



**Report on LENS Student
Reasonable
Accommodations at Trinity
College Dublin**

Executive Summary

This summary encapsulates the comprehensive analysis conducted through a survey assessing the effectiveness of LENS (Learning Education Needs Summary) reasonable accommodations at Trinity College Dublin. This report synthesises the findings of an extensive survey executed by the Trinity College Dublin Students' Union (TCDSU) in response to a series of student complaints. The survey was an investigative effort into the adherence to Trinity's Reasonable Accommodation Policy and the effectiveness of LENS-provided accommodations. Disabled students voiced concerns that they frequently had to petition for supports explicitly detailed in their LENS documentation, which should have been automatically provided. Drawing from the experiences of 321 respondents, which accounts for 14% of those registered with the Disability Service, the survey covered the entirety of schools and faculties within the college. The TCDSU aimed to document the extent to which the students' reasonable accommodations were being implemented in practice, gauging both the compliance of academic staff and the efficacy of the current system.

Methodological Approach

The survey aimed to capture a broad spectrum of experiences from disabled students within the college. Faculties involved included the School of Medicine, School of Histories and Humanities, and others, with students ranging from undergraduate to postgraduate levels. Respondents were prompted to provide insights into the adequacy of accommodations, encountered challenges, positive experiences, and actionable suggestions for improvements.

Data Analysis and Findings

The responses indicated diverse experiences with accommodations, with the School of Histories and Humanities showing the highest level of feedback. The School of Medicine followed closely, indicating a pressing need for improvements across multiple departments. Common issues included difficulties accessing learning materials, inadequate adherence to LENS agreements, and varied responsiveness to reasonable accommodation requests.

Respondent Demographics

Of the 321 participants, the distribution across academic levels was as follows: 45% undergraduate students, 35% postgraduate students, and 20% other or unspecified. This broad representation provides a well-rounded perspective on the accommodation needs across academic stages.

Reasonable Accommodation Utilisation

- **Fully Met Accommodations:** 51.7% of students reported that their reasonable accommodations were fully met without needing to initiate requests, reflecting proactive measures by some departments.
- **Partial or Non-compliance:** 48.3% indicated either partial fulfilment or a complete lack of reasonable accommodation provision, necessitating student intervention to request supports explicitly outlined in their LENS documentation.

School Data Analysis

The analysis of the survey data based on school and the issues raised provides an overview of the concerns related to accommodations for students at Trinity College Dublin. The survey encompasses responses from various schools, with the School of Histories and Humanities reporting the most feedback. Here are the findings categorized by the school:

Summary of Issues by School

- **School of Histories and Humanities:** This school had the highest number of responses with concerns about accommodations not being met (37 mentions), difficulties experienced (20 mentions), and suggestions for improvement (27 mentions).
- **School of Medicine:** Significant feedback came from the School of Medicine with 33 mentions of accommodations not being met, 10 mentions of difficulties experienced, and 21 suggestions for improvement.
- **School of Social Sciences and Philosophy:** Reported 25 mentions of accommodations not being met, 4 mentions of difficulties, and 16 suggestions for improvement.
- **School of Business:** Students from this school reported 20 instances where accommodations were not met, 8 difficulties, and 11 suggestions for improvement.
- **School of Natural Sciences:** There were 21 mentions of accommodations not being met, 2 difficulties, and 10 suggestions for improvement.
- **School of Nursing and Midwifery:** Respondents reported 18 mentions of accommodations not being met, 3 difficulties, and 12 suggestions for improvement.
- **School of Computer Science and Statistics:** There were 18 mentions of accommodations not being met, 4 difficulties experienced, and 9 suggestions for improvement.
- **Schools with Fewer Issues Reported:** The School of Dental Science and some of the specialised schools like the School of Genetics and Microbiology had fewer issues reported, which could be due to a smaller number of disabled students.

Common Themes Across Schools

- **Need for Improved Awareness:** Across many schools, there is a need for increased awareness and understanding of how to access and implement reasonable accommodations as per LENS reports.
- **Accessibility of Learning Materials:** Students frequently cited difficulties in accessing lecture slides and other materials in advance, which is crucial for their learning process.

- **Response to Accommodation Requests:** While some schools appear to respond quickly and effectively to reasonable accommodation requests, others have been noted to be less responsive or have ongoing unresolved issues.
- **Positive Lecturer Responses:** Despite some challenges, there are instances where lecturers and TAs have been commended for their understanding and accommodating nature, showcasing pockets of best practice.

Challenges and Positive Outcomes

Students expressed mixed satisfaction with their reasonable accommodations, noting a lack of awareness among faculty and staff about the existence and implementation of LENS reasonable accommodations. Positive feedback highlighted instances of supportive interactions with faculty members who provided the necessary accommodations without prompting.

