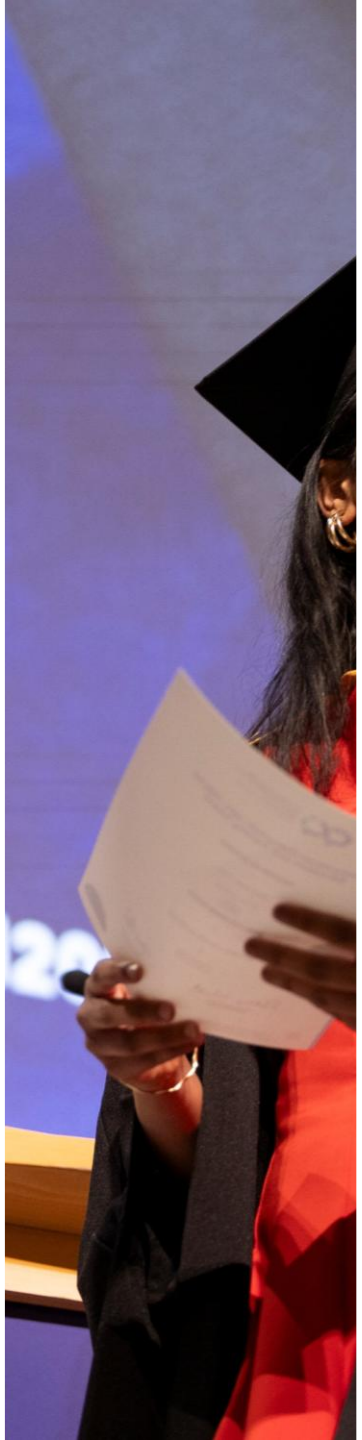


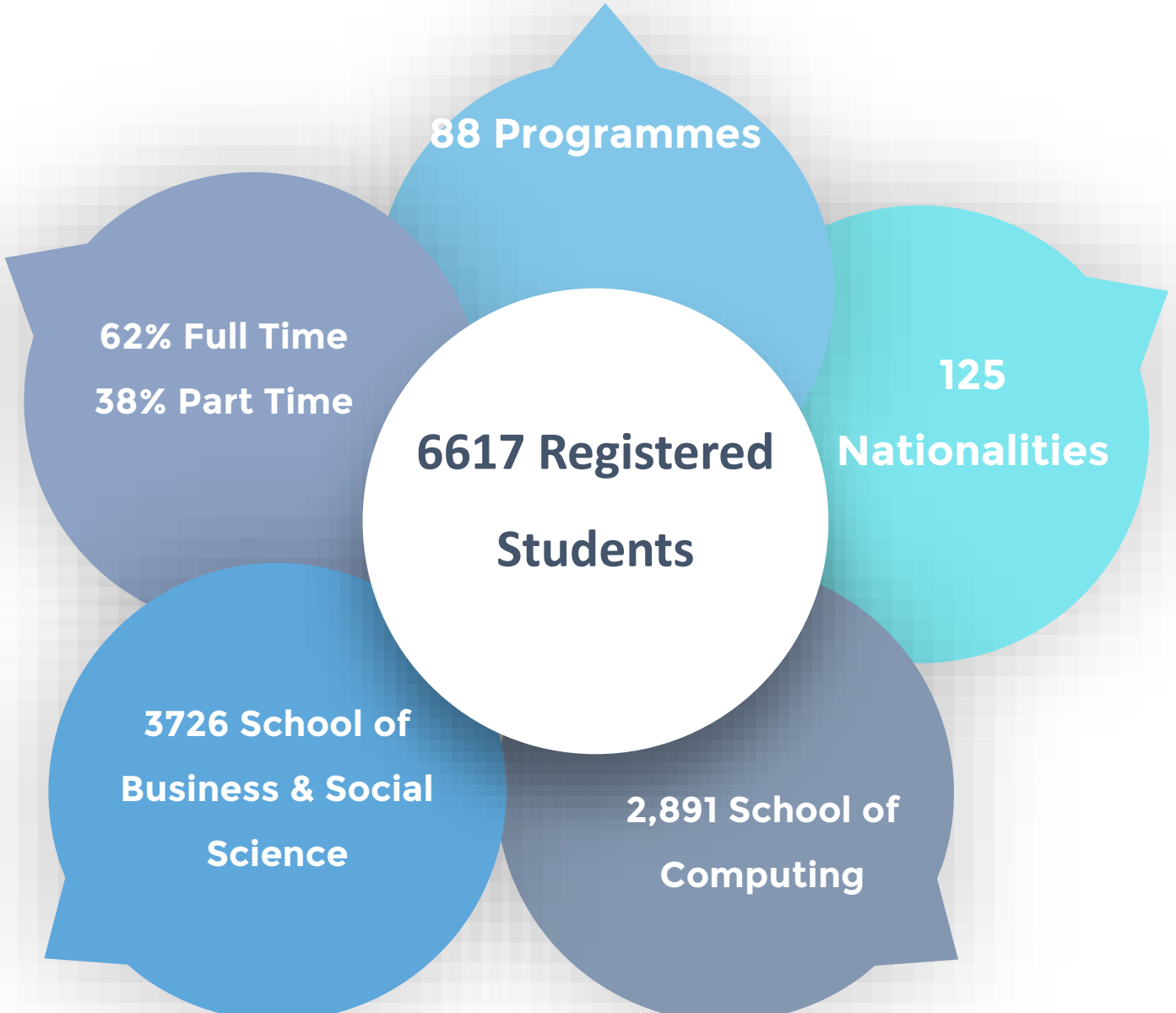
Coláiste Náisiúnta na hÉireann | National College of Ireland

