online discussion board."

"Discussion boards."

"VLE forums."

Reference was also made to Survey Monkey, Google forms and Socrative:

"Survey Monkey for specific new changes."

"Survey Monkey for post graduate teaching group."

"Google Forms."

"Bespoke Google Forms for selected modules."

"Responses to questions posed in Socrative."

"I have used Socrative in the class."

Two faculty members referred to using rubrics and a self-developed rating system:

"I use a H frame. Marks for this module out of 10? Why did you not give it 10? Why did you not give it 0? What knowledge? Skills? Learning did you gain or improve during this module?"

"Peer review, rubrics, posters etc."

One faculty member referred to using feedback provided by the Maths Support Centre:

"The feedback generated by maths support centre tutors has been the most valuable to me in terms of knowing where my students struggle, how many are struggling, what needs changing and what needs addressing (in real time) for this year's cohort as the UCD student feedback module system can only help the next cohort of students and with the best will in the world, thoughts of teaching only return in the last week of August (or never for some lecturers) when student feedback is long forgotten."

3.6.4   Feedback from class representatives
Thirty-one faculty members (10%, n=320) sought feedback from class representatives and student committees:

"School has meetings with class reps."

"Through regular meetings with class reps during the semester."

"Student forum."

"Via class rep - class consensus re: issue/change in teaching/external lecturers."

"School staff-student liaison committee."

"Talking to them in class, individually, or picking up on the grievances they raise through reps on the staff student committee is currently the only meaningful method of evaluating modules."

"School has one staff/student forum meeting per semester for each of stage 3, 4 and stage 1+2 groups."

3.6.5   Feedback based on student assessment performance
Twenty-two faculty members (7%, n=320) used information gained from assessments:

"Exam transcripts, exam results."

"In truth, student work in assignments and exams is the main source of info about how they are doing/ what is being learned."

"Close attention to formative learning assessment and then feedback."

"In class MCQ tests provide a granular level of understanding that my classes have of specific topics."

"Final Learning Journal of the module is 'free' in sense that students may comment on any aspect of the teaching and content."

3.6.6 Mid-semester survey

Eighteen faculty members (6%, n=320) sought mid-semester feedback from students:

"Take in-class feedback at week six: this is much better as all students give feedback rather than ~20%."

"I ask them to submit detailed mid-term feedback to me."

"Short mid-term survey."

"In class mid-semester feedback."

"Two question online survey through Qualtrics.com in Week 5/6 - what's working well do far and what's not working. This allows me to adjust the delivery mid-way through the module where necessary."

"Feedback in week three from the students, which goes mainly to content but also delivery."

"Sometimes I use mid-term self-administered surveys, that allow me to adjust the course while it's still ongoing."

3.6.7 Email

Twelve faculty members (4%, n=320) indicated that they used email to get student feedback:

"Encourage email."

"Invite them to email me with feedback, questions, which they have."

"They are constantly in touch by email, their concerns are communicated and dealt with in real time."

3.7 Increase student response rates

Faculty were asked to indicate if they actively sought to increase response rates. Table 8 presents the data.

Table 8 Activities to increase student response rates.

Activities	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Time in class to complete survey	11%	40
Reminder in person in class	62%	219
Reminder emails	36%	127
Reminders through Blackboard/Brightspace	34%	119
Reminders through school/programme communications	8%	29
I don't do anything	24%	83
Grand Total		351

The majority of faculty (62%) used in-class reminders; over a third (36%) sent a reminder email and the same proportion (34%) sent reminders through Blackboard/Brightspace. Just under a quarter (24%) did not engage in any activity to increase student response rates. Fifty seven faculty members offered additional commentary with reference to increasing response rates. Figure 36 illustrates the data.
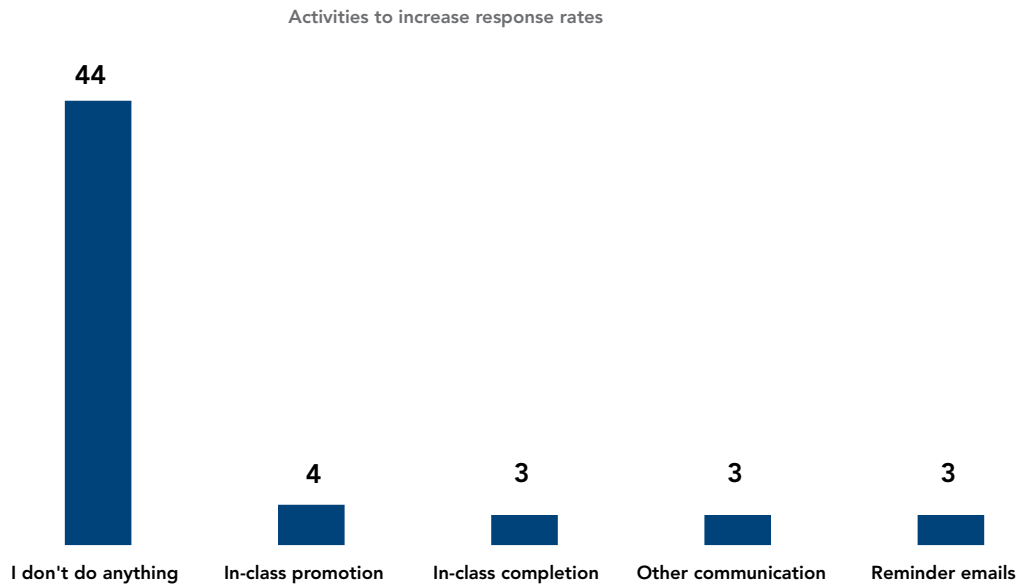
Activities to increase response rates

Figure 36 Commentary with reference to activities to promote the survey.

3.7.1   Did not engage in activities to increase response rates

The majority of faculty who commented, forty-four (77%, n=57) indicated that they did not engage in activities to increase response rates. Some faculty did not believe in the current system:

"I think the system is fundamentally flawed and reinforces the tendency to see the university as just another 'business' providing a 'service' to the 'customers' that they can review as they see fit under protection of anonymity. So I say nothing about it usually."

"Find it a bit awkward to point to the survey to be honest, so I never refer to it."

"I used to teach at a university where they had to be done in class. Returns were higher (except that students often skipped or came late the day they expected this to happen), but the comments were not very different. Early in the process at UCD, I sent reminder emails, but it changed nothing, so I stopped, in part because it would indicate that I have more faith in the process than I do."

"Because: 1) There is no control on the population of students answering and on the quality of the answers; 2) Many students rate the quality of the course in terms of the likelihood that they will get a good grade rather than the academic quality, and they are very different things (I would have also done this as a student); 3) The vast majority of (thoughtful) feedback falls into the category of 'I know this, but with the constraints put on the course, there is essentially nothing I can do'."

"In my view the students are overwhelmed with feedback requests and only the most motivated complete it. The rate of completion is low and might be improved if I did some the things listed above, but to what end? The first few years of introducing a module is where the feedback is most valuable. My impression now is that students will use the feedback system for personal gripes with a decision of a lecturer (e.g. not allowing them to resubmit a piece of assessment to improve their grade). Furthermore, this then has a large impact on the Likert score, but is not reflective of the overall student cohort."

"I do not wish to expose my students to the current system."

"Sorry, I gave up on promoting this system as response rates were so low and the surveys were not reflective of the cohort."

"Sending emails etc is ambivalent, as the current system is so adversarial."

"I used to encourage students to do the survey in class (before the module feedback was explicitly linked to promotion) and encourage students to participate (I had response rates ~90%) but stopped."

Other faculty referred to the impact of promoting the survey among students:

"I used to give time in class to complete the survey but I was specifically told in promotion feedback not to do this as I would introduce 'bias', (which I found quite insulting, by the way)."

"I think asking students to do the surveys in class is a little unethical as it may make them feel pressured to be more positive."

Faculty did not promote the survey due to a lack of student engagement:

"I do dislike allowing students who voluntarily opt-out of attending all/most classes from giving feedback on certain components that they have not partaken in."

"Very happy and very unhappy students complete the survey, not the silent majority."

"Many students feel they are not doing this for the module, the lecturer or the School but for UCD as a bureaucratic institution. This may impact on the low response rates."

Some faculty referred to not having time to promote the survey:

"Time in class to complete survey doesn't tend to work because at Week 11/Week 12, there's only about 30% attendance anyway, and these are the very students that normally respond to the survey."

"Time in class? Are you kidding?"

"In-class survey completion is not possible if the module ends before the system goes live to students."

"Sometimes - but it jars with the timing of assessment and end of semester exams."

"Usually these reminders are a waste of my time, as it would be best to do it in class, except the system opens too late in the semester."

"I am aware that the students have a lot of modules so try not to give them too many reminders, as if everyone does this all the time, it will be tedious for the students."

"I tried giving time in class and got rushed responses and much less narrative data, which we find the real feedback comes in, so I don't give time in class any more."

"I need the already limited class time to ensure that the curriculum is delivered as thoroughly as possible."

Other faculty indicated that they would consider various other options in relation to promoting the survey:

"I never thought of allowing students to do it in class until I read this! I think this would be a good approach from now on."

"Getting them to fill the forms in class on their devices is an idea, but compared to paper forms, fairly impractical."

"I didn't know we were allowed to use class time."

"Had not thought about doing this. I do not encourage the use of the internet in class time so would prefer not to give over time to in-class surveys that require internet. But will certainly remind them through Brightspace and in class next year."

"Now that the School of [-----------------] will be upgrading 3rd Year Options seminars from 1 hour to 2 hours, I will be able to give over time during the final seminars of the semester for students to complete the survey. However, I do wonder about the merits of having students complete the survey during class time because; by virtue of the lecturer being in the room, would students be honest with any critiques of the module, in case the lecturer could see what they're typing into their computers?"

Some faculty were of the view that they should not take responsibility for promoting the survey:

"Responsibility for increasing response rates rests with others."

"It is UCD's responsibility to send such emails to students; a reminder email from me may impact (either positively or negatively) the evaluations I receive in the end. In my previous university, submitting evaluations was mandatory for a student to be able to see his/her grade on a module."

"Feedback should not be forced."

"Heads of Teaching and Learning should do more to ensure that the feedback surveys are completed in Schools. All students should be emailed. Schools could incentivise students in an appropriate manner."

"I feel it is the responsibility of admin staff or Central to organise and promote it properly."

"Ideally, it would be preferable if 'the system; were to send students individual reminders, as opposed to leaving this to module coordinators so that there was a certain automation to reminders."

"I am not teaching when the survey opens to the students. If I was, I would give them time in class."

3.7.2   In-class promotion
Four faculty members (7%, n=57) promoted the survey in class:

"I encourage students to provide feedback at the start, middle and end of the module delivery."

"I encourage students to complete the feedback form to try to get a more representative sample in the feedback. To no avail."

"In class I show them a results page in my PPT, so they can see how it is anonymous and the types of information that come back to me, and then hopefully they understand how it is useful."

"In the past I have send multiple emails - to no effect. So now I just ask students to fill it out."

3.7.3   In-class completion
Three faculty members (5%, n=57) provided time in-class to complete the survey:

"I spend 10 minutes of the final lecture on the feedback, I ask students to use their phones and laptops."

"Time to complete in class."

"I found the most effective way to increase response rates was to schedule a small-stakes summative continuous assessment component for a scheduled lecturer/tutorial time that requires the use of a laptop or at worst smartphone and then to ask students to take three minutes to take the UCD survey before they take the in-class test (asking them after the test is useless, as they run out naturally, once finished), and to walk around to ensure they are on the site and not using social media etc."

3.8   Informing students about how feedback is used

Just under half (47%) of faculty members informed students about how they have used feedback. Table 9 presents the data.

Table 9 Informing students about how feedback is used

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Never	13%	44
Sometimes	33%	117
About half the time	7%	26
Most of the time	21%	73
Always	26%	91
Grand Total	100%	351

A higher proportion of females informed students about how they used feedback compared to males, as did a higher proportion of faculty in the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences compared to faculty in other Colleges. A higher proportion of faculty with less than two years' service also informed students about how they used feedback compared to other faculty members. Figure 37 illustrates the data.
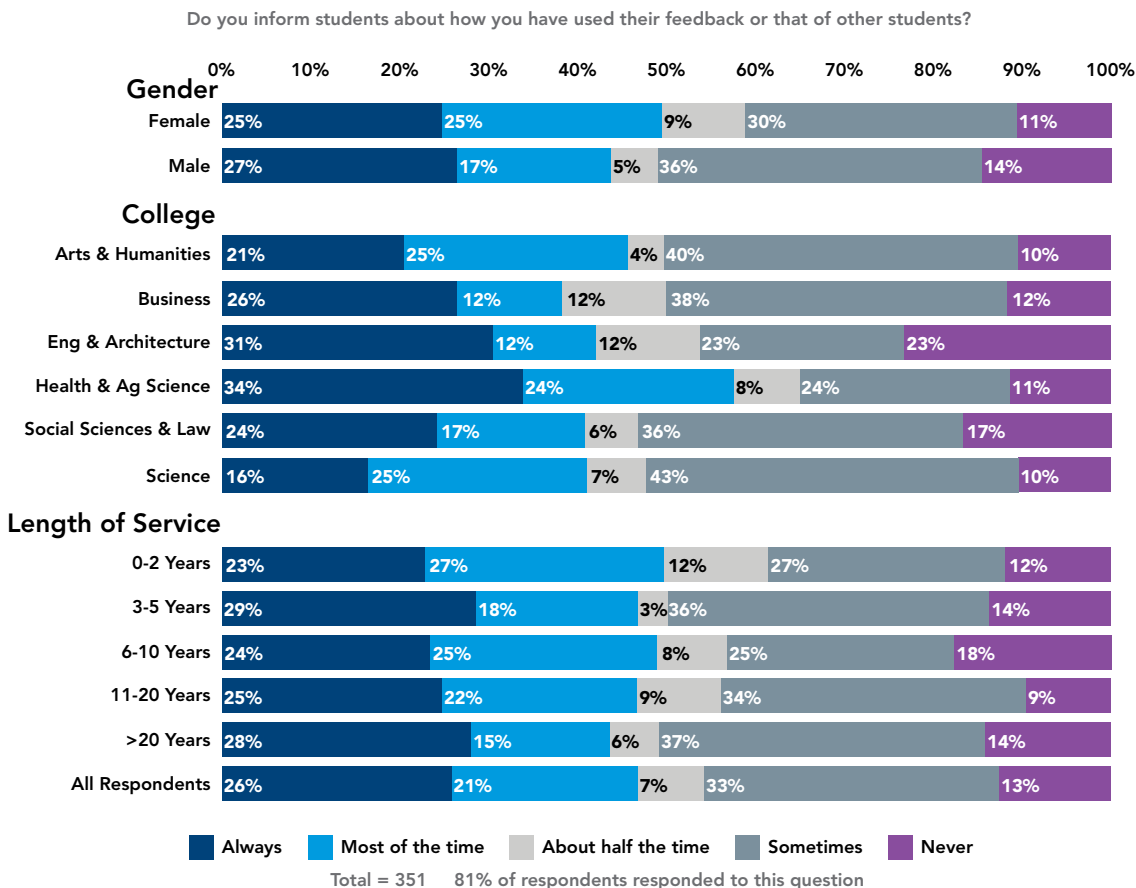
Figure 37 Informing students about how feedback was used.

Forty eight faculty members offered comments about informing students in relation to using feedback. Figure 38 illustrates the data.
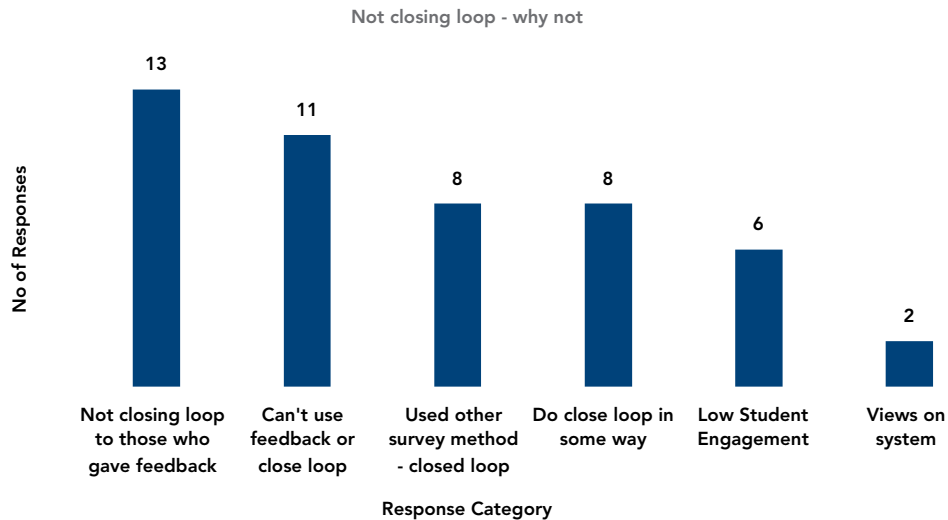

Figure 38 Faculty comments on closing the student feedback loop.

