



DAY 1
OCTOBER 13



explorance
summit

9:30

9:30–10:15

WELCOME

Registration & Refreshments

10:15

10:15–10:30

Explorance Europe Summit 2026 – Welcome

Matt Claridge



10:30

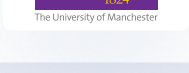
10:30–11:00

HOST UNIVERSITY

Beyond Listening: From Student Voice to Student Influence

In this session, Prof Appleby will explore the evolution and challenges around Student Voice, and the importance of Student Voice to the University of Manchester. Exploring both the literature and the university's strategy to maximise student success, Prof Appleby draws out the challenges, both for the sector and the use of technology, to ensure student success remains at the core of the university mission.

Prof Rob Appleby



11:00

11:00–11:40

PRODUCT KEYNOTE

Explorance Feedback Analytics – Product Vision and Roadmap

In today's dynamic and demanding environment, the ability to listen with intelligence and act with confidence is a strategic imperative. At Explorance Europe Summit 2026, Chief Product Officer Zebrey Bédard will present the product vision guiding Explorance's evolution into a truly adaptive, intelligent feedback platform—one that empowers organizations across education and the workplace to become wired to know.

At the core of this vision is choice: giving institutions the flexibility to meet their unique needs with technology that is resilient, extensible, and aligned to their goals. Whether automated or analyst-driven, Explorance offers configurable pathways to capture continuous feedback, surface insights, and translate them into meaningful action.

The keynote will showcase how Explorance is advancing an administrator-first platform experience by streamlining complex workflows, modernizing the UI, and enhancing operational control, all while upholding the highest standards of data integrity, security, and compliance. Zel will highlight new capabilities that enable organizations to scale with confidence, including performance-optimized infrastructure, powerful APIs, and seamless integrations with LMS, HRIS, and enterprise systems.

Finally, attendees will see how Explorance is integrating MLY-driven analytics across the platform to deliver multilingual insights, redaction controls, and enhanced qualitative analysis. This brings both human and machine intelligence into every decision loop. Built in close collaboration with our customers, this product direction reaffirms a core belief: when organizations have the freedom to choose, they gain the power to listen better, respond faster, and lead with insight.

Zebrey Bédard



11:40

11:40–12:00

BREAK

Networking Break

12:00

12:00–12:35

SESSION

Explorance Campus-Wide Solutions

Higher education institutions collect feedback across courses, programs, departments, and the broader student experience. Yet collecting more data does not necessarily lead to better decisions. Institutions need a connected approach that makes feedback easier to collect, more responsibly managed, and more meaningfully interpreted.

This session explores the value of building a connected feedback ecosystem. With Explorance Blue, BlueX, and MLY, institutions can bring together structured Course evaluations, institution-wide survey programs, and qualitative analytics within one broader feedback strategy.

Attendees will learn how a connected feedback ecosystem can help institutions simplify their approach to feedback while creating new opportunities to turn information into deeper institutional insight.

Chris Slack



12:35

12:35–13:00

SESSION

Maximising Student Feedback Participation: Insights from the Global Response Rates Tournament

Learn which tactics helped higher education institutions increase survey participation and what those choices mean for your own survey strategy. This Explorance-led session breaks down the 2026 Global Response Rates Tournament results to show which approaches appeared most often among our customers, where institutions focused their efforts, and how those decisions supported broader feedback goals. You will leave with practical ideas for course evaluations, student voice initiatives, and institutional surveys, along with a clearer understanding of how communication, timing, sponsorship, and delivery channels influence participation at scale. The session is designed to help you assess your response rates baseline and uncover improvements you can apply on your campus.