# National College of Ireland

## Graduate Outcomes Survey

Karen Jones, Registrar
Lori Johnston, Director of QIE

# NCI AT A GLANCE



# THE NCI STORY

Established in 1951, NCI has a student body of 6,600 students with over 85,000 alumni across the globe

Independent not-for-profit higher education institution with charitable status.

Providing access to innovative higher education programmes in Business, Computing, Psychology & Education and employment

Flagship Early Learning Initiative (ELI) supports up to 16,000 children and families each year

# Using the Graduate Outcome Data in NCI :

## Programme Review & Validation

Informs academic reflection on programme relevance, skills development, and progression pathways

## Curriculum intervention

Identifies where programmes need stronger alignment with labour market realities, graduate capabilities, and student career preparedness

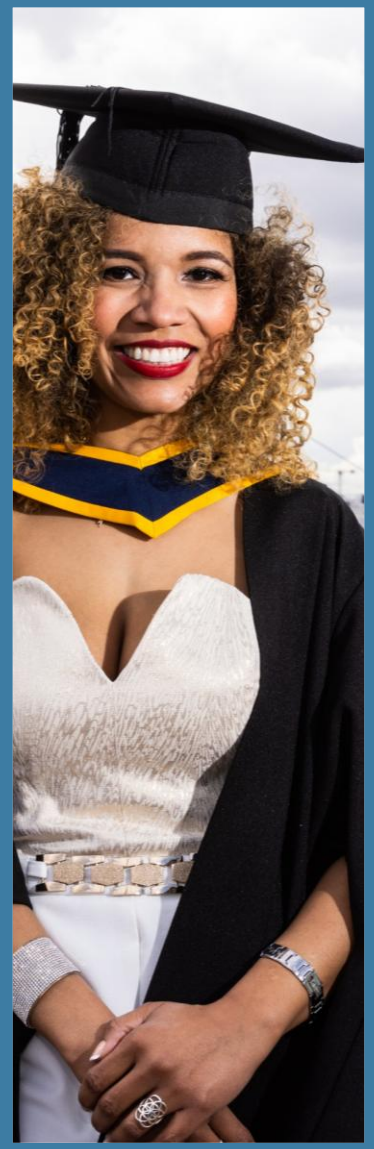
## Long-term enhancement

Tracks patterns over time to support strategic decisions on curriculum design, employer engagement and graduate readiness.