3.8.1   Reasons for not informing students about how feedback is used

Twenty-four faculty (50%, n=48) did not close the feedback loop and offered a number of reasons for this. Some faculty did not think it was important to do so:

> "I do not think it is important."

> "Because it is useless."

> "I am not sure how useful it is e.g., students routinely disagree over their preference for MCQs over essays or VV, I use both as appropriate to the level I am teaching. But if one or two students give feedback that conflicts with the main feedback, I am not sure that is useful."

> "Because feedback was overwhelmingly positive and no change was required. It confirmed that the module works."

Other faculty members felt unable to make changes based on the feedback received:

> "I used to, but I have been teaching now for decades, get pretty much the same (mostly positive) comments year in and year out, change the content of my lectures anyway on a near constant basis because of new scholarship, and am not going to respond to the two most frequent criticisms, which are that I assign too much reading (a fraction of what I had to read as a student) and expect students to master more material than they would like. I am also criticised for not putting everything the students need to know into PowerPoint. The one change I have made to my teaching at UCD in response to student comments is to add identifying information to my images on PowerPoint instead of in a separate lists, but I was trained in universities where anyone who used bullet points in assessment flunked that piece of assessment and in which bullet points were never used in relation to teaching. They are almost invisible in scholarly presentations in my field to this day and should be in the classroom as well."

"Probably relates to the class size and level of interaction with the students. I do inform undergraduates about practical classes and feedback."

Reference was also made to lack of time:

"Lack of time. our semester-ised modules don't allow sufficient time to deviate from core learning objectives."

"Too little time in classtime / lectures."

"Opportunity does not always arise."

Faculty also referred to the fact that they were unable to inform existing students about changes:

"Unfortunately, the following-on class will be the main beneficiaries of the changes."

"The students will not typically see how I have used their feedback as the results are only available after the module has finished. The next cohort of students will typically be told what feedback from previous cohorts has been taken on board."

"Because students change every semester; I think telling previous semester's students how they changed how you teach in the following semester to different students is not meaningful."

"Telling the 'next year' class about what you have changed since the 'last year' class is not hugely interesting for the class, I fear..."

"Because by the time I've implemented changes, the cohort of students that have requested them have moved on."

"Because the students who sit in front of you the following year are not the students who gave that feedback upon which you acted."

"Don't usually see the same students again."

"Different cohorts!"

"Referring this year's students indirectly to last year's module sometimes triggers biased responses by students, e.g., some students wonder if something was "wrong" in last year's module, thus their trust in this year's module can be weakened."

"It's meaningless to explain to students why something they haven't had to experience is no longer part of the module."

"Yes but I'm telling new students and I don't think it registers as they do not know what the course was like in previous years."

3.8.2 Informing students about changes

Sixteen faculty members (34%, n=48) did inform students about changes that they had made:

> "If I change something in a module because of feedback in the evaluations, I will always flag this in class and say that it was prompted by student feedback in the survey."

> "I inform the next class on how I changed based on the comments of the previous class."

> "If I have made major changes in assessment, I inform the new class how the previous class had responded to previous assessment and why I made the changes."

> "I have told large lecture groups about why I have changed the assessment strategy, and how it has evolved in order to stay aligned to the professional nature of their degree (PME)."

> "I inform the current year students of the changes that have taken place as a result of feedback from previous years' students."

> "I inform the post graduates but less so the undergraduates. Probably relates to the class size and level of interaction with the students. I do inform undergraduates about practical classes and feedback."

> "I mention any changes that I have made to a module as a result of feedback from the previous year when outlining the structure and content in the first class of the next year."

Some faculty used mid-semester feedback to close the feedback loop:

> "I used mid-term reviews, I plotted the summary statistics and shared them with the class right on my next lecture. The students were very satisfied to see that and I explained how I aim to improve my teaching."

> "I do seek feedback at a mid-semester level and I inform students of any changes."

> "With the early semester review I do in class, I tell them what changes I've made and remind them when I do something differently based on that feedback; I don't tell them after the end-of-semester review."

> "I inform my students what ex-students tell me about how useful the module has been at interview with employers, and in their subsequent careers."

3.9   Changing the current system

The majority of faculty felt that the current system should be changed. Figure 39 illustrates the data.

Do you think the current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System should be changed?

Total = 348
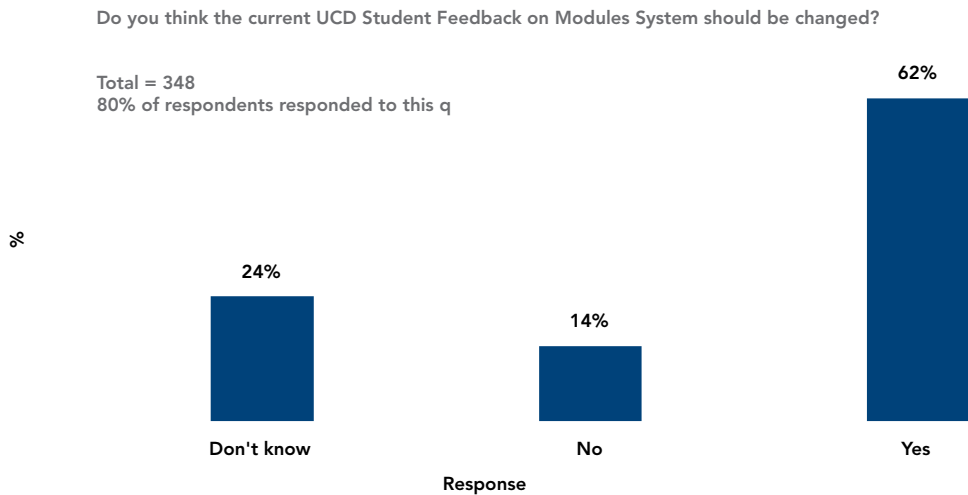80% of respondents responded to this q

Figure 39 Changing the current system.

Two hundred and twenty one faculty members offered commentary in relation to changing the current system. Figure 40 illustrates the data.
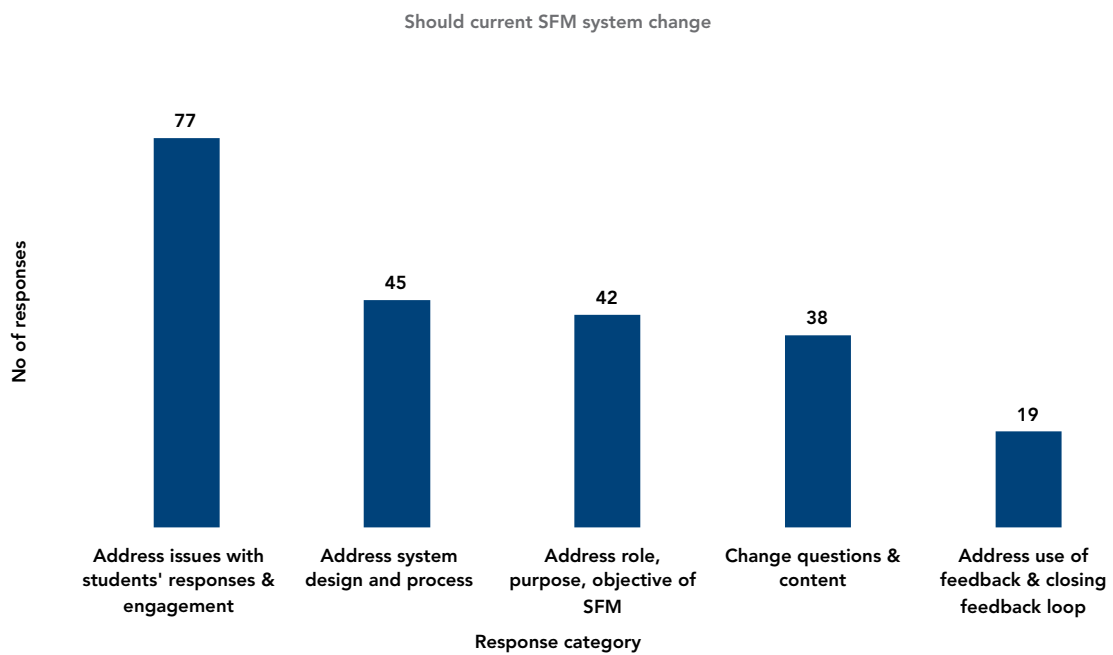
Should current SFM system change

Figure 40 Faculty commentary on changing the current system.

3.9.1   Address issues with student responses and engagement

Seventy-seven faculty members (35%, n=221) referred to the need to increase response rates:

"Increase response rate by students."

"The system does not seem to be able to get feedback from larger numbers of students."

"The system itself is not bad, it's just that we need to get more students to fill this out to be of relevance."

"There needs to be a better way of increasing response rates."

"Reports are produced even when class sizes are small and even when the non-response rate is large. There is usually considerable non-response from students and so results are biased. Non-response is the most crucial aspect of any survey."

"Response rates are so low and students have no incentive to fill them in; why would they bother?"

"The real issue is student take-up."

"Rates of student engagement are typically low. In spite of this, management persist in using data sets for e.g. curriculum review, faculty promotion, etc..."

"Not sure if electronic system working. Response rate seems to be poorer than when we used paper-based feedback mechanisms."

"The issue is not students who provide the feedback, or the system to coordinate the feedback. It is the vast majority of students who do not provide feedback, rendering the results largely irrelevant."

"There is a relatively low uptake on these surveys, which means you usually get extreme reactions. Handing out surveys in class in the old days meant that all students were more likely to complete the survey. We are all inundated with emails and students are under pressure to complete assignments rather than complete these kinds of survey. I would imagine that it is probably only mature students and the rare young one that complete these."

"It would be better if there was a way to encourage all students to complete it."

"Measures to increase fraction of students giving feedback (but how?)"

"I think the problem is with response rates rather than the feedback itself. When it's up to the students and they have six of these a semester to do, they can't be bothered."

"I'm not sure if the current burden of six modules per semester is too much for students, although I know they can evaluate it quickly by the tick boxes, but asking them to engage cognitively for six modules with meaningful responses may be too much."

Other faculty suggested strategies with reference to raising response rates:

"There's got to be a way of increasing the response rate. Perhaps the student would not be allowed to register in the next semester until they had filled out their survey. Then again, there is a risk of coerced students responded randomly or spitefully, so maybe that's not good."

"I am concerned that the students who do the surveys are self-selected and not representative of all students. I suggest the students receive course credit for completing the survey."

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"In other institutions I've been at, students get something for filling in the surveys. access to their grades a day early or something."

"Response rates are the main issue. Grades should be not released to students until they complete student evaluations."

"When this came in, it was argued that it was a validated system that would replace non-standard questionnaires. It proved a disaster due to the low response rates, which automatically invalidated it, and where non-representative comments from individual students got far too much credibility."

"It is always disheartening how few students bother to give feedback. I am not sure how that problem could be addressed."

"Need to find a way to get all students to engage rather than just the extremes. Perhaps as part of a final assignment?"

"Ideally, it should be compulsory alongside attendance registers for lectures."

"Improve the response rates of all modules by querying with HoS or Hof T&L low response rates and to devise a way by which all lecturers can promote the survey to their students."

"Give direct motivation for completion of feedback, e.g. non-release or delay of their results until feedback is completed."

3.9.2   System design and process

Forty-five faculty members (20%, n=221) commented on issues concerning design and process:

"It is not very attractive to students to complete the same form multiple times."

"There could be a really good opportunity here for students and staff. Does the university ever consider acknowledging staff that get very good feedback etc? Rather boring system at the moment."

"The design of the feedback survey could also be more creative."

"It needs to be more dynamic, flexible."

Reference was made to the contextual nature of programmes:

"Focus on each course and what fits that. The current system is an exercise on making up numbers without strong interpretation. Often, the main issue is something specific- and qualitative."

"I am not sure if a generic approach across all disciplines and programmes can give sufficient meaning to the evaluation exercise. I believe monitoring and evaluation is really important; however, it needs to be somewhat focused."

"Ask about resources where they are needed. Three specific choices in regard to course improvement ex. reduce content, increase content, content level reduced or increased in 'hardness'."

"I think it should be further simplified. Students are asked for too much feedback."

"Staff generated question required might get greater staff engagement."

Many references were made to the issue of abusive comments from students:

"It should not give a free ride to abuse and thus, it must be linked to some moderation by the Registry. Guidelines and ethical considerations should be given to students to answer the survey in a constructive and professional way."

"I'm happy to take constructive criticism on board but staff should have the facility to notify registry of abusive comments for investigation and possible sanction. The teaching staff don't have to know who the student is to keep things as anonymous as possible while protecting against abuse."

"There should be censorship of inappropriate comments by a third party before module coordinators get to read them."

"I strongly feel that it needs to be prefixed by the UCD dignity and respect policy and the students participating need to check a box and agree to adhere to this. Some of my colleagues have received abusive messages, or ones commenting on their personal appearance or accent.. this is unacceptable."

"I believe it has become a kind of pointless function. Treated as such by the wider university. Student responses often stray into personal criticism."

"I am aware of a number of female lecturers where the student feedback has been inappropriate and petty and has included comments on the way they look or dress and has been quite hurtful and upsetting."

"The current system deliberately takes away any accountability from students. Years ago, one respondent lampooned my (foreign) name, in a generally dismissive response. Faculty doing the same to a student would probably go to jail. I asked that those managing the feedback kept the respondent's name from me but told him/her that this personal insult was not acceptable. I was told that this was not possible as it would compromise anonymity. I take this as evidence that students are not held accountable (note that an online respondent is identifiable to someone in the system). I have seen evidence that this damages staff morale in general."

"The system as it is now it gives a free ride to abusive comments but no guidance or ethical framework is given to the students to respond to the surveys."

"Abusive/aggressive comments should be dealt with through Registry. I can't understand how students who have psychologically abused colleagues can go through graduation and be awarded with a degree after engaging with such unacceptable behaviour. I think the module coordinator should not have information about the identity of the student since the survey is anonymous, but the Registry should have access to this data and process any anomalies."

"Abusive comments apparently are getting through to staff, with no monitoring. This is because the students remain anonymous and there is no training or guidance with regard to the policy on dignity and respect at work for staff, which is supposed to be a regulation. I understand some action is to be taken by senior academics regarding this, and not before time. Abuse should be traceable back to a student and action taken if comments are sexist or racist."

Some faculty expressed the view that student feedback should not be anonymised:

"The student responses should NOT be anonymised."

"Feedback should not be anonymous. Teachers give feedback under their own name so students should do the same."

"Students can hide behind anonymity and may not be fair. Feedback is provided after results are provided, hence no need for anonymity. The student knows who marks their work, the lecturer should see who is making them. Removing anonymity will ensure a fairer and transparent process on both sides."

"So long as the students' opinions are anonymous, then the actionability of the information remains low. If someone fails to turn up to class for example, does not attend tutorials provided and then complains that the lecturer does not explain things well enough.... how does that help exactly?"

"I do not think it should be anonymous. I think rude, aggressive, hurtful or spiteful comments about lecturers and/or modules should be followed up in the same way the positive comments are fed back to the class. I do not it fair that some people are subjected to online abuse and nothing can be done. I have no problem with anonymised comments but students should be told that this is not a platform to say hurtful things."

"Students should be identified - particularly the fact that they can make untrue comments without justification or identification."

Concerns were also expressed about the timing of the survey:

"The timing is woeful - more notice on the questionnaires would help us to find time to change."

"Today, the survey was to be available, and it is not. So please ensure the survey is available from the day it is supposed to be."

"The student module feedback system opens too late in the semester. It should be open from week 10 of the semester."

