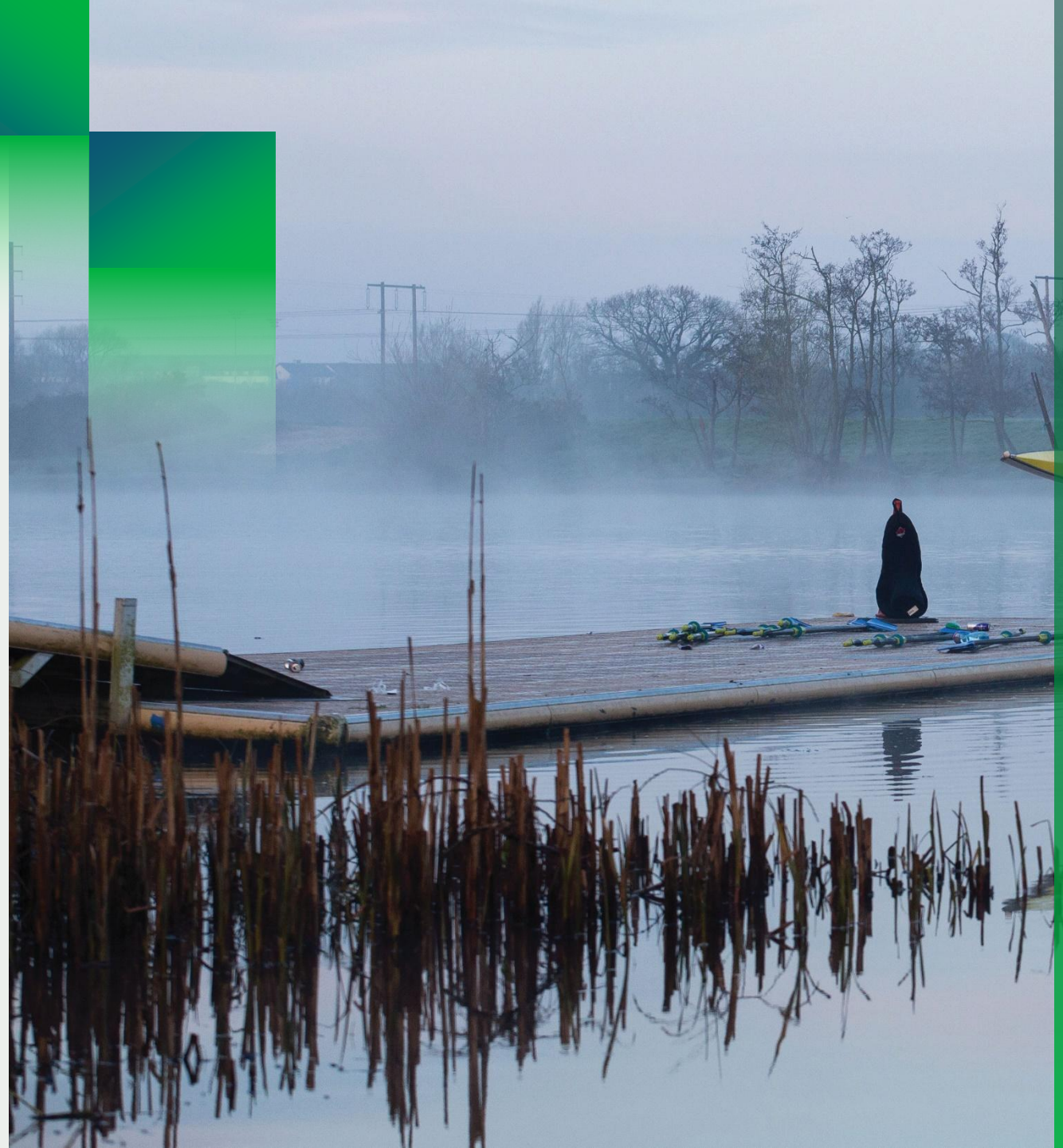


TRUSTing the Process: Student Evaluation at the University of Limerick

SINÉAD O'SULLIVAN

DIRECTOR OF QUALITY

What is TRUST?

Time to Reflect and Understand Students

Building a Culture of Trust

TRUST fosters partnership between students, staff, and the institution to build a culture of mutual trust.

Enhancing Student Voice

TRUST emphasizes meaningful student feedback that is acknowledged and used to improve teaching and learning.

Strategic Enabler

TRUST strategically balances institutional goals with local contexts and student engagement to reduce survey fatigue.

Drivers for Change

Student Feedback Needs

Students seek meaningful, anonymous feedback that is visibly acted upon and allows reflection on learning experiences.

Staff Concerns

Staff worry about over-surveying, unclear evaluation purposes, and desire flexibility with qualitative insights.

Need for localization and recognition that '*a once size does not fit all*'

How would and could data be used?

Institutional Alignment

Institution aim to align feedback with quality assurance, staff development, promotion, and strategic planning.

TRUST Development Journey

Initial Insights and Challenges

Feedback from students and staff in 2020-21 revealed the value and issues with existing feedback mechanisms.