# NCI Starting Point

# What we had vs What we wanted

- Collecting graduate outcome data was an administratively heavy and fragmented process.
- Labour intensive – not automated.
- We were keen to move to an end-to-end graduate outcomes process that would be user friendly, personalised, minimise work involved for the graduates, send automated reminders, support telephone and LinkedIn follow-up and consolidate the final data for reporting.



# Working with evasys

# Process Overview

- Quick turnaround: 4 weeks from project sign off to surveys sent out.
  - Contact made 1st May 2024 and surveys were issued on 4th June 2024.
- evasys designed the survey with inbuilt survey logic and conditionality in line with HEA requirements:
  - Separate process for those graduates who had continued their studies at NCI in line with HEA requirements.
  - NCI-specific questions included.
- Survey with logic and conditionality created by evasys:
  - Internal testing, feedback and refinement, with error spotting by evasys
  - Graduate records sent to evasys who uploaded to system.
- Unique  url: Every graduate gets a unique, single-use link which allows us to know who has completed the survey and who has not.
- Instructor dashboard allows real time view of response rates by programme and PDF of response rates.
- Emails from the evasys system are personalised, branded, sent from an NCI Careers Service email address and link to National College of Ireland's named evasys domain:
  - Three tailored reminder emails sent automatically via evasys system to non-responders on specified dates.
  - Non-responder list sent weekly to Careers Team to facilitate targeted follow up and text messages.
  - Email confirmation to the graduate that their survey had been completed.

# Timeline:

- 1st May 2024: Initial contact made with evasys
- 22nd May 2024: Project sign off internally
- 4th June 2024: Survey issued
- 4th June 2024: Text message via engage hub at 9 am to let students know to expect the survey
- 4th June  2024: evasys Graduate Outcomes Survey sent to students
- 7th June 2024: Email and text reminder 1
- 12th June 2024: Email and text reminder 2
- 19th June 2024: Email and text reminder 3
- June 22nd 2024: Survey closes and phone calls and LinkedIn messaged start.

# Response Rates:

**2024 Results**

- **4th June: 9%**
- **6th June: 13%**
- **10th June: 24%**
- **13th June: 31%**
- **20th June: 35%**
- **13th August: 83%**