"The whole system should be activated earlier so the system fully opens to students at the end of Week 10 or latest very beginning of Week 11. Last year, it didn't open until Week 12, and this year it seems like the same. I understand there might be problems during the process which causes the date to be pushed back, but these unforeseen problems should be taken into account and the team in charge should start working on the system much earlier that they are doing currently."

"More than email prompts are required to get more teaching staff to promote the surveys to their students. Follow-ups with lecturers who receive poor response rates should be implemented on a School basis and followed up by senior management to check Schools have done this."

A number of faculty members were of the view that the feedback system should be left open until after the examination period:

"Obviously, the possibility to enter feedback should be stopped well before the exams, or only opened after graduation. Otherwise, giving an easy exam is a great way to get good feedback, which promotes dumbing-down. Actually, many of my colleagues think that the fact that the feedback is open until after the exams is a deliberate step to dumb-down courses and artificially increase students' grades and pass rates."

"Feedback system should close before exams. Otherwise students' evaluations are biased by their exam performance perceptions. No other university I worked for kept evaluation system open for weeks after exams. This is a serious error."

"It should be closed before the exam period. Module coordinators should have immediate access to the feedback and should not have to wait until the final grades are released."

"It should close before end of semester assessments to avoid knee-jerk negative responses."

"To me the biggest problem with the current system is that students can answer the survey AFTER THE FINAL EXAM. This is something I have never encountered before. It seriously distorts the answers because students can retaliate if they feel that they have been given a difficult exam. At the same time, it creates an incentive to set exams that make the students happy."

"The system should be closed for student responses before the exams begin. Faculty (particularly junior ones) sometimes feel pressure to set a 'nice' exam so as not to endanger their chances of getting high teaching scores."

"Timing. Asking students to complete feedback at the end of the semester when they are studying for the exams means that often they don't have time to do it."

3.9.3   Address the purpose and objectives of the system

Forty-two faculty members (19%, n=221) commented on the need for clarity concerning the objectives of the system:

"I would urge colleagues who are reviewing the current system to think carefully about how tools like the current Student Feedback mechanism promotes the idea that university learning is about consuming in a module-by-module way. It reduces complexity to linear scales and fails to engage the students in the reflective practices needed to deeply consider their learning."

"It's a rather crude instrument for a very complex process."

"Current system is not working, so it's worth trying something different."

One faculty member questioned the yearly cycle of feedback on modules:

"Having centralised feedback for every module every year is redundant; possibly move to a two-year cycle, which will also give time for new modules to bed in before a proper assessment can be made."

For some faculty members, too much emphasis was placed on the statistical data:

"There is far too much statistical collation and absolutely no interest in non-systematised processes, such as open discussion, debate, and human means of communication."

"As in most other HE feedback systems in the UK, US and Canada, there is always the option for those who teach to comment on the class performance and quality as a whole. Agreed, this is no longer purely a one-sided/ one-way student feedback but something more dialogical and communicative (which at the moment does not exist)."

Other faculty suggested that the purpose of the system should be made clear:

"Very simple - make it count! It is entirely unfair and demotivating that some colleagues do the bare minimum in terms of teaching whilst others put a lot more effort in. My conclusion at a School level is that senior management don't care about teaching quality, especially at undergraduate level. Once you are churning out publications in the right outlets, it doesn't matter!!!! So you can design the best system in the world, but until the administration in this university and School put teaching on the same pedestal as research, then teaching quality will suffer, and our students will continue to suffer a poor experience because their lecturer has been incentivised to do the bare minimum."

"The PURPOSE of it should be made clearer: is it for managers? For students? For module coordinators to improve mod design? For promotions? Or just to tick a box?"

"Also, this feedback should be reviewed at a School level as it is not clear if some lecturers take it on board at all."

"You can change systems as many times as you change your socks. They might improve or not. What needs to change before the system does is the way that some staff ignore it. Staff attitudes need to change."

"Semesterly reassessment involving all staff at staff meetings where the item is on the agenda and comments minuted."

"Mandate review and documented response (even formal refuting of feedback) by Subject Heads and line managers."

Some faculty felt that the current feedback system was unfair due to having multiple lecturers on programmes:

"There are cases (e.g. big stage 1 or 2 modules where there are 10 or more tutorial groups, each with different tutor) where there are many academics involved in module delivery. It is difficult to reflect on your own teaching, looking at student feedback for such modules."

"Feedback should be specific to module and lecturer. As module coordinators, we do not choose or train our co-lecturers and we have no impact or control over what they do."

"What is SO unfair is when you are a module coordinator and someone else is teaching the module. You are doing a service for the school and you do your best to mentor the person, but if they are a terrible lecturer, what can you actually do about it? You have no power to fire them from the module (who does?) and yet you get lumbered fixing their problems and having their extremely poor teaching on your record for GOOD. These people may be postdocs or finishing PhDs so what can you do? Alternatively, I have seen where a poor lecturer is module coordinator, and the lecturer who might just be part-time is brilliant! Do these staff members own up to the fact that the brilliant feedback does not actually belong to them? I seriously doubt it! This is an issue that really, really upsets me. I know a colleague who was left as module coordinator while on maternity leave and was told she just had to live with the poor evaluations that the lecturer who gave the module saddled her with. So, so unfair."

"Hard to tie to teachers, as module coordinators are not always responsible for the teaching/delivery of their courses. This of course can have both a positive and negative affect on the module coordinator."

"Should have ability to nominate teaching staff within module and tutors so they can benefit from the feedback also - important if you are taking a career development perspective of more casual staffing."

"One element that might be changed would be to guarantee access to all persons teaching the module and not just the module coordinator."

3.9.4 Change questions and content

Thirty-eight faculty members (17%, n=221) suggested changing the questions and content. A number of faculty members wanted to have greater opportunity and flexibility to include their own questions:

"More specific questions allowed, potentially with some guidelines on how to prevent bias in the questions."

"More informative questions should be asked."

"Perhaps increase flexibility to set own questions, not just selecting predetermined questions."

"Only open-ended questions composed by the lecturers. But to do that you'd have to abandon the idea that you can use this as yet another auditing tool to, one day, weed out the 'bad seeds'."

"There should be more flexibility for the module coordinator to change questions, add free text questions etc. The 'three good things' and 'three improvements' are arbitrary and should be revised."

"I would prefer to just have the open-ended questions. I understand that this does not allow me to compare my scores with the rest of the school but if the open-ended comments tell you the positive aspects of the module and the suggestions for change (typically) tell you about the negative aspects of the module, then it is clearer what may need to be addressed. I have no issue sharing the written comments with my HoS as these are much more informative than the scores."

"It can be very difficult to have standardised questions, and also very unfair. I appreciate the need for standardised questions, and honestly do not have a solution to this: the responses to my self-created questions tends to be where I look."

"Offer staff more options to add questions."

"Needs to have the ability to add custom, tailored questions, in a more flexible format."

One new faculty member commented on the impact on their teaching as a result of the feedback from the system:

"As a new member of academic staff, I have found the Likert scores on the module feedback (and sometimes the comments themselves) extremely demotivating and depressing. With so much to learn and so little concrete support on teaching methods, it feels extremely unfair to be graded/performance managed on this aspect of our work when we are so vulnerable and lacking in confidence. Module feedback has overall negatively impacted my teaching methods, making me depressed and anxious and cautious about innovating or challenging students. I feel it should not be applied to new academic staff for their first few years until they acquire the necessary skills and confidence to positively deal with such a system. It has also been used as a performance management tool in my School, with a School average Likert score set and colleagues' performance measure off that. I find this divisive and de-motivating. As a relatively young, female lecturer I also feel these scores have a greater negative impact on me (i.e. females are shown in studies to be scored lower by students than their male, senior colleagues)."

Another faculty member commented:

"I am old enough to recall a Head of School smugly and publicly congratulating himself for sacking a person who in their first year of teaching received some poor feedback. Without real systems in place to help understand why some modules receive poor feedback, and a meaningful mechanism to assist staff, then the feedback system in its current format should be discontinued. The response rates are too poor and reactions are skewed towards the disenchanted."

Some faculty members referred to the need to have feedback that went beyond the module:

"The system provides feedback on modules but not either students' experience of their Programme / stage overall, or on individual faculty members' performance in teaching. Both of these (programme and individual evaluation) would be valuable. Without them, the feedback is unbalanced."

"It would be useful to get students' feedback on the programme."

"Needs to be a system for an overall course review."

"Focus on each course and what fits that. The current system is an exercise on making up numbers without strong interpretation. Often, the main issue is something specific- and qualitative."

Other faculty members did not think that a generic approach worked well and suggested having staff generated questions:

"I am not sure if a generic approach across all disciplines and programmes can give sufficient meaning to the evaluation exercise. I believe monitoring and evaluation is really important; however, it needs to be somewhat focused."

"Staff generated question required might get greater staff engagement."

3.9.5 Address use of feedback

Nineteen faculty members (9%, n=221) focused their comments on the way feedback is used. For some, it was important that students were informed about how their feedback was implemented:

"Students should be able to see what changes were made to modules they have taken, and to those they are about to take."

"Provide a mechanism for teachers to inform the students about changes planned/made in response to their feedback."

"We should work on a two-way conversation system. How can I respond to a student if appropriate after s/he filled out a teaching evaluation?"

Other faculty members referred to access to open commentary:

"It is my understanding that currently only module coordinators can see the answers to the open-ended questions. If there is something that comes up again and again with respect to a module (either positive or negative), there is no way of identifying anything students find particularly helpful or have a particular issue with. Hence, if the module coordinator does not address an issue, it will continue unresolved or unrecognised. I feel that this is to the disadvantage of students."

"When I served as Head of T&L, I read the feedbacks for my School and fed back an overall view of areas we needed to address, and areas in which we were doing very well; this has not continued and I think Heads of T&L need to be very engaged with assessment and feedback issues generally."

"Lecturers are not provided with a vehicle to respond to comments made by students which may be incorrect or untrue. Offers a lot of protection to students, but none to lecturers."

Some faculty members were of the view that they should be allowed to respond to issues raised about resources and that they should have access to broader student profiles:

"The feedback system should permit lecturers to comment on available resources and facilities, IT assistance etc., so that the university cannot deflect problem issues onto lecturers."

"It should facilitate faculty to analyse the determinants of the evaluations, e.g. student demographics, performance, attendance etc."

Other faculty referred to dealing with student feedback at School level:

"Head of School, Head of T&L, and Head of Subject receive evaluations for school. What is any of these (especially latter two) supposed to do with people who get very poor evaluations and who are permanent members of staff?"

"H-S are responsible for a very large number of modules. A very simple system would need to exist to show how feedback was taken on board. Could P4G do this?"

"If the module feedback is particularly poor, the head of the subject area should have discussions with the module coordinator."

3.11 System addressing those who teach

Almost three quarters (72%) of faculty were of the view that the feedback system should reference those who teach, as opposed to module coordinators. Table 10 presents the data.

Table 10 Feedback system should reference those who teach as opposed to module coordinators

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Strongly disagree	4%	15
Somewhat disagree	4%	15
Neither agree or disagree	18%	64
Somewhat agree	35%	124
Always	37%	130
Grand Total	100%	348

A higher proportion of female faculty were of the view that the feedback system should reference those who teach compared to their male colleagues, as were faculty from the College of Social Science and Law and those who had less than two years of service. No significant difference emerged between the categories. Figure 41 illustrates the data.

A UCD feedback system should reference those who teach as opposed to module coordinators

Total = 348   80% of respondents responded to this question
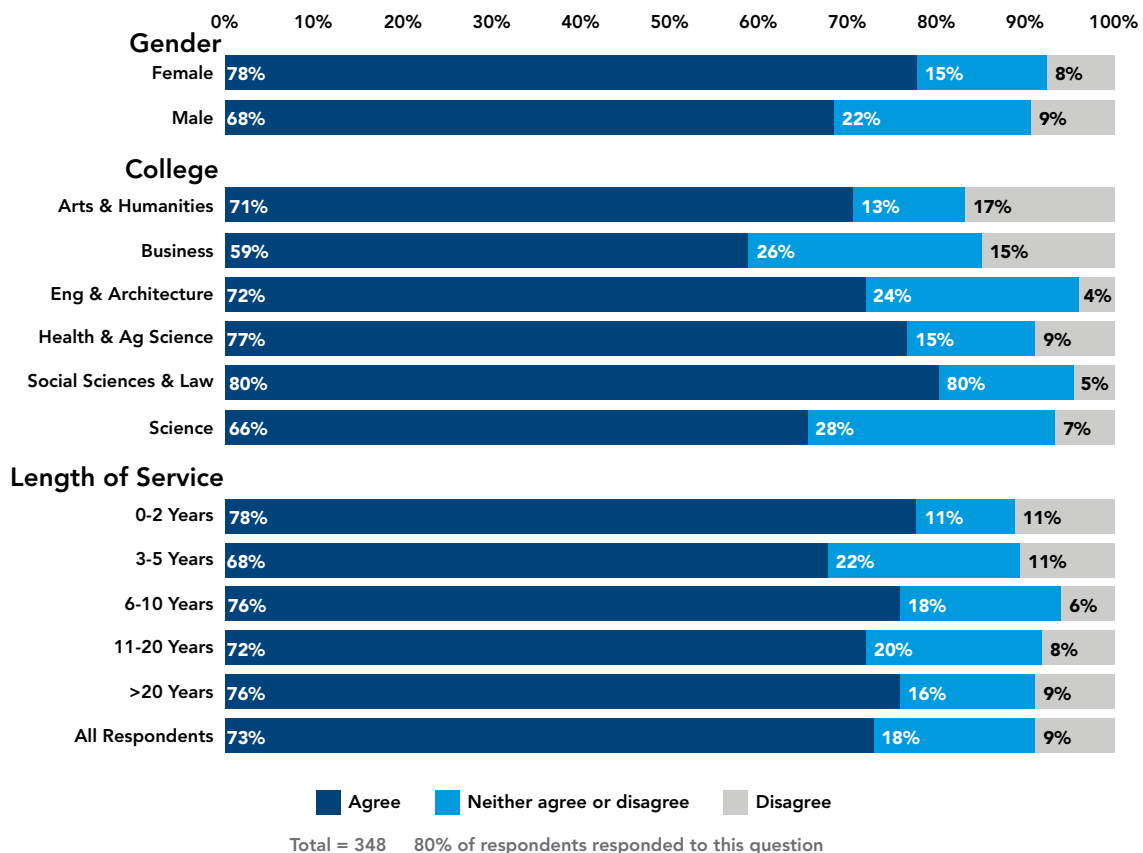
Figure 41 The feedback system should reference those who teach as opposed to module coordinators

3.12 Areas that should be included in a feedback system

Faculty were asked to consider a number of suggested items for inclusion in a UCD Student Feedback System. Table 11 presents the data.

Table 11 Areas that a UCD Feedback System should address

	% of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Lecturer knowledge of the subject	68%	224
Lecturer enthusiasm	66%	219
Lecturer ability to make subject interesting	69%	229
Lecturer planning and organisation e.g. materials available; module activities	84%	278
Lecturer communication approaches e.g. in lectures, online, written and other	81%	268
Lecturer approachability e.g. encourages students to ask questions and seek help	81%	268
Lecturer provision of timely and helpful feedback	72%	239
Helpfulness of the Lecturer in supporting to student learning	74%	246
Student engagement with material	76%	251
Student taking responsibility for learning	76%	253
Student levels of attendance	62%	206
Grand Total		331

Seventy six per cent of respondents answered this question. The majority of faculty were of the view that a UCD feedback system should address lecturer planning and organisation (84%), lecturer communication approaches (81%) and lecturer approachability (81%). Faculty also indicated that a feedback system should address student engagement with material (76%); students taking responsibility for their own learning (76%); helpfulness of the lecturer in supporting student learning (74%); and lecturers providing timely and helpful feedback (72%). One hundred and ten faculty members offered comments about the suggested items. Figure 42 illustrates the commentary on these items.
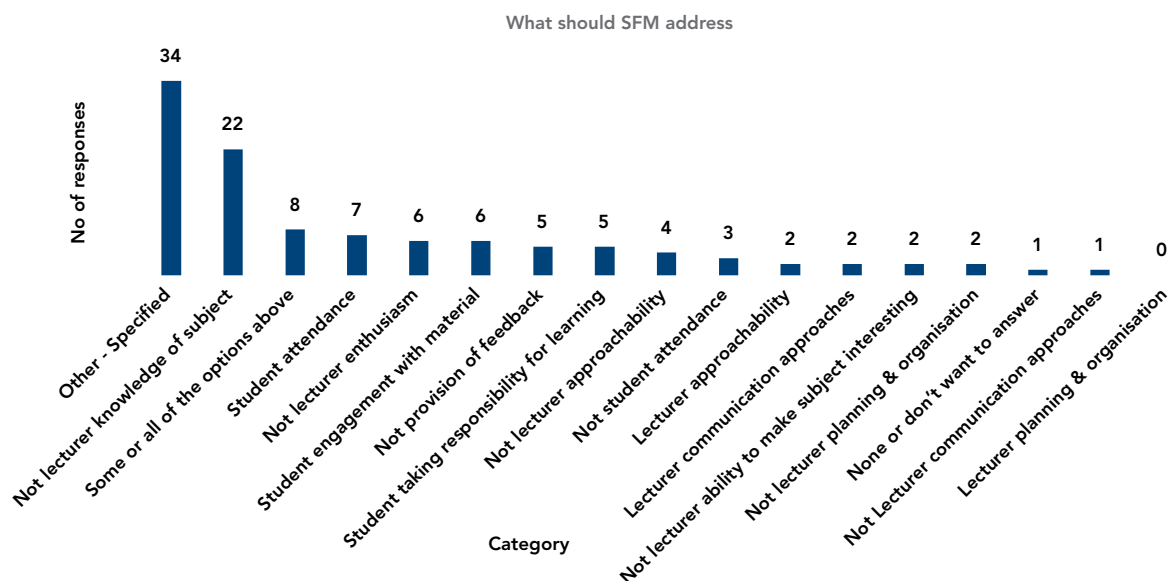

Figure 42 Faculty commentary on areas that should be included in a feedback system.