Technical Specification and Procurement

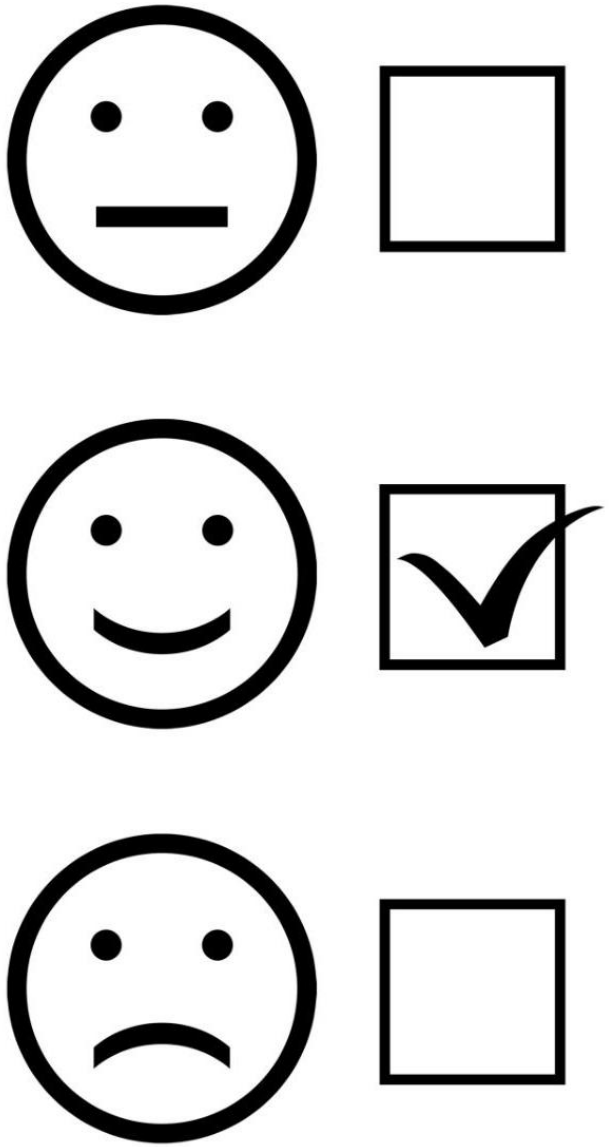
March 2024 marked the start of specifying and procuring a technical solution aligned with security and privacy needs.

Pilot Phase and Learning

Pilot from September to November 2024 involved cross-functional teams and opt-in academic staff for testing and refinement.

Rollout and Expansion

Rollout of TRUST-EM in January 2025, followed by expansion into TRUS
SET and TRUST-PL during 2025-26.



The TRUST Framework

TRUST-EM Module Evaluation

TRUST-EM provides consistent, mandatory feedback for taught modules, excluding placements, projects, and dissertations.

TRUST-SET Teaching Evaluation

TRUST-SET focuses on student evaluation of teaching and remains opt-in initially to build staff confidence and trust.

TRUST-PL Placement Evaluation

TRUST-PL evaluates placements, recognising the unique nature of work-based learning and external partnerships.

Success Factors

Leadership and Strategic Support

Strong backing from Academic Council and institutional leaders provided legitimacy and strategic alignment for TRUST.

Trade Union Engagement

Early collaboration with trade unions ensured staff concerns were acknowledged and addressed promptly.

Knowledgeable Project Team

Experienced team with deep understanding of academic processes provided practical and credible solutions.

Incremental Pilot Approach

Pilot-based rollout enabled learning and adjustment, reducing risk and building confidence.

Challenges

Data Volume and Complexity

Managing and interpreting large volumes of data brings different challenges

Staff Assignment Coordination

Ensuring correct staff assignments in team teaching or non-standard delivery requires careful organizational coordination.

Survey Scheduling Complexity

Variations in module timing and structure add complexity to planning and scheduling surveys effectively.

Qualitative Feedback

Qualitative feedback remains a significant ongoing challenge

Emotional Impact of Feedback

Qualitative feedback can be emotionally challenging but is crucial for continuous improvement.

Have we achieved balance?

Still have a lot of surveys……

Impact and Engagement

Rising Student Participation

Participation increased from 38% to 46% from Semester 2 2024-5 and Semester 1 2025-6, showing the positive effect on response rates.

Qualitative Impact on Learning

Improved insights into student learning experience support more informed teaching and curriculum discussions.

Closing the Feedback Loop

Linking data to purpose reinforces reflective practices across module, programme, and institutional levels.

Why TRUST Matters

Strengthening Student Voice

TRUST fosters meaningful and respectful opportunities for students to provide valuable feedback and be heard.

Enhancing Teaching Quality

TRUST encourages reflective practice and professional development to support evidence-informed improvements in teaching.

Aligning Institutional Excellence

TRUST aligns student feedback with strategic priorities and quality assurance to promote institutional accountability and excellence.

Shared Responsibility and Partnership

TRUST is an evolving framework emphasizing collective benefit through ongoing collaboration between staff and students.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

THANK YOU

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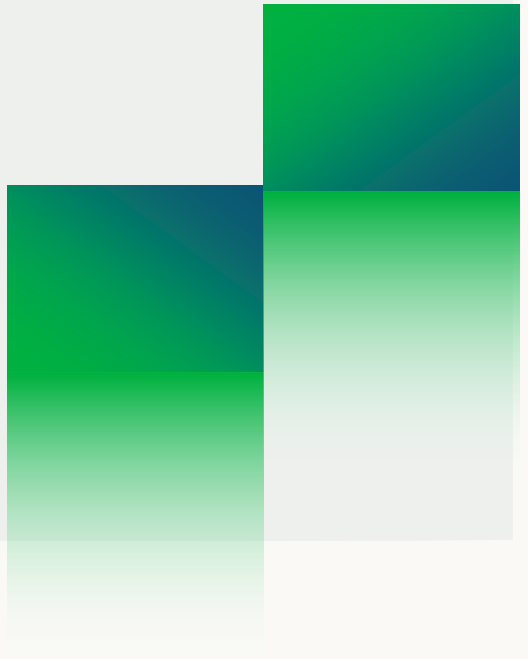
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