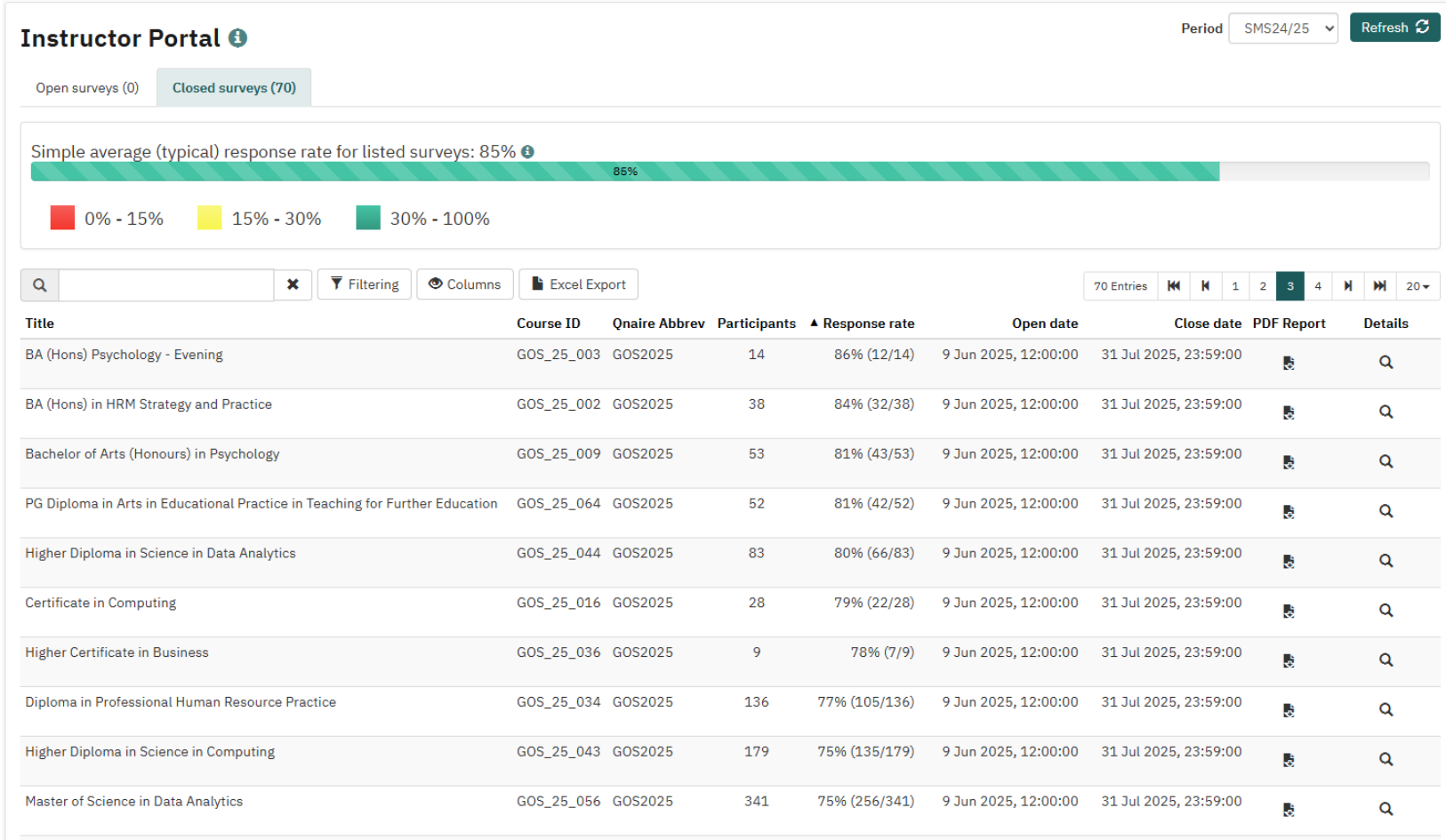
**2025 Results**

- **6th June Launch**
- **10th June: 24%**
- **20th June: 35%**
- **22nd July: 53%**
- **7th August: 62%**
- **15th August: 90%**

Multi-channel marketing strategy – emails, Text Messages, LinkedIn Messages, Social media campaign and phone calls.

Personalised urls were a significant help in driving response rates.
Allowed us to contact graduates when following up by LinkedIn message with the unique url that required no log in and had personal details preloaded into the survey.

# Real Time Insights



Instructor Portal

Period SMS24/25 Refresh

Open surveys (0) | Closed surveys (70)

Simple average (typical) response rate for listed surveys: 85%

85%

0% - 15% 15% - 30% 30% - 100%

Filtering Columns Excel Export

70 Entries 1 2 3 4 20

| Title | Course ID | Qnaire Abbrev | Participants | Response rate | Open date | Close date | PDF Report | Details |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BA (Hons) Psychology - Evening | GOS_25_003 | GOS2025 | 14 | 86% (12/14) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| BA (Hons) in HRM Strategy and Practice | GOS_25_002 | GOS2025 | 38 | 84% (32/38) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology | GOS_25_009 | GOS2025 | 53 | 81% (43/53) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| PG Diploma in Arts in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education | GOS_25_064 | GOS2025 | 52 | 81% (42/52) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| Higher Diploma in Science in Data Analytics | GOS_25_044 | GOS2025 | 83 | 80% (66/83) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| Certificate in Computing | GOS_25_016 | GOS2025 | 28 | 79% (22/28) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| Higher Certificate in Business | GOS_25_036 | GOS2025 | 9 | 78% (7/9) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| Diploma in Professional Human Resource Practice | GOS_25_034 | GOS2025 | 136 | 77% (105/136) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| Higher Diploma in Science in Computing | GOS_25_043 | GOS2025 | 179 | 75% (135/179) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |
| Master of Science in Data Analytics | GOS_25_056 | GOS2025 | 341 | 75% (256/341) | 9 Jun 2025, 12:00:00 | 31 Jul 2025, 23:59:00 | | |