3.12.1 Suggested items for inclusion

Thirty-four faculty members (31%, n=110) suggested a range of areas for inclusion in a student feedback system. Some faculty felt that the system should focus on content:

"I think it could be useful if it focused on whether the content was interesting."

"Find if the course is covering comprehensive and difficult materials - is it introducing complex concepts to the students? Is the course challenging (difficult, but in a good way)?"

"The feedback should avoid emphasising the lecturer, and instead focus on what the student is receiving, such as content and delivery."

"So often the feedback is about whether the student liked the subject or not. I think the questions need to be asked in such a way as to ascertain the experience of the module as opposed to picking up on whether they liked the subject or not."

"How hard or difficult the subject was for the student."

"Pick out key messages things that have worked well and could be improved rather than soliciting comment on everything and setting up a judgement/evaluative dynamic divorced from the fact that learning is a process that can be uncomfortable, outcomes not always clear in 12 weeks etc."

Other faculty suggested that items about assessment and experience should be included:

"More specific to the actual assessments used and their impact on student learning."

"Quality and relevance of assessment components."

"Were there major clashes with other assignment deadlines which created stress? Did you find assignments clearly identified what you needed to do to complete them?"

"There also needs to be module-level feedback, particularly for co-taught modules e.g. on module structure, coherence, alignment of lectures and tutorials etc. Assessment isn't mentioned above and obviously that is critically important."

It was also suggested that a number of items should focus on the lecturer:

"The most important question on the instructor-side is: how effective is the Instructor in teaching this course? That is, should UCD let him/her teach this module again? This question is currently absent."

"Care taken by the lecturer towards the students and the module."

"Too many lecturers do not even bother to reply to their students' email queries, which is disgraceful. The least a lecturer can do is to have the courtesy to reply to a student and preferably within a 48-hour time limit. Too much time is invested by lecturers in ways to avoid student interaction rather than encourage it, as this will increase time spent on research and hence promotion, as this is what is mainly valued by the university."

"Accessibility and communication are fine."

"There should be feedback specific to individual teachers, especially when it goes to promotion."

A number of faculty members did not feel comfortable with an item referring to lecturer approachability:

> "Whilst all of the above are important, there is a danger that feedback could become like the unofficial 'rate my professor' surveys, which can be highly personalised. The feedback should be about the module, not the person."

> "Please do not ask about approachability or communication; students now expect lecturers to respond to emails on weekends and evenings, which is not fair when the lecturer is available M-F and in class for several hours."

> "Teachers' workload can dictate how much time discretionary time they have to meet students, provide formative feedback etc."

> "Lecturer approachability e.g. encouraging students to ask questions and seek help is aspirational, as large classes make it virtually impossible to meet all students who need one-to-one help."

One faculty member suggested asking students if they felt the course was worth the investment:

> "Question worth asking are: 'Was it worth the money' i.e. time and effort and money if applicable?' 'Did you learn anything?' 'Was it useful' etc."

Other faculty members were of the view that items should focus on resources and learning materials:

> "The accommodation, including it being sufficiently comfortable in terms of temperature, seating etc. also needs to be addressed. Students frequently leave early due to cold rooms."

> "It should be much more focused on things like availability of learning materials."

However, some members of faculty disagreed with this:

> "This just looks like more boxes to tick for the promotional framework workspace and really will not deliver on T&L outcomes for the students or the lecturers."

> "Disgraceful, hostile, anti-academic, un-collegial, anti-professional bias here. On the basis of these questions, a vocationally committed, idealistic academic teacher may no longer wish to be part of such an institution. Shameful aggression and assumption that a threatening environment of micro-monitoring will boost teaching. It would utterly destroy it. 'Popular' and 'populist' are sometimes not far apart, sadly. That should not be what a university is about. The university should foster critical thinking, not be a place of surveillance and hostility."

> "I don't understand why these questions are proposed. Who benefits from asking and responding to them?"

3.12.2 Lecturer knowledge

Twenty-two faculty members (20%, n=110) did not agree with lecturer knowledge being referenced in the feedback system. There was a general consensus among those who commented on this item that students were not in a position to make this determination:

> "Students cannot possibly comment on the lecturer's knowledge of the subject since they come to learn about the subject."

> "Students don't know enough to comment on what lecturers do or don't know. Even though some lecturers don't know enough!"

"There are a number of attributes here that a student cannot comment on. For example, lecturer knowledge of the subject. In many cases, the student will not be able to meaningfully evaluate."

"I'm not sure that it is appropriate to ask the students about a lecturer's knowledge of the subject."

"Not really the job of students to decide whether a lecturer has knowledge of their subject, is it?"

"How would a student, perhaps first year, be in a position to evaluate what the lecturer knows on a subject? How would that affect their learning?"

"The majority of students cannot possibly judge whether a lecturer knows their subject. The most important aspect of teaching is the relationship between the lecturer and the students. This is unique to each lecturer and cannot be measured with one-size-fits-all questions."

"I strongly feel it is not up to students to evaluate lecturer's knowledge of the subject. If students had sufficient insight into the knowledge of the subject to be able to evaluate other's knowledge, they'd be lecturers and not students."

"A lecturer's knowledge of the subject should be a given."

"The idea of asking a student to judge whether the lecturer knows their subject is nonsensical! Some students do study, most don't know how to study and therefore have very little knowledge."

"I am assuming all lecturers have knowledge of their subject!"

"On some of these items, the student may not be in a position to comment on the lecturer."

"Absolutely no comment should be allowed on lecturer knowledge, unbelievable that this should be included when the interview panel and subject professors are the ones who employ us on the basis of our knowledge and qualifications."

"Allowing students to assess a lecturer's knowledge of subject or suggesting content is ridiculous, particularly in technical subjects such a computer science."

"Students are not in a position to assess lecturer's knowledge of the subject and enthusiasm is a very subjective value."

"Hopefully UCD doesn't employ any lecturer who knows so little that students can informatively assess her/his *knowledge of the subject*."

"I do not think it would be helpful to have students decide on the lecturer's knowledge of the subject - that should be down to UCD in employing them in the first place."

"UCD lecturers have been through a rigorous selection process and are knowledgeable. Novice students are not well positioned to judge lecturers' knowledge; graduate students may have some useful views."

"Am not sure that most students are qualified to evaluate lecturers' knowledge of the subject."

3.12.3 Some or all of the options

Twenty-two faculty members (20%, n=110) were positively disposed to the inclusion of the suggested items:

"All of the above are absolutely needed."

"All of the above are important - the feasibility of capturing all of these factors without overburdening students may be challenging."
"Probably all of these are relevant to teaching and learning."
"All of the above - to varying levels depending on the programme."

"In principle, all the above, but one needs to safeguard against making the per-module feedback overly detailed as it decreases the fraction of students providing feedback.
So one needs to select a subset of the above!"

3.12.4 Student Attendance

Seven faculty members (6%, n=110) indicated that an item on student attendance should be included:

"An important aspect in teaching evaluations is to make students responsible for their evaluations. It would be good to know to what extent a student was involved in the module. Did s/he attend all sessions? Did s/he do the work and study required? Or am I facing comments from a student who attended the module at a rate of e.g., 60% only?"

"Linking student feedback to attendance and participation is vital, as negative feedback may come from those students who do not attend lectures or do not participate. Students should be asked questions about their attendance and participation before they are permitted to provide anonymous feedback."

"It is essential that some of the questions relate to student attendance and independent learning - otherwise the impression is given that the student is the passive recipient of knowledge from academic staff."

"If it could address student levels of attendance, that would be a really positive thing."

"The final three points focusing on student reflection on their own role are very important in framing that differently: if we continue with SFM more of this dimension would be very welcome."

However, three faculty members pointed to the challenges in capturing this information accurately:

"In many cases, the student will not be able to meaningfully evaluate. If you want to measure student attendance, then have students clock in."

"It is hard to use a feedback system to record student levels of attendance - but this is another very important area that the university needs to tackle; I am in a (mainly) graduate School, and attendance can get erratic towards the ends of the semesters, even though our students are mainly over 21 years, somewhat 'mature', and in preparation for their profession. This is a measure of the over-assessing the teaching and learning, and no use of cross-modular assessments."

"Student attendance levels are often very poor and UCD, through the new regs, is giving a carte blanche for non-attendance. Poor attendance undermines both teaching, making preparation extremely difficult (what to do when students come and go and have not prepared?) and learning, in that it sends an extremely negative signal to those students who are really committed to their studies and very much want to engage."

3.12.5 Lecturer enthusiasm

Six faculty members (5%, n=110) did not want an item referring to lecturer enthusiam:

"It is problematic (re UCD policy of dignity and respect) to ask students to judge the knowledge and enthusiasm of the lecturer."

"We should, however, be careful that student feedback on enthusiasm etc does not necessarily relate to good, effective teaching and student outcomes. Sometimes students should not be having a good time!"

"Not did you think your lecturer knows their subject or was enthusiastic (hopefully they do or else poor hiring!!) You can have incredible experts who are enthusiastic but couldn't teach their way out of a bag...."

3.12.6 Student engagement

Six faculty members (5%, n=110) were of the view the level of student engagement and enjoyment should be captured:

"How much effort the student put into the module."

"More student-focused reflections would be particularly helpful, I think."

"Student's enjoyment of the class (distinct from engagement)."

"What did you find most difficult and why?"

"I feel that there should be a section on the feedback forms wherein students can elaborate and explain any problems - both pedagogical and personal - that they encountered during the time period of the module. That way, if the students have performed poorly and they also have a space in which to voice the reasons for their poor performance, this might remove some of the blame-apportioning and unconscious bias that the Likert-scale question-model inherently encourages."

3.12.7 Lecturer provision of timely and helpful feedback

Five faculty members (5%, n=110) did not agree with including an item referring to feedback:

"Re: Lecturer provision of timely and helpful feedback: while extremely important and a core part of learning for the students, I think there are fundamental problems with using this as a quality metric for assessing student experience. Firstly, there is a great difference to having the opportunity to give feedback to 21-70 students vs 250 students, which I have experienced over the years. My colleagues who do not teach large groups are in positions to give ongoing feedback to students, leading to the development of good relationships with students, leading to a better experience for their students, leading to a better evaluation. While I can use different methods for giving feedback in large groups, there is limited opportunity to build relationships. If students are asked to rate things from their experience on whether the feedback is timely and helpful, they will not be considering that my module had 250 students and the other modules they were in had 20, when they give their feedback. I believe that all module coordinators and the lecturers teaching the large groups are at great disadvantage when students are asked to give feedback on their experience of receiving feedback on their course and greater consideration needs to be given to this inequality!"

"A lot of these aspects (eg timely feedback) depend on how many students are in the class and the support that lecturers get (in the form of demonstrators etc.)."

"Lecturer provision of timely and helpful feedback is also problematic due to large class sizes."

"I also, in general, think student expectations about feedback doesn't reflect the nature of the classes we teach (i.e. large). If we all had nice small seminars, sure, but realistically it's not possible (unless MCQ)."

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3.13 Communicating results of feedback with stakeholders

Faculty were asked to consider if a student feedback system should facilitate faculty to share results with students; share any changes made with students; facilitate faculty to reflect on teaching and facilitate Heads of Schools to see where enhancements have occurred. Figure 43 illustrates the data.
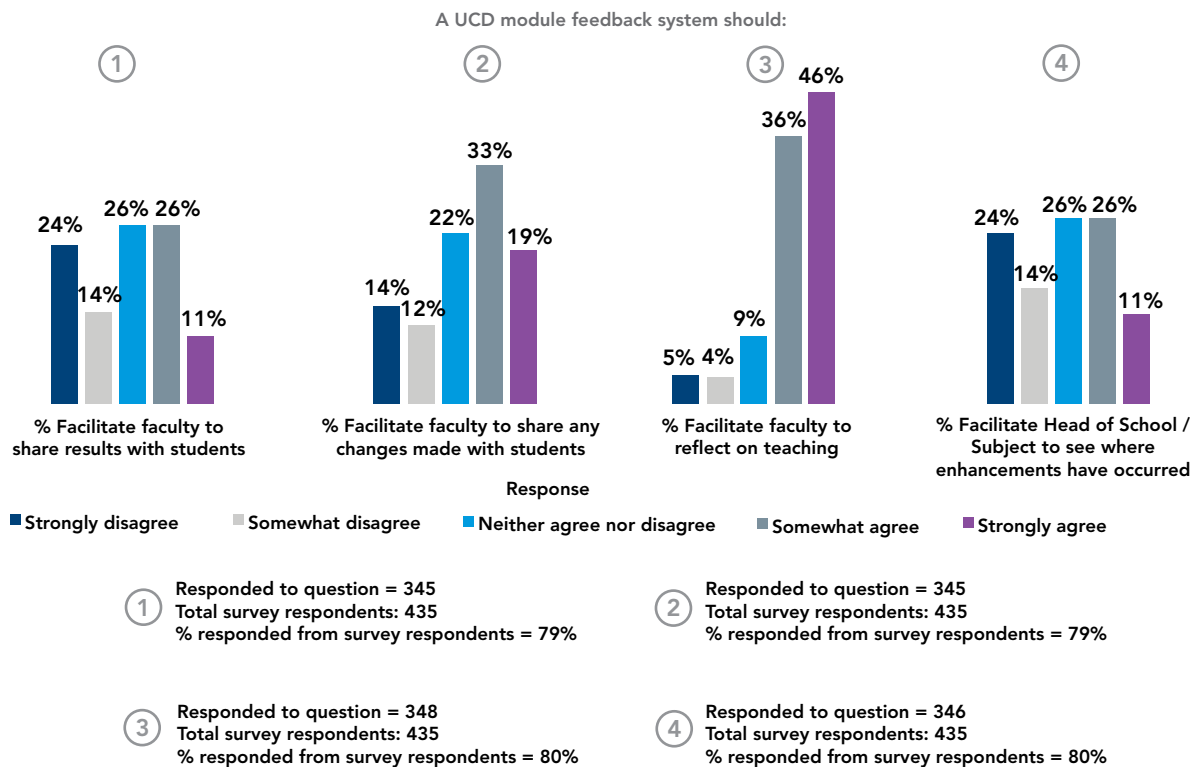
A UCD module feedback system should:

Response

■ Strongly disagree   ■ Somewhat disagree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Somewhat agree   ■ Strongly agree

① Responded to question = 345
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 79%

② Responded to question = 345
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 79%

③ Responded to question = 348
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 80%

④ Responded to question = 346
Total survey respondents: 435
% responded from survey respondents = 80%

Figure 43 Faculty commentary on communicating results of feedback.

Faculty were almost equally split with reference to sharing results with students, (38%) did not agree with this, whereas (37%) agreed. Over half (52%) agreed with sharing any changes made with students. A majority of faculty (82%) wanted the feedback system to support reflection on teaching. Faculty were almost equally split with reference to the system facilitating Heads of School/Subject to see where enhancements could be made: 38% disagreed, whereas 37% agreed with this view.