Anastasia Tsimiklis



13:00

13:00–14:00

BREAK

Networking Lunch

14:00

14:00–14:35

CUSTOMER SESSION

Counting what Counts: Using Blue to Track and Support Students' Educational Gains

Across the higher education sector, there is growing recognition that student success extends beyond only academic success, and also includes personal development, skills, belonging, and preparedness for an increasingly uncertain graduate-world. However, institutions face significant challenges in meaningfully defining, measuring, and using data about these broader educational outcomes in ways that benefit students and staff. This session presents a case study from the University of Manchester, exploring how Blue from Explorance is being used to measure and support students' broader Educational Gains as part of a framework designed to help students recognise, track, and articulate their development over time, while also supporting academic advising and institutional decision-making.

Drawing on extensive student and alumni consultation, we developed a four-strand Educational Gains framework (Discover, Build, Connect, and Grow) that reflects the academic, personal, and social dimensions of Higher Education. Blue has been configured as a reflective self-assessment tool aligned to this framework, prompting students to consider their progress, aspirations, and readiness for future study or work. On completion, students receive a personalised report with a visual summary of their responses, reflection prompts, and signposting to relevant support and development opportunities.

Crucially, Blue enables data to be used at multiple levels: (1) Supporting reflective conversations between students their tutor; (2) Highlighting patterns (and gaps) at the level of programmes, schools, and student groups; and (3) Providing institution-wide insights into areas such as belonging, career readiness, and confidence that are otherwise difficult to capture. Pilot programmes launched in 2025–26 demonstrate how Blue can function as a longitudinal, scalable, and student-centred mechanism for supporting student success.

Jen McBride, Kelly-Ann Mallon & Daniel Bayes



14:35

14:35–15:10

CUSTOMER SESSION

Data and Evidence | Insight and Action | Improving the Process

Data and evidence, as one of the six core principles of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and external review, is key to the University of Strathclyde's approach for enhancing the student experience. This presentation will describe how data and evidence is transformed into insight and action via partnership working between education leaders, our insight team, academic colleagues and our Students' Union. Finally, we will focus on more recent initiatives to improve these processes, including the use of dashboards and embedding the use of MLY.

Prof. Brian Green & Lorna Robertson



15:10

15:10–15:45

CUSTOMER SESSION

Using MLY Analysis to Identify Evidence for Institutional Change

After 5 years of using Blue for survey management, the University of Worcester has recently added MLY to its survey environment. Having the capability to analyse qualitative data from surveys conducted across the entire university, including these not managed via Blue, means that there is an opportunity to create a large and complex dataset to support identification of actions related to strategic priorities.

Using responses to questions relating to what students would like to see improved, a deep dive analysis will be conducted using MLY to identify specific challenges, changes and clarifications needed around the topic of 'communication'. The intention is to use the analysis to support a cross-University project looking at communication to and with students, and how improvements might be made.

This presentation provides an overview of the process, the outcomes and the benefits of using MLY to quickly capture, categorise and analyse a large dataset with a specific focus in mind.

Carolyn Moir



15:45

15:45–16:10

BREAK

Networking Break

16:10

16:10–16:45

CUSTOMER SESSION

DIG in Practice: Cleaner Data, Smoother Workflows

Daniel Morton



16:45

16:45–17:20

CUSTOMER SESSION

Using Question Personalisation to Inform Institutional Change:
Focus on Intellectually Stimulating Teaching

Intellectually stimulating teaching is an important indicator of educational quality. The question on how often course is intellectually stimulating is included in the NSS, contributing to institutional Teaching Excellence Framework performance measures. Yet understanding how students experience intellectual stimulation requires evidence beyond a single survey measure.

This presentation explores how Question Personalisation functionality, specifically an optional question bank strategically positioned within module evaluation, was used to understand intellectually stimulating teaching from both staff and student perspective. Module leaders' selection of questions provided insight into their priorities, while student responses captured perceptions of intellectual challenge.

Analysis explored relationships between intellectual stimulation items and core evaluation measures, alongside differences across student demographic groups. Free-text comments provided further insight into how students recognise intellectually stimulating teaching.