**At a glance can see:**

- **Overall Response Rates by Programme.**
- **Sort by Highest to Lowest Response Rate.**
- **Click PDF to view status of responses.**
- **Facilitated targeted follow up with particular classes.**

# Benefits of evasys for Students

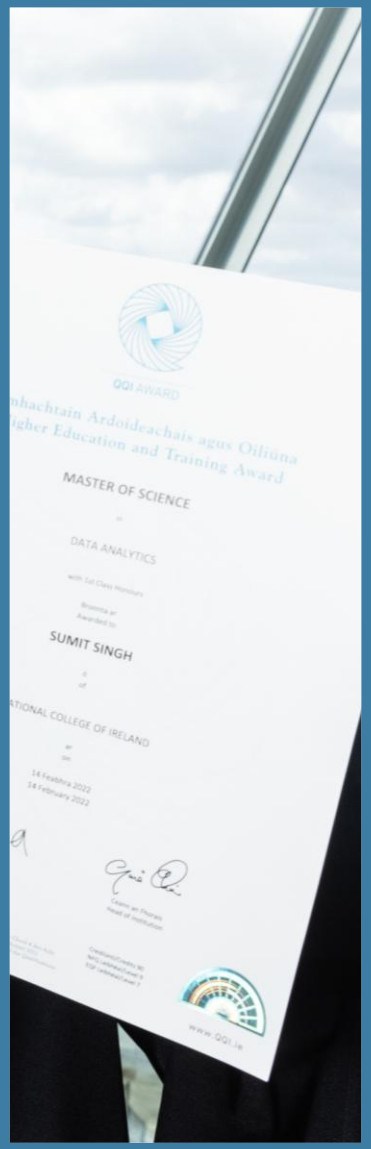
- **User friendly:** There is no need for graduates to log in with a username and password, as their information is already linked to the URL.
- **Sophisticated identifier:** Using their student ID as a unique identified their name, the course they graduated from etc. is hardcoded into the survey so graduates do not have to complete any of this information and can focus on completing survey questions.
- Unique url allows us to send the link to students via text, email, LinkedIn message.
- Emails to non-responders are targeted rather than blanket reminders.
- Mobile and Desktop compatible.

# Benefits of evasys for NCI

- Partnership approach – evasys work with you from the beginning providing both advice and assistance.
- Real-time monitoring of response rates through the evasys Instructor Portal.
- Strong early response performance 35% response rate before follow up phone calls.
- Unique url made it easy to contact students via text and LinkedIn to maximise responses once survey closed to graduates.
- Branding and personalisation in graduate surveys. Personalised communications and an NCI institutional look and feel appear to have contributed to graduate engagement.
- Fully translatable – into Power BI to create dashboards.

# Output

- PDF of each Programme available on demand via Instructor portal.
- evasys then created:
  - Raw data file of all responses
  - Translated raw data file of responses that can be understood by non-technical staff.
  - PDFs on request for groups such as
    - Full time graduates
    - Full time Level 8 Graduates
    - Full time Level 9 Graduates
- The data is then easily translatable to Power BI dashboards for internal reporting and to HEA format for HEA reporting.




# The Experience

**The Solution**

- Easy to use – intuitive.
- Reduced manual processes and evasys automated the manual tasks.
- Flexible and sophisticated system.
- Maximised response rates.

**The Approach:**

- Partnership and solution focused approach – genuinely interested in doing the very best for us.
- evasys did the heavy lifting.
- Hands on support – very quick to respond.
- Joe proactively looked for errors and has excellent attention to detail!
- Strong  understanding of HE landscape and obligations to the HEA
- Strong personalised support from Joe – endless patience and good humour.
- Responsive and dealt with any errors we made quickly.