A significant emerged across the Colleges with reference to sharing results with students. The College of Arts and Humanities and the College of Business disagreed more than expected, while the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences agreed more than expected [χ^2 37.506, df 10, p=.000]. Figure 44 illustrates the data.
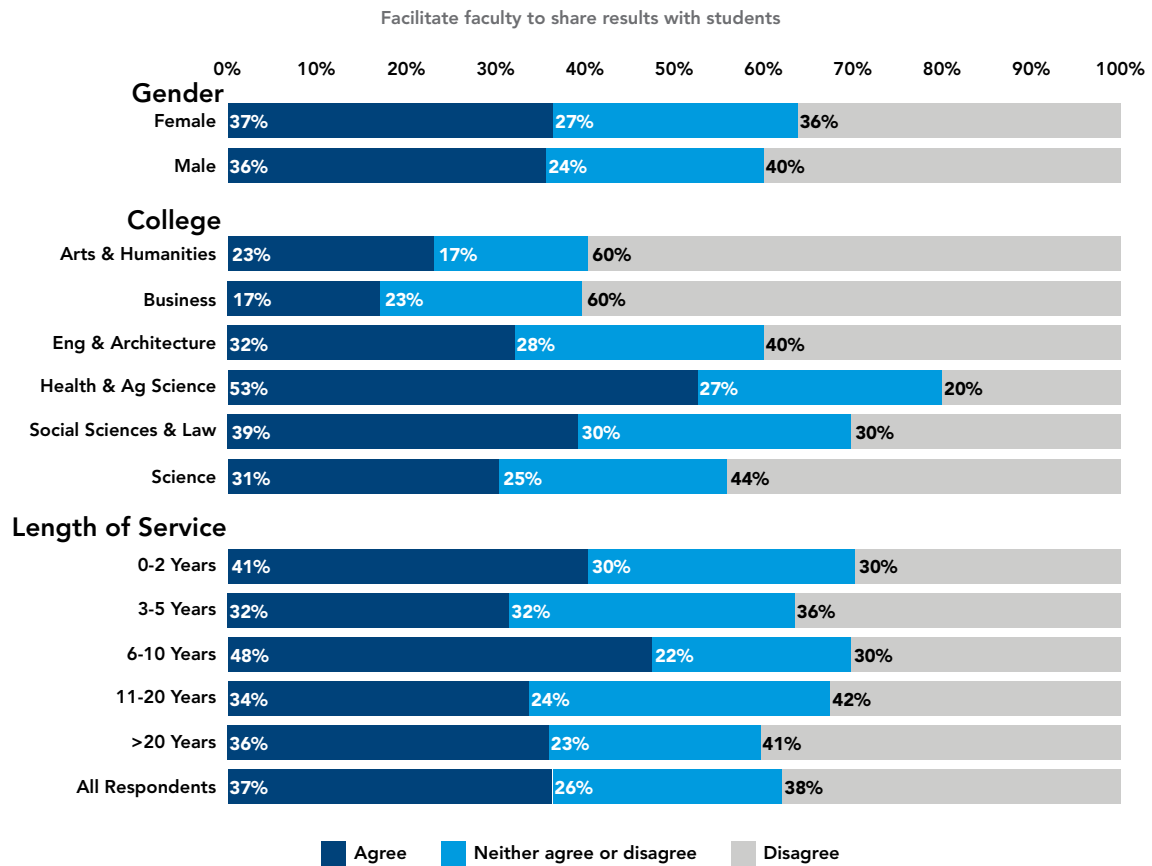
Facilitate faculty to share results with students

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Gender			
Female	37%	27%	36%
Male	36%	24%	40%
College			
Arts & Humanities	23%	17%	60%
Business	17%	23%	60%
Eng & Architecture	32%	28%	40%
Health & Ag Science	53%	27%	20%
Social Sciences & Law	39%	30%	30%
Science	31%	25%	44%
Length of Service			
0-2 Years	41%	30%	30%
3-5 Years	32%	32%	36%
6-10 Years	48%	22%	30%
11-20 Years	34%	24%	42%
>20 Years	36%	23%	41%
All Respondents	37%	26%	38%

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Neither agree or disagree ■ Disagree

Figure 44 A feedback system should facilitate faculty in sharing results with students.

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A significant difference emerged between faculty across Colleges with reference to sharing changes made with students [χ^2 24.772, df 10, p=.006]. A higher proportion of faculty from the College of Business disagreed with sharing changes made compared to faculty from other Colleges. Figure 45 illustrates the data.

Facilitate faculty to share any changes made with students
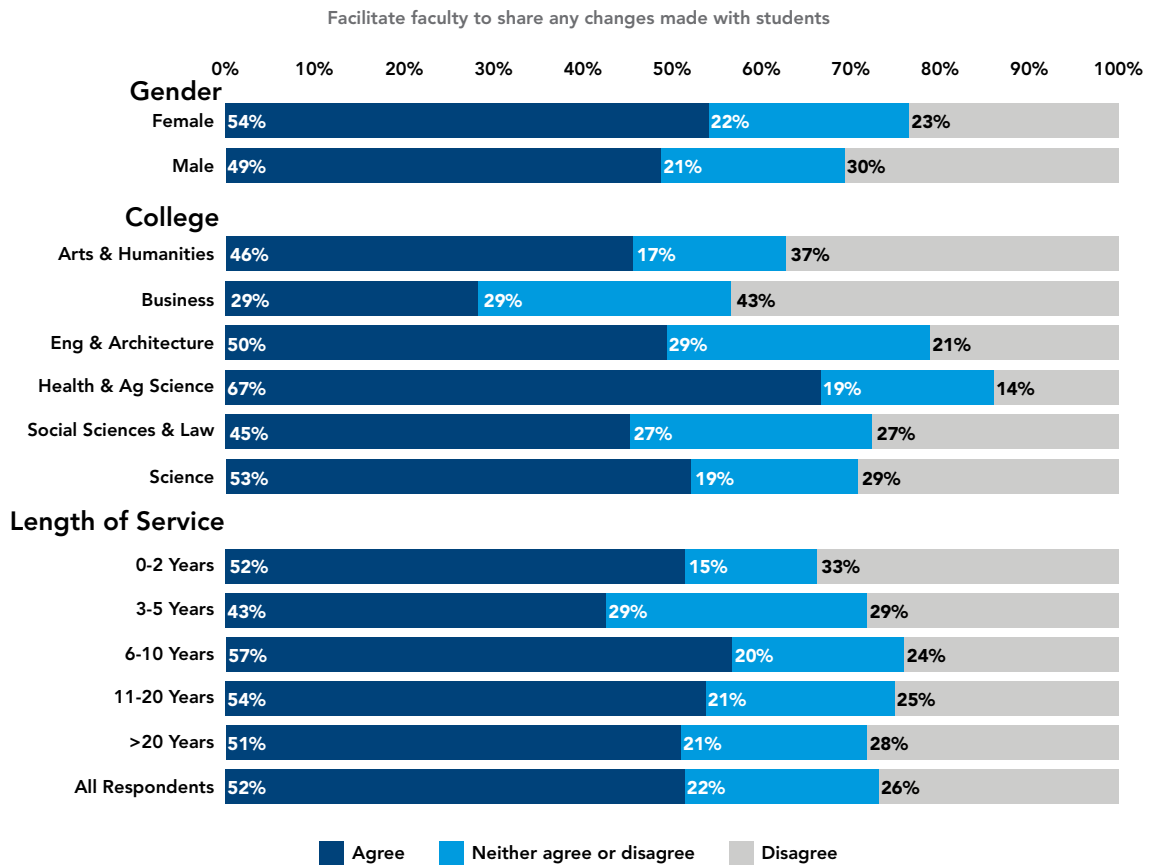
Figure 45 A feedback system should facilitate faculty in sharing any changes made with students.

A higher proportion of faculty from the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences were of the view that the system should facilitate faculty to reflect on their teaching. Figure 46 illustrates the data.

Facilitate faculty to reflect on teaching
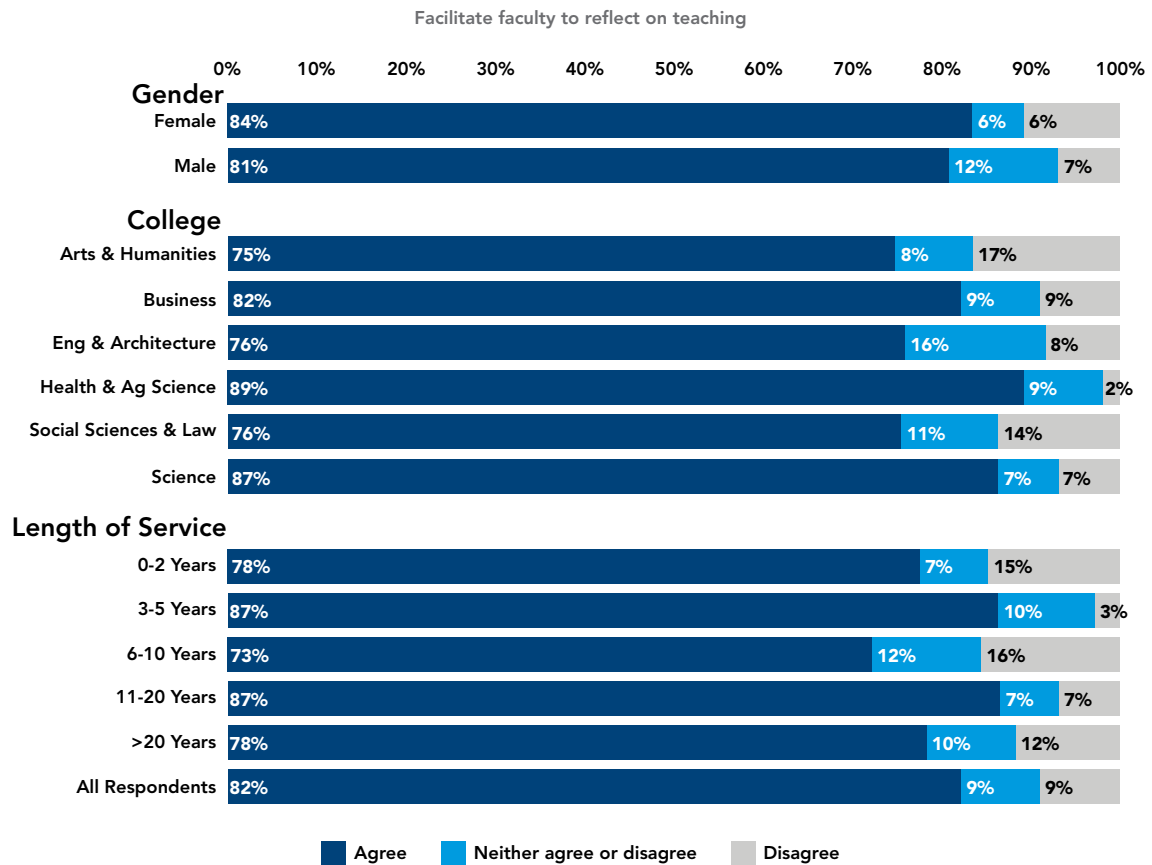
Figure 46 A feedback system should facilitate faculty to reflect on teaching.

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A higher proportion of female faculty members agreed with the view that feedback should be shared with the Head of School compared to male colleagues. A lower proportion of faculty from the College of Arts and Humanities agreed with this view compared with faculty from across other Colleges. No significant difference emerged among the categories. Figure 47 illustrates the data.

Facilitate Head of School / Subject to see where enhancements have occurred

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Gender			
Female	62%	16%	22%
Male	57%	20%	23%
College			
Arts & Humanities	49%	15%	36%
Business	60%	11%	29%
Eng & Architecture	60%	24%	16%
Health & Ag Science	69%	18%	13%
Social Sciences & Law	54%	15%	31%
Science	59%	22%	19%
Length of Service			
0-2 Years	63%	22%	15%
3-5 Years	62%	14%	25%
6-10 Years	55%	24%	22%
11-20 Years	59%	18%	23%
>20 Years	62%	14%	23%
All Respondents	60%	18%	23%

Figure 47 A feedback system should facilitate a Head of School / Subject to see where enhancements have occurred.

Twenty six faculty members offered comments with reference to sharing feedback results with students and faculty. Figure 48 illustrates the data.

A UCD feedback system should facilitate...
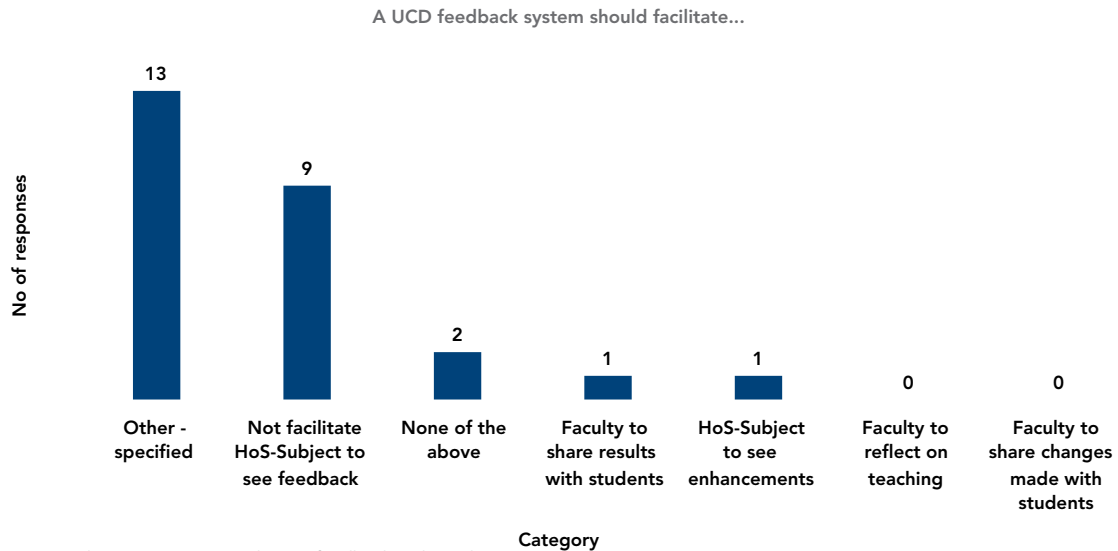
Figure 48 Faculty commentary on sharing feedback with students.

3.13.1 Specific suggestions

Thirteen faculty members (50%, n=26) offered a number of suggestions. For a number of faculty members, the system should facilitate student learning:

> "It is my belief that if we are going to have a module feedback system, it should be used to enhance the students' overall learning experience. Surveys are inherently biased and students tend to only complete if they are extremely satisfied or extremely dissatisfied with their experience."

> "Above all, it should be learning centred rather than evaluative."

> "It should also focus on student engagement. The student has a key role in the learning contract."

One faculty member felt that the system should gather feedback at stage level:

> "A UCD feedback system should evaluate the stage experience, not just the module experience."

Another faculty member expressed the view that feedback should be for those who taught the module:

> "Feedback should be for the person who taught the module."

Other faculty members expressed the view that the type of module, student engagement and student demographics should be taken into account:

> "The interpretation should be aligned to the topics. Also, core, difficult modules tend to get lower ratings due to larger numbers, response bias and difficulty level, as compared to courses with a lot of waffle."

> "It should facilitate faculty to analyse the determinants of the evaluations, e.g. student demographics, performance, attendance etc."

One faculty member suggested that the system should allow faculty to respond to unfair criticism:

"As stated elsewhere, it should facilitate faculty to have the right to respond to unfair criticism of teaching."

Another faculty member commented:

"It should be a help, not a management tool, nor some kind of virtue signalling."

3.13.2 Facilitate Heads of School/Subject to see where enhancements have occurred

Nine faculty members (35%, n=26) offered commentary with reference to sharing results/data with Heads of School/Subject. One faculty member agreed with sharing feedback with those who had responsibility for teaching and learning:

"These feedback evaluations should be visible to individual module coordinators, School Heads of T&L, Heads of School and College VPs for T&L."

Another faculty member was unsure about this approach:

"I am divided about the role of the Head of School: some colleagues need more mentoring because their teaching is poor. On the other hand, having the Head of School rate the performance of lecturers could easily become a bullies' charter. Since there are more bullies than poor lecturers in UCD, I am inclined to favouring less Head of School facilitation rather than more."