The presentation reflects on how targeted optional questions can extend the value of established survey measures, generate richer evidence of educational quality, and how university can capitalise on the survey platform functionality to inform evidence-informed curriculum enhancement and institutional change.

Dr Elena Zaitseva



17:20

17:20–17:30

Day 1 – Closing Remarks

Matt Claridge



18:30

18:30–20:30

RECEPTION

Social Networking & Awards





8:30

8:30-9:15

WELCOME

Registration & Refreshments

9:15

9:15-9:30

Day 2 Conference Opening

Chris Slack



9:30

09:30-10:05

INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER SESSION

Beyond the Survey: When Data Knows Before You Ask: International Speaker

For nearly a decade, Explorance Blue has been Zayed University’s institutional listening backbone — the single system through which the university runs its full portfolio of student and faculty evaluations every semester, integrated with Banner and Blackboard. But the richest signal in that feedback has always been the open-ended comments, historically the hardest to read at scale. This session shows how ZU closes that gap with MLY, Explorance’s qualitative natural-language-processing engine, which reads every comment in minutes — surfacing topics, sentiment, recommendations , urgent alerts and insights through its Student and Employee Experience and self-service access for every college. Underpinning both is , ZU’s Data Analytics Support System, the governed data framework that keeps this feedback trusted, connected and decision-ready, and extends it into prediction. Together they mark a shift from asking more to listening better — and, ultimately, to knowing before you ask.

Samit Lotlikar



10:05

10:05-10:40

CUSTOMER SESSION

Turning Voices into Action: The Duty to Use Open Comment Data

Open-ended comments from students and staff offers unparalleled qualitative insights into lived experiences, institutional culture, and areas for improvement. However, the sheer volume and complexity of these comments often render manual analysis impractical, leading to underutilisation and missed opportunities for meaningful change. This presentation argues that institutions have an ethical and moral duty not only to collect feedback but to act upon it effectively. The MLY software provides a Higher Education specific, transformative solution by enabling efficient processing, categorisation, and thematic analysis of qualitative data at scale.Leveraging the MLY tool ensures that every voice is heard, patterns are identified, and actionable insights emerge swiftly and accurately.By integrating the output alongside the quantitative feedback regularly produced from student and staff surveys, uphold principles of transparency, responsiveness, and trust, while reducing bias and human error.This session will show Heriot-Watt University, Scotland at the forefront of MLY users, gaining human oversight, and aligning technological innovation with institutional values.Ultimately, using the MLY software enables an institution to turn voices into action, but is not just a matter of efficiency—it is a moral imperative for fostering inclusive, evidence-based decision-making in education.

Kirsty Scanlan



10:40

10:40-11:00

BREAK

Networking Break

11:00

11:00-11:35

SUPPORT SESSION

Admin Essentials: Quick Solutions for Email, LMS, SSO Mapping & Access

Hazeem Al-Tamimi



11:30

11:35-12:15

PANEL DISCUSSION

Transforming NSS Insights for All: Collaboration Behind the MLY NSS Model

Explorance experts and higher education leaders explore how a customized MLY model was developed to align with the UK National Student Survey (NSS), helping institutions analyze qualitative feedback at scale while maintaining confidence in the results.

In this session, you'll learn:

- How MLY accelerates the analysis of large volumes of open-text feedback
- The benefits of customizing the Student Experience Insights (SEI) model for specific survey frameworks
- Best practices for validating AI-generated themes and recommendations
- How institutions are using insights to support continuous improvement and close the feedback loop with students
- Real-world experiences from higher education institutions using MLY to analyze NSS data
- How customised models compare with standard analysis approaches and historical datasets

Ursula McTaggart



Natalie Holland



Penny Jones



12:15

12:15-13:00

Explorance Europe Summit 2026 Close & Networking Lunch

Samer Jaffar



13:00

13:00-14:00

WORKSHOP

Explorance Europe Summit 2026 - Workshop
Reporting Crash Course

Aya Alruzzi

