



CASE STUDY



Enhancing student evaluations of teaching at Universitat Pompeu Fabra using Explorance Blue

About Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Universitat Pompeu Fabra, located in Barcelona, Spain, is a highly regarded public university established in 1990. It is recognized for its strong emphasis on research and academic excellence and consistently ranks among the top young universities globally. The university has approximately 12,000 enrolled students across its undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs, spanning multiple disciplines such as social sciences, communications, economics, and law, with a growing emphasis on interdisciplinary studies and innovation.



blue

CHALLENGE

Low-technology evaluation system, low student participation rates

In September 2020, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) sought a different solution to address the “complexity of requirements” that it was experiencing to assess students’ evaluation of teaching.

Previously, UPF had been using its own internal system to collect teaching evaluations, and this tool did not allow the institution to quickly leverage the data for actionable improvement. Low student participation rates (22%) were also an issue, given UPF’s target to achieve 40%.

“UPF has defined an institutional strategy around digital transformation,” said Anna Petit Solé, Coordinator of the Area of Studies and Analysis in UPF’s Projects, Studies and Quality Unit. “For this reason, we were looking for a solution that would allow us to migrate our own development to a cloud application. The main objectives were to have a state-of-the-art feedback system and to increase participation in the teaching evaluation surveys.”

UPF identified several opportunities for improvement, including: the distribution of surveys to students, monitoring the progress of participation among faculty, resulting reports, calculation of response reliability, visualisation of results, personalised questions, and closing the feedback loop.

SOLUTION

Digital transformation through Explorance Blue

In 2021, UPF selected Explorance Blue to support their teaching evaluation process.

“Explorance Blue is the platform that best fits our teaching evaluation model, since it allows students to evaluate only and exclusively the subjects in which they are enrolled and, within these, the professors who have taught them,” Anna explained.

“Since there are multiple professors attached to a single course, students needed a way to easily identify their professor not only by name but also with a photo when answering the evaluation, and Blue makes this possible. Another key aspect is that all communication in Blue can be displayed in Catalan, Spanish, and English, which are the three languages used at the University.”

Anna continued: “In addition, Blue has provided us with a series of functionalities that improve communication with the greater university community. For example, students receive an e-mail with the link to the survey, and the following reminders. Professors receive an e-mail with the link to monitor student response rates and a link to the evaluation’s

resulting report. It also provides us with the possibility of a more exhaustive analysis of all the information collected, as well as improvement in data visualisation.”

In September 2021, UPF started the implementation of Explorance Blue, being able to carry out all quarterly teaching assessments of the 2021-22 academic year with the new platform and generating a series of reports for professors, deans, department directors, and the greater university community.

Since then, UPF has progressively enhanced its use of Explorance Blue to maximize the value of teaching evaluations and institutional surveys. For example, UPF implemented personalised questions in various subjects to support specific teaching goals and a “closing the loop” approach—where teachers engage with students’ ratings through comments to help boost response rates. Building on this success, UPF leverages the Explorance Blue Dashboard to help visualize survey results and has expanded Blue’s use to include all institutional surveys, enabling deeper insights and broader application.

OUTCOME

Multiple strategic, technical impacts and higher student engagement

The implementation of Explorance Blue has brought a range of impacts for students, academic staff, survey administration, and for the institution. Anna said: “For students, Blue makes it easier for them to access and answer the surveys. Since implementing Blue, survey participation has increased to around 35%.”

Instructors have gained a clearer understanding of student participation and developed a stronger sense of ownership over the evaluation process, ultimately increasing its perceived value. For deans and department directors, the most significant benefit lies in the ability to dynamically visualise evaluation results through the Blue

Dashboard, which enhances data analysis capabilities. This includes leveraging key enrollment data such as student demographics (e.g., gender, age), subject details (e.g., courses, types), and faculty characteristics (e.g., category, gender) to generate detailed and insightful reports.

The success of this approach is reflected in elevating the prestige of teaching evaluations as a vital and central tool for driving improvement and innovation in teaching practices, fostering recognition of its value across the entire UPF community.