Other faculty members disagreed with sharing results and data with Heads of School:

"I'm not in favour of making the HoS monitor staff any further."

"Head of school should only standard scores, not comments."

"The agreement to introducing module feedback in the first place was that the comments are for module coordinators only. That is the way it should remain, unless module coordinators have the option to share comments with others. It should not be mandatory. I note that a report on module feedback was produced, so it already appears that some people have access to comments already, even though that was not what was originally agreed."

"Facilitating the Head of School / Subject to see where enhancements have occurred would turn this into a formal way of controlling faculty and allowing the more vocal students to control the delivery of courses and by extension the resources of the School. Have faith in your teaching staff. We already feel undervalued and undermined."

"Module coordinators should be trusted to run their own module without interference from the Head of School."

"I would note in particular the unacceptable implications of this final question in this set: if a HoS wants to know what I am doing when I rebuild / develop a module based on conversations with learners, they should ask me, not exercise surveillance."

"Sharing or monitoring? Collegiate communication or supervision? Let's cut back on the fascism, shall we?"

One faculty member commented on the leading nature of the question:

"Leading questions. They presuppose that we should have a module feedback system. As a result, the question itself is not informed by any of the latest research on the matter. Go inform yourselves and come back to us."

3.14 Conclusions

A number of interesting themes emerged from the analysis of the Faculty Survey. Receiving feedback from students was very important for faculty. More faculty in the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences considered feedback from students important compared to colleagues in other Colleges, as did early career faculty.

In general faculty were of the view that students who gave feedback took the process seriously; faculty in the College of Science and faculty with over 20 years' service indicated higher levels of agreement with this view compared to colleagues in other Colleges.

Mixed views emerged with reference to the usefulness of feedback from the current system. Open-ended questions were viewed positively by the majority of respondents, as they provided the most valuable feedback. The standard Likert scale and additional questions were viewed as offering useful feedback by half of respondents. Faculty in the Colleges of Engineering and Architecture and Health and Agricultural Sciences were of the view that the questions provided useful feedback. In relation to the open-ended questions, males were more inclined to agree that they provided good feedback, as were faculty in the College of Arts and Humanities and those who had over 10 years' service.

Faculty offered a range of views about the standard questions. Reference was made to the way in which the Likert scales are calculated; the feedback from these questions was not considered useful and it was felt that students were not clear about what the questions were asking. Students were not clear on what the questions were asking. Some faculty members were also of the view that students did not want to answer the questions on learning outcomes until they had received their results.

Different views emerged about the role of the current system. The majority of respondents felt that the role of the current system was to satisfy institutional requirements, improve module content, improve the quality of teaching and improve the students' learning experience. Half of those who responded suggested that the role of the current system was to decide on promotions. A significant gender difference emerged with reference to the role of current system and the promotions process, with female faculty members more likely to express this view. Early career academics also shared this view. The majority of those who commented focused on the role of the system in the promotions process and articulated their opposition to this.

Half of faculty members were satisfied with the facility to choose additional questions and monitor response rates. Faculty in general were unhappy with the quality of the reports produced by the system. A significant gender difference emerged with reference to including additional questions in the feedback system. More females than males were satisfied with this option. Faculty from the College of Arts and Humanities were also satisfied with this facility, as were faculty with over 20 years' service. Much of the commentary focused on the usefulness of additional questions and the quality of the reports.

Faculty used feedback in a variety of ways, such as reviewing notes and module materials, reviewing assessment, reviewing student workload, changing approaches to giving feedback to students and changing teaching methods. Faculty from the College of Business were less inclined to change course content as a result of student feedback compared to other Colleges. Faculty in the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences were more inclined to change their teaching methods based on student feedback, as were early career faculty. A higher proportion of faculty from the College of Engineering and Architecture were more likely to review student workload, review assessment approaches, change teaching styles, review notes and module materials, review their accessibility and review the provision of tutorials and laboratories as a result of feedback compared to faculty in other Colleges. Early career faculty were also more likely to engage in this type of activity based on student feedback.

The majority of faculty who commented indicated that they did not use feedback due to low response rates, they did not have faith in the system and were of the view that the system was too crude so they used their own approaches. The vast majority used conversations with students both inside and outside the classroom context, in class paper surveys, the VLE, feedback from class representatives, student performance on assessment and mid semester surveys.

Faculty members tried different approaches to increase student response rates, including reminding students in class, sending emails to students, using messages through the VLE, time in class to complete the survey and reminders through School and programme communication. A higher proportion of faculty from the College of Engineering and Architecture used other approaches to get feedback from students compared to faculty in other Colleges, as did faculty who have had over 20 years' experience. Those who commented indicated that they did not try to increase student engagement as they did not see it as their role to do so.

Less than half of faculty members informed students about changes made as a result of their feedback. Female faculty members were more inclined to inform students about changes made as a result of feedback compared to their male colleagues, as were faculty in the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences and early career faculty. Those who commented were of the view that such changes would not be to the benefit of existing students.

The majority of faculty members felt that the current system should be changed, particularly with reference to student response rates. They also suggested that the current system should be re-designed, existing questions should be changed and that the role and purpose of the system should be clearly stated. Three quarters of faculty were of the view that the feedback system should reference those who teach, as opposed to module coordinators. A higher proportion of female faculty members were of the view that the feedback system should reference those who teach compared to their male colleagues; faculty from the College of Social Science and Law were more inclined to agree with this view compared to colleagues in other Colleges, as were early career faculty.

Faculty were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a list of areas for inclusion in a student feedback system. Over two thirds of faculty agreed that the suggested areas should be included. Higher preferences were indicated for areas such as lecture planning and organisation, lecturer communication, lecturer approachability, student engagement with material, students taking responsibility for their own learning and the helpfulness of the lecturer in supporting student learning. Lower percentage agreement emerged with reference to the inclusion of the following areas; lecturer knowledge of the subject, lecturer ability to make the subject interesting, lecturer enthusiasm and student attendance. Different views were expressed in faculty commentary about all of these areas, some arguing for their inclusion, while others did not want the areas to feature as part of student feedback.

The majority of faculty members wanted the system to support reflection on teaching. Half of faculty members were supportive of sharing changes made as a result of student feedback. Faculty were equally split about sharing results with students. A significant difference emerged between Colleges with reference to sharing results with students; faculty in the College of Health and Agricultural Sciences were more in favour of this, compared to faculty in other Colleges. Gender differences emerged with reference to sharing changes with students; female faculty members were more in favour of this than their male colleagues. Significant differences also emerged across Colleges; the College of Business indicated less agreement with this suggestion compared to faculty from other colleges. A higher proportion of faculty members from the College of Health and Agricultural Science were of the view that the system should support faculty in reflecting on their teaching compared to faculty in other colleges. Female faculty members were more in agreement with sharing feedback with Heads of School to demonstrate enhancements compared to their male colleagues. Faculty in the College of Arts and Humanities indicated less agreement with this suggestion compared to colleagues in other Colleges.

04

Workshop Consultations with Faculty and Staff

4.1 Introduction

Faculty and staff from across the university attended the workshop consultations. Figure 49 illustrates the data.
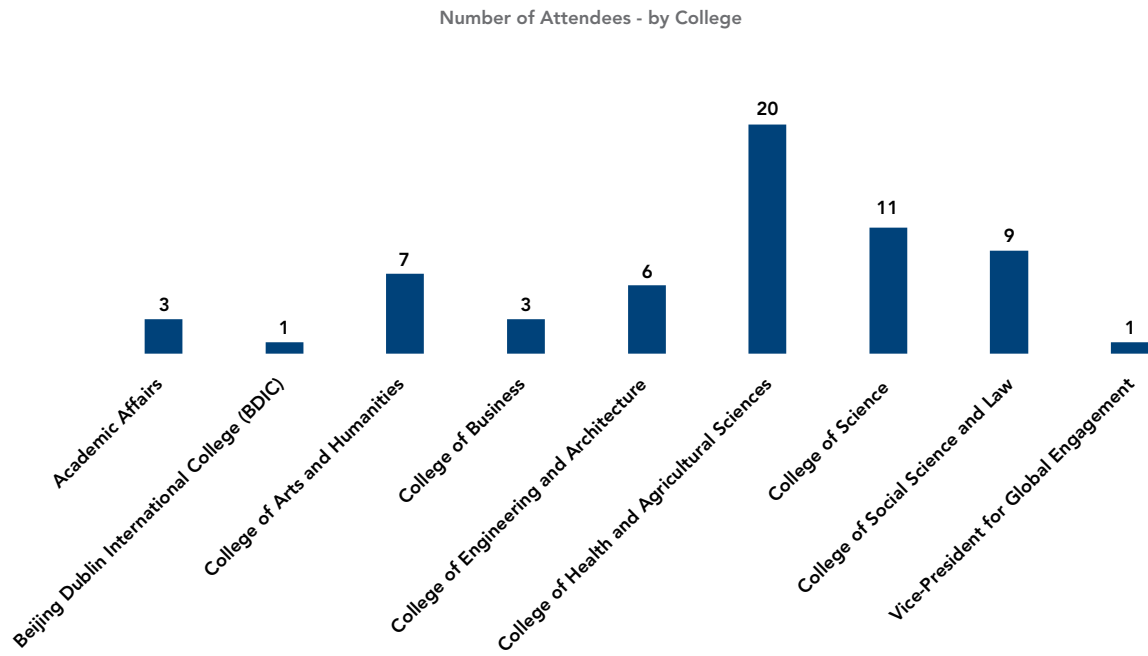
Number of Attendees - by College

Figure 49 Workshop attendees by College.

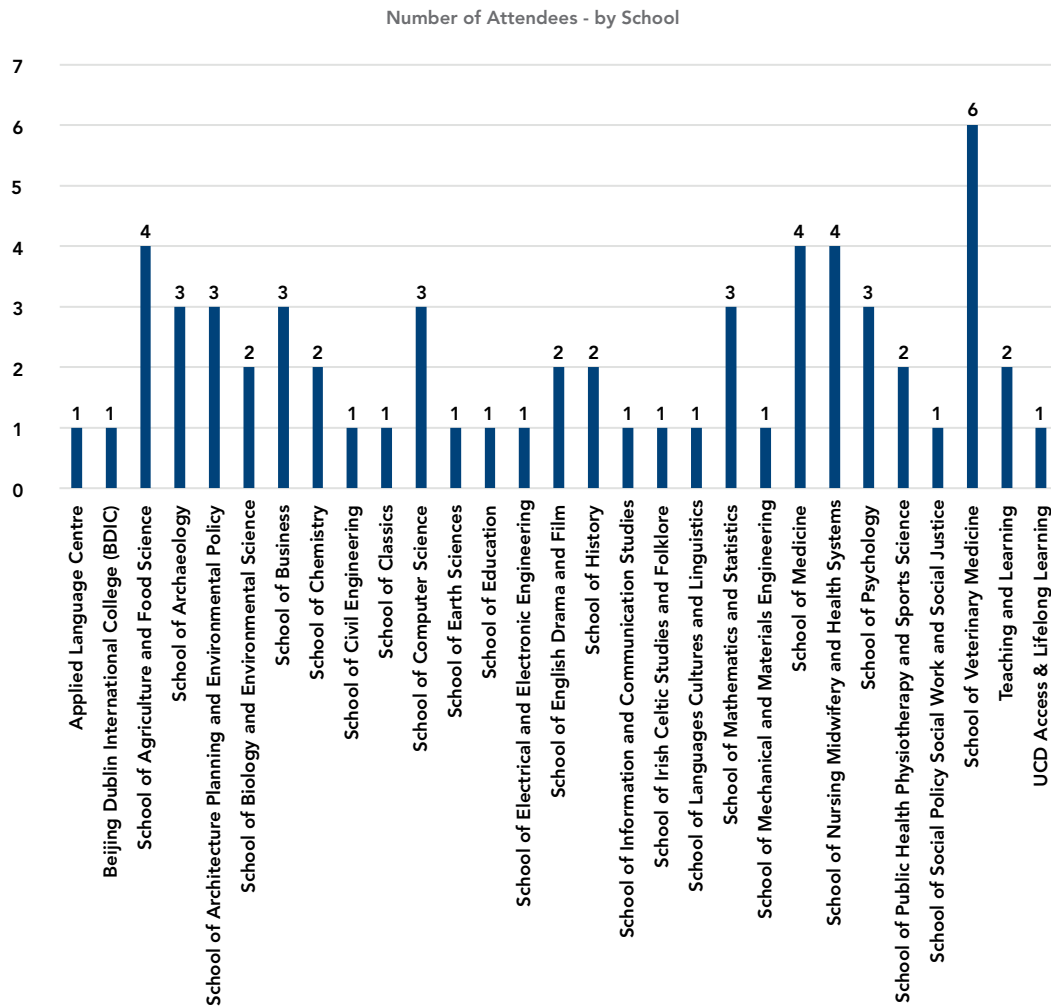There was also a broad representation of Schools from across the university. Figure 50 illustrates the data.

Number of Attendees - by School

Figure 50 Workshop attendees by School.

Different grades of staff were also represented. Figure 51 illustrates the data.

Staff Workshops - Grade of Attendees
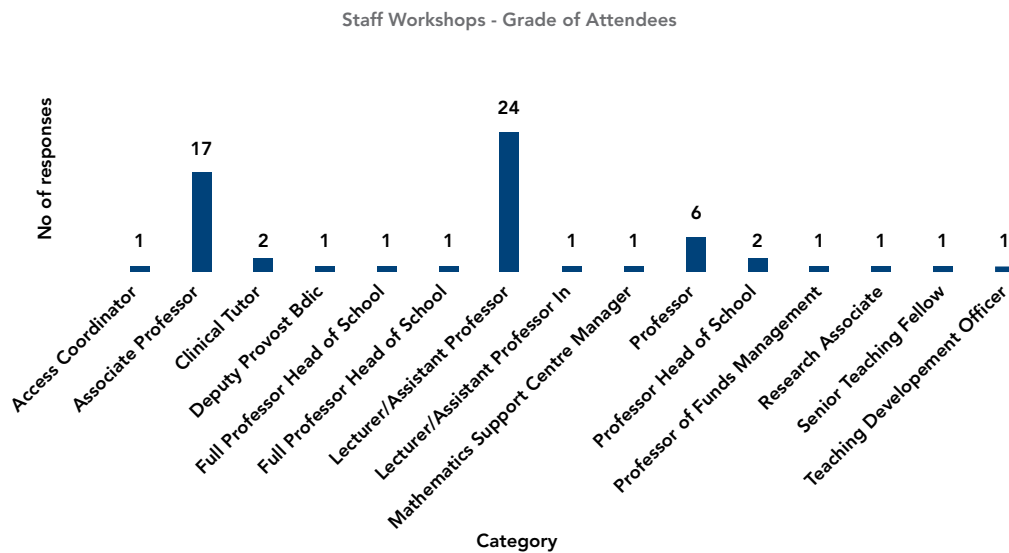
Figure 51 Workshop attendees by grade.

4.2   Views about the current feedback system

Participants were asked to give their views on the current system, including the best features and the elements that they would like to see discontinued. A number of perspectives emerged.

4.2.1   Best features of the system

Some participants referred to the fact that it was good to have a feedback process that gave students a voice:

"Exists to give a voice to students."

It also provided a mechanism to highlight problems:

"Highlights problems at the delivery of modules."

"Heads of Schools can see what the problems are."

Reference was also made to the fact that the current system was easy to use and provided a system of analysis that did not require much thought:

"Like the ease of the current system."

"It gives us analysis without having to think about it."

For some participants, the automatic nature of the survey was good, as it did not involve additional work on the part of the module coordinator:

"It's good the survey is administered automatically and module coordinators not having to do much."

The capacity to add question was also viewed as a positive dimension of the current system:

"Can add questions."

The qualitative feedback on the survey was viewed as being very useful:

"Qualitative feedback has the most value."

4.2.2   Aspects of the system that do not work well

Participants pointed to a number of issues with the system that they felt did not work well. It was generally felt that students were not clear on the purpose of the survey:

"Purpose of it to students not clear."

"Clarity of purpose."

"Are we obliged to say to students to respond? What is the purpose of this?"

Equally, participants were of the view that the purpose of the survey was not clear to faculty:

"Purpose of it to faculty: is it for the module or for promotion?"

"What is the purpose? Is it to grade us and get more out of us? Is it for performance?"

"There is a difference between feedback on teachers and on modules."

Participants were unhappy about the way the current survey was linked to promotion:

"Problematic link to promotion. System of staff evaluation rather than student feedback."

Some questioned the validity of the model:

"Comparisons of modules cannot be done."

"Model validity."

"What is the extent of the correlation between scores, teaching and student learning?"

It was also suggested that the model did not allow for comparisons between other Schools in the university or in the College:

"Have a School average; don't have any other average. Don't know how it sits in terms of College and university."

The fixed questions were viewed as problematic:

"Fixed questions – don't like them."

"Hate the questions and feel restricted by them."

"Over simplistic."

It was also felt that terminology used in the questions was not clear to students, especially around learning outcomes:

"Students don't know what learning outcomes are."

"The terminology is beyond students."

"Students don't understand the questions."

It was indicated that with large classes, there was no mechanisms by which large amounts of qualitative data could be analysed:

"Huge modules free text, lots of qualitative. How do you do it? Too much time and effort."

Some participants referred to the low numbers of respondents:

"Problems with low feedback."

Many were of the view that only students who had problems seemed to respond:

"Bias: only those with problems seems to respond."

"Students use comments to vent spleen."

"Extreme views: good and bad views."

"25% or 30% of students: who are they? Don't know how the 75% feel."

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"Not much self-reflection in the survey. How much did they do?"

"Comments from students. Should have a tick box re dignity and respect policy."

For other participants, in order to make the feedback meaningful, the university should have oversight of student attendance at lectures:

"Oversight re attendance, barometer of something meaningful."

"Wrong that those who haven't attended can give feedback."

Reference was also made to the impact of inappropriate comments about lecturers:

"Comments from students and impact on precarious workers."

Some participants queried whether students were qualified to comment on their teaching:

"Are students qualified to comment on the quality of our teaching?"

"A module may be enjoyable but not learning."

"A teacher might be great but not well organised."

"Are students good at assessing teaching quality?"

It was also felt that the system did not capture shared teaching on modules:

"Shared modules, 3/4 people: hard to figure out what is going on."

"Feedback not reflecting who did the teaching."

"Relationship between single module coordinator, use of buying in teaching."

Some participants were of the view that the Likert scales did not work well:

"Likert scales very blunt as to what you get with it."

"Scores can be affected by large class sizes and audiences that you have; students from different programmes."

"Numbers are crude. Should use a temperature scale as opposed to numbers."

Other participants saw value in using standardised numerical system:

"Standardised numerical system can be helpful. There are patterns in terms of how people are doing. Heads of Schools value it."

For a number of participants, more clarity was required in relation to oversight and closing the feedback loop:

"Clarity around who sees the feedback."

"Feedback loops need to be clearer at the end of the day."

Some participants felt that the feedback system should be used in conjunction with other methods:

"Must be used in conjunction with other methods, focus groups, student-teacher liaison, regular meetings, feedback in the classroom, phone apps."

"One size fits all not appropriate."

Participants also expressed the view that students received too many emails about completing the survey:

"Over saturation re number of emails that people get."

A diverse range of opinion emerged with reference to the current student feedback system. A number of positive aspects were identified, including the importance of having a feedback system, giving voice to students and ensuring that Heads of School had data to establish patterns over time. Participants liked the additional questions, the system was easy to use and the qualitative feedback was helpful.

Participants pointed to a number of features of the current system that they were unhappy with. There was general agreement that the purpose of the survey was not clear to faculty or to students. Reference was made to the problematic link with the current promotions system, which made it a staff evaluation system, as opposed to a student feedback system. Participants were also of the view that it was extremely difficult to get feedback on modules that had multiple lecturers. The low response rates to the survey rendered the data invalid as it was not clear who was responding to the survey.

Participants felt that the phrasing of the questions was not helpful and did not explore the module issues in-depth. It was also suggested that there was no opportunity for students to reflect on their engagement or learning in the survey. The Likert data was viewed by some workshop participants as unhelpful and they were not clear as to what a Head of School could do with the data received. It was also difficult to make comparisons at College-level and across the wider university. Some participants felt that the numeric data was helpful. It was generally felt that there should be more clarity around who sees the feedback.

It was suggested that students should be obligated to give feedback in a constructive manner. Equally, it was felt that students who had not attended lecturers/classes should not be in a position to offer feedback on a module. Participants were of the view that the university did not have a policy on closing the feedback loop to students.

4.3   Objectives of a student feedback survey

Participants were asked to reflect on the objectives of a student feedback survey. For some participants, the purpose of a student feedback system is to improve modules, to identify recurring issues and address issues of quality:

"Module design, programme design and QAQI."

"To help improve the module."

"To look into patterns over time to see problems. Some years good and some years not."

"Mechanism to flag issues as they arise."

"Importance of identifying practical problems."

"Lecturers and programme directors to identify problems and fix them."

Some participants expressed the view that a student feedback survey should not be used for promotion purposes:

"Shouldn't be used for promotion - to include it if they want to."

Other participants disagreed with this view:

"If you don't include teaching for promotions, then are you pleading the fifth. Should be the norm."

Some participants expressed the view that a student feedback survey should be for students and not lecturers:

"If we want student feedback, it is for them not for me."

"It should be for the student and directed at the student."

"Student engagement and provide with them with feedback."

"It should be the students' role as agents and to ask them about their role in that."

"Students have to be invested consumers; otherwise it is just a satisfaction."

Other participants suggested a student feedback system should be to improve teaching:

"Information to iteratively improve teaching."

"Specific about what I teach."

"Evaluation of teaching innovations."

"Feedback on what I have introduced."

Differences of opinion emerged with reference to the inclusion of general questions:

"Not general questions on modules. Looking for constructive feedback."

"What it appears like to a student to get the same questions."

Some participants expressed the view that general questions were useful:

"Balance between general questions across modules."

"Generic questions allow Heads of School to see what is working or not."

Other participants saw value in having open text questions:

"Why not go with open questions?"

"Individual questions that we do ourselves and open text to show what needs improvement."

4.3.1   Suggested changes

For some participants, the timing of the system was difficult, and they suggested mid-semester feedback to get students to engage:

> "Compare what they had learned and have to do in the future."

> "Timing earlier / mid-semester for small changes."

It was also felt that a feedback system should close the feedback loop with current students, not just future students:

> "Closing the loop with existing group."

> "Should be an opportunity to feed forward."

> "How to respond – show that we are listening and they can see our responses."

It was also suggested that students should be incentivised to complete surveys:

> "Some sort of incentivisation to get students to complete."

> "School jerseys, things like that."

> "Giving results early for feedback."

The view was expressed that results from student surveys should be statistically significant:

> "Response rates statistically significant."

Expanding on that, it was observed that a culture of student feedback needed to be established:

> "UCD slide of what the objectives of feedback are for students – builds a culture."

In addition, the view was expressed that faculty needed to be incentivised to engage with the student feedback system:

> "We need to be incentivised."

Some participants referred to the importance of having student feedback in the context of professional accreditation:

> "In some schools, it's important for professional accreditation."

A number of participants referred to award schemes that were operational in their Schools:

> "Some Schools already giving staff rewards."

Other participants referred to the modular system and the difficulty of collecting data that was useful:

> "Variation of modules so great, how can you interpret it?"

Some participants expressed the view that it was not necessary to evaluate every module every year:

> "Frequency of evaluation. Not every single module, every year."

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"We over evaluate. Programme evaluation might be of value."

"Look at stage modules together and more of a sense of getting something from that."

"System for programme improvement."

Other participants wanted a system that provided them with useful feedback:

"Improvement, reflection and development of potential."

"Potential for getting honest perceptions."

Some participants expressed the view that all feedback should be available to Heads of School, Heads of Teaching and Learning and Programme Coordinators and that an appropriate mechanism should be developed to feed into the promotion system and staff development:

"Appropriate mechanism to feed into promotion."

"Staff development have it available as a development tool."

"Mentoring process for new staff."

"Scope for using the feedback system as a teaching tool."

Reference was made to exploring within a student feedback survey the opportunity to capture research-led teaching:

"Student feedback on research led teaching content: student experience of this."

Other participants referred to capture the learning context:

"Context of the learning experience."

"Enough TAs/Supports/Labs/Field Trips."

Participants expressed a wide range of views about the objectives of a student feedback system. It was generally agreed that there needs to be clarity around the purpose of student feedback for both students and faculty. There was general agreement that a feedback system should allow faculty to consider patterns over time; it should be used to improve teaching and identify additional required resources. Faculty and staff were of the view that both students and staff should have incentives to engage with the system. Some differences of opinion emerged with reference to the type of questions that should form a student feedback survey, getting the balance right between general questions, teaching specific questions and open text questions was considered important. There was strong agreement that any feedback system should have the capacity to feedback and feed forward and that existing students should benefit from feedback, as well as incoming students. Providing students with the opportunity to flag issues as they arise mid-way through a module was considered important to allow for immediate interventions. Student engagement was considered a key element to ensure good response rates, and to get buy-in from faculty in general. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to how and with whom data is shared, especially where modules have multiple lecturers, and a communications plan developed around time frames within which to complete the survey.

4.4   Views on a programme-based survey

A variety of views emerged in relation to introducing a programme-based survey. Some participants thought that stage and programme level feedback should be introduced:

"To give feedback at a stage and programme level."

"Stage feedback very important."

"Good to have something at programme level."

"Programme-level survey would be very useful."

Some participants were of the view that not every module should be evaluated every year:

"Should every module be evaluated every year? Response rates are so low and there is a lot of student fatigue."

Other participants felt that it might be difficult to develop a programme survey for Stage 1, where students were taking general areas before specialising:

"Contextualised Stage 1 and how to administer it and what questions you ask."

"Vet Med very different to Languages and Arts."

"Science first and second year not identified."

"Might lack granularity."

Some participants suggested a combination in the one survey:

"More subject stage evaluation; combine all three into one: modules, teachers and programme as a whole."

Others disagreed and felt that programme evaluation should not be conducted using a survey:

"Programme evaluation not by survey."

"Different feedback to evaluate different aspects."

"Better done by focus group / forum."

"Semester/stage/programme evaluation: need different mechanisms, developed in specific local context."

It was suggested that consideration should be given to having a programme evaluation after students had completed their degree:

"Evaluation at programme level - evaluation beyond the degree. How they responded to the teaching afterwards - see the value subsequently."

"Holistic: are students academically ready for giving feedback?"

"Mature educationally to judge impact."

4.5 Views on replacing system with a separate teaching-only based survey

Faculty were presented with a teaching survey developed in Curtin University (Appendix 1), which they were asked to consider. Different opinions emerged in relation to having a separate teaching-based survey. The majority of participants in the workshops welcomed this type of approach:

"Having teacher feedback valuable in terms of promotions having good quality feedback."

"Content of module to be assessed by a programme director. Want teaching evaluation as well."

"Teacher survey – liked it. Students would like it. Should be an incentive for students to fill it up."

"Can be used by teachers to see trends."

"Important to have mechanism to get feedback on components with multiple lecturers."

Other participants suggested having a teaching survey that could form part of the P4G discussions:

"Input for P4G discussions."

It was also suggested that a teaching survey could enhance academic development:

"Teacher survey useful for academic development."

"Teaching survey opportunity for professional development."

"Teaching survey – responsibility on us to learn."

"Teacher survey useful if it is embedded in a culture of self-reflection and professional development."

Other participants qualified their support of a teaching survey, suggesting that it required institutional supports so that it would not become purely a satisfaction instrument:

"A teaching survey needs to be in conjunction with institutional supports so that system doesn't turn into a 'Rate my Professor' type system."

Some concern was expressed about having a teaching survey that could be gamed for promotion purposes:

"Concern about abuse for promotion."

Reference was also made to the fact that a teaching survey could lead to a popularity contest:

"Popularity contest in teaching."

Concern was expressed about how a teaching survey would be implemented and reservations were expressed about the use of the term 'teaching survey':

"How one would happen and how would it work."

"Not use the word about teacher. Like secondary school."

Some participants were of the view that the Curtin University teaching survey was too long and should have more open-ended questions:

"Curtin survey could be more concise and have options for open-ended questions."

"Some questions on Curtin survey more appropriate to module."

"Some Curtin items slightly vague, repetitive, too much jargon, limited flexibility."

Other participants suggested having a combination of a module survey, which would capture the team-teaching element:

"Combination of single module and part of a team."

Participants saw positive elements in both a programme and teaching survey but saw each as having different purposes. Some saw value in having a programme evaluation but did not consider a survey to be the best methodology, as programmes were contextually based. The majority of workshop participants favoured the introduction of a teaching survey. Others, while they liked the idea of a teaching survey, felt it required supports and resources to allow people to develop. Those who expressed reservations focused on issues such as gaming the system, and the potential for it to develop into a rating scale. Others did not like the title 'teaching survey'.

4.6   Conclusions

A diverse range of opinion emerged with reference to the current student feedback system. A number of positive aspects were identified, including the importance of having a feedback system, giving voice to students and ensuring that Heads of School had data to establish patterns over time. Participants liked the additional questions and the fact that the system was easy to use and found the qualitative feedback helpful.

Participants pointed to a number of features of the current system that they were unhappy with. There was general agreement that the purpose of the survey was not clear to faculty or to students. Reference was made to the problematic link with the current promotions system, which made it a staff evaluation system, as opposed to a student feedback system. Participants were also of the view that it was extremely difficult to get feedback on modules that had multiple lecturers. The low response rates to the survey rendered the data invalid as it was not clear who was responding to the survey.

Participants felt that phrasing of the questions was not helpful and did not explore the module issues in-depth. It was also suggested that there was no opportunity for students to reflect on their engagement or learning in the survey. The Likert data was viewed by some workshop participants as unhelpful and they were not clear as to what a Head of School could do with the data received. It was also difficult to make comparisons at College level and across the wider university. Some participants felt that the numeric data was helpful. It was generally felt that there should be more clarity around who sees the feedback.

It was suggested that students should be obligated to give feedback in a constructive manner. Equally it was felt that students who had not attended lecturers/classes should not be in a position to offer feedback on a module. Participants were of the view that the university did not have a policy on closing the feedback loop to students.

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Participants expressed a wide range of views about the objectives of a student feedback survey. It was generally agreed that there needs to be clarity around the purpose of student feedback for both students and faculty. A feedback system should allow faculty to consider patterns over time, it should be used to improve teaching and identify additional required resources. Participants were of the view that both students and faculty should have incentives to engage with the system and it should faciliate students in their own reflections on their learning. A feedback system should facilitate students in their own reflections on their learning. Some differences of opinion emerged with reference to the type of questions that should form a student feedback survey; getting the balance right between general, teaching-specific and open text questions was considered important. There was strong agreement that any feedback system should have the capacity to feedback and feed forward and that existing students should benefit from feedback, as well as incoming students. Providing students with the opportunity to flag issues as they arise mid-way through a module was considered important to allow for immediate interventions. Student engagement was considered a key element to ensure good response rates, and to get buy-in from faculty in general. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to how and with whom data is shared, especially where modules have multiple lecturers, and a communications plan developed around time frames within which to complete the survey.

Participants saw positive elements in both a programme and teaching survey but saw each as having different purposes. Some saw value in having a programme evaluation but did not consider a survey to be the best methodology as programmes were contextually based. The majority of workshop participants favoured the introduction of a teaching survey. Others, while they liked the idea of a teaching survey, felt it required supports and resources to allow people to develop. Those who expressed reservations focused on issues such as gaming the system, the potential for it to develop into a rating scale. Others did not like the title 'teaching survey'.

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Conclusions

There are a number of emergent themes arising from this review. These include reasons for giving feedback, the importance of feedback, a need to redesign the current system and existing questions, the inclusion of new areas closing the feedback loop and the need to explore new approaches.

5.1 Purpose and role of the current system

The review clearly demonstrates that there is a lack of clarity around the purpose and role of the current system and that view is held by students and faculty. Students offered a range of perspectives with reference to their experience of the current feedback system. Their views were influenced by the context of large classes, inputs from a diverse number of lecturers on their modules and the perception that UCD was a competitive educational environment. Faculty were also of the view that it was extremely difficult to get feedback on modules that had multiple lecturers.

Students were not clear about the purpose of the feedback survey. They were of the view that it was used to monitor lecturers and that the university was obliged to have a feedback system in place. Faculty were also unclear about the purpose of the system, the majority felt that the role of the current system was to satisfy institutional requirements, improve module content, improve the quality of teaching and improve the students learning experience. Half of faculty who responded to the survey were of the view that the system was there to provide evidence for promotion. Female and early career faculty held that view. The link between the current feedback system and the promotion system was viewed as problematic by faculty and staff who took part in the workshops, making it a staff evaluation system as opposed to a student feedback system.

Students were not clear about who sees their feedback and faculty also expressed the view that there should be more clarity around who has access to feedback. It also emerged from the review that multiple approaches to getting student feedback existed in the university. Some of these approaches were viewed positively by students, others less so. Some students reflected on negative personal interactions that they had with faculty when trying to give feedback, which they found upsetting. It was suggested in the workshops that a feedback system should allow faculty to consider patterns over time, and that it should be used to improve teaching and identify additional required resources. Equally, it was important to faculty that a feedback system should facilitate students in their own reflections on their learning.

5.2 Reasons for giving feedback and its importance

Students offered a number of reasons for giving feedback. Some gave feedback in order to improve the experience of future students, or if they felt aggrieved by a negative assessment experience and if they wanted a grade change. Other students were reluctant to give feedback as they did not view it as of direct benefit to their own learning; some did not want their feedback to benefit other students, some were of the view that their feedback would not be taken on board and they did not know what the outcome of their feedback would be. The majority of students viewed the process as very time consuming.

Receiving feedback from students was very important for faculty, especially early career faculty members. In general, faculty were of the view that students who gave feedback took the process seriously. The low response rates within the feedback system was a cause of serious concern for faculty members. Many had tried different approaches to increase student response rates, including reminding students in class, sending emails to students, using messages through the VLE, time in class to complete the survey and reminders through School and programme communication. The majority of faculty members felt that the current system should be changed, particularly with reference to student response rates. Equally, faculty were of the view that students who had not attended lecturers/classes should not be in a position to offer feedback on a module.

5.3   Redesign current system

A general consensus emerged about the need to redesign the current system. Students recommended a number of enhancements to make the survey more attractive and compatible with mobile devices. In general, students were negative about the current communication process used to promote the survey. This was linked to the fact that they felt overwhelmed by the number of surveys that they received from UCD about a range of issues. They complained about the frequency of the requests to complete the survey and the timing of these requests, especially around the examination period. Faculty also recommended the development of a communications plan around time frames within which to complete the survey. Differences in opinion emerged between students and faculty in relation to the time frame within which the survey was open for completion. Some faculty expressed the view that students did not want to answer the questions on learning outcomes until they had received their results.

Students stressed the need for having clear guidelines about completing the survey. Faculty also concurred with this view, especially in relation to the nature of student commentary and the need for guidance around that. It was suggested that students should be obligated to give feedback in a constructive manner.

Students expressed some unease about the anonymity of the survey; they were not clear that it was anonymous. This was an issue for some faculty, who believed that anonymity allowed students to make unacceptable comments. Both students and faculty agreed that some form of incentivisation should be introduced to increase engagement with the feedback system. Students suggested awarding additional marks and offering vouchers and additional UPoints on their current student cards.

5.4   Review current questions

A range of issues emerged with reference to the current survey questions. Students felt the questions were too generic and somewhat repetitive. They also found some questions difficult to answer, especially with reference to learning outcomes and the way in which teaching contributed to their learning. Some students were unclear about what to say in the open text sections of the survey, when trying to relate it to their own learning. Faculty also felt that students found it difficult to answer the questions that the survey asked.

The majority of faculty members were of the view that the open-ended questions provided the most valuable feedback. The standard Likert scale and additional questions were viewed as offering useful feedback by half of faculty who responded to the survey. Female faculty were more satisfied with the option of including additional questions compared to their male colleagues. Faculty members offered a range of views about the standard questions, especially with reference to the way the current Likert scales are calculated. The Likert data was viewed by some as unhelpful and it was not clear what a Head of School could do with the data received. It was also difficult to make comparisons at College level and across the wider university. During the workshops, faculty members were generally agreed that felt that the phrasing of the questions was not helpful and did not explore the module issues in-depth. Faculty in general were unhappy with the quality of the reports produced by the system.

5.5   Areas for inclusion

Both students and faculty offered a number of perspectives about areas that they would like to see included in a feedback system. Students were clear that they did not wish to provide feedback on individual lecturers or their characteristics but felt engagement, communication and approachability were important traits that contributed to their learning experience. Faculty generally agreed that areas such as lecture planning and organisation, lecturer communication, lecturer approachability, student engagement with material, students taking responsibility for their own learning and the helpfulness of the lecturer in supporting student learning, should be included as in any feedback system. Less agreement existed for the inclusion of areas such as lecturer

knowledge of the subject, lecturer ability to make the subject interesting, lecturer enthusiasm and student attendance. Faculty also expressed the view that there were few opportunities for students to reflect on their engagement or learning in the current system.

5.6 Closing the feedback loop

Students were very clear that they wanted to be informed about how their feedback was used when it was received. Faculty and staff who participated in the workshops were of the view that the university did not have a policy on closing the feedback loop to students. Faculty used feedback in a variety of ways, such as reviewing notes and module materials, reviewing assessment, reviewing student workload, changing approaches to giving feedback to students and changing teaching methods. Less than half of faculty members who responded to the survey informed students about changes made as a result of their feedback. Female faculty members and early career faculty members were more inclined to inform students about changes made. Faculty members were not generally in favour of sharing feedback results with students and half of those who responded to the survey were supportive of sharing changes made as a result of student feedback. Female faculty members were more in favour of this than their male colleagues. Female faculty members were more in agreement with sharing feedback with Heads of School to demonstrate enhancements, compared to their male colleagues. Faculty and staff who participated in the workshops expressed strong agreement that any feedback system should have the capacity to feed-back and feed forward and that existing students should benefit from feedback, as well as incoming students.

5.6 New approaches

During the review of the current system, both students and faculty made a number of suggestions with reference to student feedback. As students had many different lecturers within one module, they felt that they did not have an opportunity to provide constructive feedback on individual lecturers, tutors or teaching assistants. Students were keen to have opportunities to report directly on their module learning experience, to include issues such as assessment and workload. They also wanted to have the opportunity to provide mid-semester feedback on modules. Students expressed the view that Schools should develop a set of questions that were module-specific, so that feedback would be meaningful to each School. While they were in favour of a programme-based approach, they could see a number of challenges associated with giving feedback in this way.

The majority of faculty (three quarters), who responded to the survey were of the view that the feedback system should reference those who teach as opposed to module coordinators. The majority of faculty who attended the workshops favoured the introduction of a teaching survey, but were of the view that it required supports and resources to allow people to develop as teachers. Those who expressed reservations focused on issues such as gaming the system, the potential for it to develop into a rating scale and did not like the title 'teaching survey'. The majority of faculty members who responded to the survey also wanted the system to support reflection on teaching. Faculty members in the workshops expressed the view that students should have the opportunity to flag issues as they arise mid-way through a module to allow for immediate interventions. Some faculty members saw value in having a programme evaluation but did not consider a survey to be the best methodology as programmes were very contextually based.

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07

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Student Focus Groups Discussion Guide

Research Discussion Guide
(60 minutes)

SECTION 1: 10 mins	Introduction and Warm Up
Aim: Warming up, Getting to Know each other, Breaking the Ice	• Introduce individually: - *What studying, programme, stage* - *Imagine you are meeting a new international student just starting - describe UCD as your university in one sentence*
	GENERAL FEEDBACK: • Describe how you give feedback generally - not just in university but in other aspects of your life • Good examples for feedback generally (Flip Chart) - probe for electronic surveys, evaluation forms, any good approaches have seen in other contexts e.g. at conferences, training sessions, etc • What works well, what works less well? Why?

SECTION 2: 20 mins	Feedback attitudes and behaviours
Aim: Deep Dive into feedback attitudes and behaviours, triggers and barriers to using the feedback system	• Key associations with UCD Student feedback system (FLIPCHART) • What's its role? • Number of module surveys complete each year? • Key triggers to fill out? ROLE OF: Lecturer/subject/timing • Key barriers to fill out? • Any other ways give feedback outside of the system?
	WHERE FEEDBACK GOES: • Where think feedback is sent? Probe for: - *Lecturer* - *Module Coordinator* - *Head of School* - *College Principal* - *Dean of Students* - *Dean of Undergraduate Studies* • How is feedback used? Probe for: - *Subject content* - *Assessment* - *Assignments* - *Module improvement* • How much do you feel the suggestions you make are used to help future students? • How seriously do you feel the faculty takes your feedback? • To what extent does the faculty respond to the feedback that you have offered? Thoughts/preferences? • Does the lecturer respond?
	TEACHER'S REPORT Imagine you've 100 points to give out in total - how would you divide out your points for each of the following (needs to add to 100): - *Improving quality of teaching* - *Improving the learning experience* - *Increasing student learning motivations* - *Satisfying institutional requirements*

SECTION 3: 20 mins	The Student Feedback System

Aim: Deep Dive into the Student Feedback System	• Explore thoughts on key aspects of the system
	  - *Timing of the surveys*
	  - *Number of surveys per year*
	  - *The user interface*
	  - *The questions asked (UCD to provide hard copy of the questionnaire - could be screenshot)*
	  - *Q1 I have a better understanding of the subject after completing this module*
	  - *Q2 The assessment was relevant to the work of the module.*
	  - *Q3 I achieved the learning outcomes for this module*
	  - *Q4 The teaching on this module supported my learning*
	• Q5 Overall, I am satisfied with this module
	• Open-ended commentary questions
	• Key advantages of the system
	• Key disadvantages
	• Key improvements to be made

	TEACHING V MODULE DEBATE:
	Split into 2 teams, discuss and debate
	1. A new specific teaching feedback survey IS BETTER which focuses specifically on the teaching of individual faculty members
	  - *Describe the teaching characteristics you most want to evaluate as a student*
	2. A module basis with different faculty members teaching IS BETTER
	  - *Why keeping the current style is better*

SECTION 3: 10 mins	Dragons' Den – Maximising appeal of Student Feedback System
Aim: Strategic direction for the future of the Student Feedback System	• How high a response rate do you think the current feedback system currently has? **2 x TEAMS** • If you were in charge of the Student Feedback System, what would you do to create/adapt an effective student feedback system with higher response rates? • 5 reasons to believe in the system? • How would you convince more students to fill it out? • Any other suggestions? **DISCUSS AND DEBATE**

Appendix B – SFM Faculty Survey

UCD Student Feedback on Modules Review: Survey for all UCD Faculty. We appreciate you taking the time to share your views on this important project. Professor Marie Clarke, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Q1 Please select your College
UMT (1) ... President, Reports and VPs not listed above (13)

Q2 What is your grade?
◯ Full Professor (1)
◯ Professor (2)
◯ Associate Professor (3)
◯ Lecturer/Assistant Professor (4)
◯ Other Teaching Related (e.g. Special Lecturer; Teaching Assistant, Studio Lecturer, Clinical Tutors, Modular Teachers) (5)

Q3 How long have you been teaching at UCD?
◯ 0-2 years (1)
◯ 3-5 years (2)
◯ 6-10 years (3)
◯ 11-20 years (4)
◯ >20 years (5)

Q4 What is your gender?
◯ Female (1)
◯ Male (2)
◯ Other (3) _____

Q5 Are you aware of the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System?
◯ Yes, I am/have been a module coordinator (1)
◯ Yes, I have had access to modules I am involved with   (2)
◯ Yes, I am aware of it but haven't accessed it (3)
◯ No, I have no knowledge of the system (4)

Q6 How important is it to receive student feedback on modules
◯ Not at all important (1)
◯ Slightly important (2)
◯ Moderately important (3)
◯ Very important (4)
◯ Extremely important (5)

Q7 Students who provide feedback take it seriously
◯ Strongly disagree (1)
◯ Somewhat disagree (2)
◯ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
◯ Somewhat agree (4)
◯ Strongly agree (5)

Q8 The current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System provides meaningful feedback to faculty through student responses to:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The 5 standard Likert-scale questions (1)	○	○	○	○	○
The 2 standard open-ended questions (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Questions module coordinators can add themselves (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q9 Please comment_____

Q10 In your opinion, what do you feel the role of the current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System is?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
to improve the quality of teaching (1)	○	○	○	○	○
to improve students' learning experience (2)	○	○	○	○	○
to increase student learning motivation (3)	○	○	○	○	○
to improve module content (4)	○	○	○	○	○
to satisfy institutional requirements (5)	○	○	○	○	○
to provide evidence for promotion (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 Please comment

_____

Q11 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System?

	Extremely satisfied (1)	Moderately satisfied (2)	Slightly satisfied (3)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (4)	Slightly dissatisfied (5)	Moderately dissatisfied (6)	Extremely dissatisfied (7)
Emails to prompt module coordinators to complete question set up (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to add own questions (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Facility to monitor response rates (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Quality of system reports produced (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q16 Please comment _____

Q13 How do you currently use the feedback that you receive from the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System?

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	About half the time (3)	Most of the time (4)	Always (5)
Change course content (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Change teaching methods/style (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Review student workload (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Review assessment (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Review notes and module materials (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Change the way you give feedback to students (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Review your accessibility to students (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Review provision of tutorials/seminars/labs/practicals (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Review room or facilities (9)	○	○	○	○	○

Q17 Please comment_____

Q14 Do you use any other mechanisms to gather feedback from students?
- ◯ Yes (1)
- ◯ No (2)
- ◯ If yes, please specify (3) _____

Q18 Do you currently undertake any activities to increase response rates with your UCD Student Feedback on Modules surveys? (tick all that apply)
- ❑ Time in class to complete survey (1)
- ❑ Reminder in-person in class (2)
- ❑ Reminder emails (3)
- ❑ Reminders through Blackboard/Brightspace (4)
- ❑ Reminders through school/programme communication channels   (5)
- ❑ I don't do anything (6)

Q20 Please comment_____

Q19 Do you inform students about how you have used their feedback or that of other students?
- ◯ Never (1)
- ◯ Sometimes (2)
- ◯ About half the time (3)
- ◯ Most of the time (4)
- ◯ Always (5)

Q21 If no, why not?_____

Q22 Do you think the current UCD Student Feedback on Modules System should be changed?
- ◯ Yes (1)
- ◯ No (2)
- ◯ Don't know (3)

Q23 Please comment_____

Q24 A UCD feedback system should reference those who teach as opposed to module coordinators
- ◯ Strongly disagree (1)
- ◯ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ◯ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ◯ Somewhat agree (4)
- ◯ Strongly agree (5)

Q25 What should a UCD feedback system address (tick all that apply):

- ❏ Lecturer knowledge of the subject   (1)
- ❏ Lecturer enthusiasm (2)
- ❏ Lecturer ability to make subject interesting (3)
- ❏ Lecturer planning and organisation e.g. materials available; module activities (4)
- ❏ Lecturer communication approaches e.g. in lectures, online, written and other (5)
- ❏ Lecturer approachability e.g. encourages students to ask questions and seek help (6) [Can't seem to line these up]
- ❏ Lecturer provision of timely and helpful feedback (7)
- ❏ Helpfulness of the lecturer in supporting to student learning (8)
- ❏ Student engagement with material (9)
- ❏ Student taking responsibility for learning (10)
- ❏ Student levels of attendance   (11)

Q26 Other, please comment

_____

Q27 A UCD module feedback system should:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Facilitate faculty to share results with students (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate faculty to share any changes made with students (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate faculty to reflect on teaching (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate Head of School / Subject to see where enhancements have occurred. (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Q28 Other, please comment_____

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Feedback from groups

10 minutes

UCD

5

Q2. What should the objective of the student feedback survey be?

- What do you need from student feedback?
- Please consider response rates, timing, sharing of results

20 minutes for discussion

UCD

6

Feedback from groups

10 minutes

Q3. What are your views on replacing the current system with:

- **an approach where students would be asked to evaluate their programme at the end of each semester or stage**

and/or

- **a teacher survey to capture feedback on teaching?**

- A new specific teaching feedback survey focusing on teaching of individual faculty members
- A programme approach evaluated each semester or Stage
- Examine and discuss merits of Curtin model
- Any other considerations

20 minutes for discussion

Feedback from groups

15 minutes

Closing Remarks

- Next Steps and communication on project
- Thank you

Review of the UCD Student Feedback on Modules System

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Ms Maura McGinn,
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