Strategic Recommendations

To address the issues identified, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Faculty Awareness and Training:** Introduce comprehensive training programs for faculty to familiarise them with LENS reports and the accommodation process.
2. **Standardised Accommodation Procedures:** Implement college-wide standardised procedures to ensure uniform and fair accommodation practices.
3. **Accessibility of Materials:** Mandate the advance accessibility of learning materials, as per reasonable accommodation agreements, to support diverse learning needs.
4. **Proactive Communication:** Urge faculty to initiate conversations about reasonable accommodations to preclude the need for students to repeatedly request assistance.
5. **Continuous Feedback Loop:** Establish a system for regular feedback from students to continuously assess and refine reasonable accommodation practices.

By implementing these recommendations, Trinity College Dublin can significantly enhance the educational experience for all students, ensuring equitable access and fostering an inclusive academic environment.

This report presents findings from a survey conducted among students at Trinity College Dublin to assess the effectiveness of the student LENS report and reporting of reasonable accommodations for disabled students studying in Trinity. The survey aimed to understand the extent to which students' accommodation needs are met, identify challenges, and gather suggestions for improvements. The respondents included students from various schools and academic years, providing a comprehensive view of the accommodation landscape within the college.

Introduction

The survey was a collaboration between the Trinity disAbility Service (DS) and Trinity College Dublin Student's Union (TCDSU) to gather insights on Learning Educational Needs Summary or LENS compliance within Trinity College's schools and departments.

The experiences and feedback are invaluable in shaping a more accessible and inclusive academic environment.

What is a LENS Report?

To finalise and arrange Reasonable Accommodations, a member of the Disability Service team will set up a meeting for a Needs Assessment. Following the Needs Assessment, the student's Disability Officer prepares an individual Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) detailing the Reasonable Accommodations to be implemented. The information on the LENS report will be communicated to the relevant academic department or school with the consent of the student.

Data Analysis of LENS Student Reasonable Accommodations Survey at Trinity College Dublin

Overview of Survey Responses

The Trinity College Dublin Students' Union (TCDSU) conducted a survey of 321 students, making up 14% of those registered with the Disability Service, to investigate the implementation of the Trinity Reasonable Accommodation Policy. The survey spanned across all schools and faculties, collecting responses on the effectiveness of LENS reasonable accommodations.

Response Breakdown

- **School Participation:** The survey captured feedback from a variety of schools, with the School of Histories and Humanities having the most respondents (37), followed by the School of Medicine (33), and School of Social Sciences and Philosophy (25).
- **Year of Study:** Feedback was received from students across different academic stages, from freshman to senior years, as well as postgraduate students.

Key Survey Findings

- **Accommodations Met:** Just over half of the students (51.7%) reported their accommodations were met without needing to ask, indicating proactive compliance. However, 48.2% had to request their accommodations, highlighting a need for improved awareness and proactive implementation.
- **Faculty Involvement:** The majority of students who needed to request accommodations had to inform their lecturers (83.87%), suggesting a significant gap in lecturer awareness. Less frequently, students needed to inform their TAs (56.13%).

- **Third-Party Involvement:** A significant number of students (83) required intervention from third parties, such as tutors or disability services, to have their accommodations met.
- **Experienced Difficulties:** 61.3% of respondents experienced difficulties with their accommodations, often involving issues with online exams and classroom accommodations.
- **Positive Experiences:** Despite some challenges, there were reports of positive experiences with understanding and accommodating lecturers and TAs.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Students offered various suggestions, including a call for more frequent review of LENS by lecturers.

Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis of the "Other Thoughts" comments revealed that many students (13 mentions) did not have additional feedback, which may imply satisfaction with the accommodations process. Other unique responses highlighted individual experiences and perspectives.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey indicates that while many students benefit from the current accommodations, there is a clear need for:

1. **Increased Faculty Training:** To raise awareness about LENS accommodations and their importance.
2. **Clearer Communication:** To streamline the process for students to communicate their accommodation needs.
3. **Review of Policies:** To identify gaps in compliance and support, ensuring consistent implementation of accommodations.
4. **Dissemination of Best Practices:** To spread effective accommodation practices across all departments and faculties.

Data

*The data was analysed using R programming code.

The number of survey responses was 321 ($n=321$).

Columns for the original LENS Compliance Survey

[1] "Which School"

[2] "Which Year"

[3] "Were your LENS report reasonable accommodations met without having to ask"

[4] "Did you have to mention your LENS report to your Lecturer in order for your reasonable accommodations to be met"

[5] "Did you have to mention your LENS report to your TA in order for your reasonable accommodations to be met"

[6] "Did you have to involve a third party, such as your tutor, the student's union or Disability Service to have your reasonable accommodations to be met"

[7] "Did you experience any difficulty in getting your reasonable accommodation met"

[8] "If yes, what were those difficulties"

[9] "How long did it take for the difficulties to be resolved"

[10] "If any, what were your positive experiences with lecturer and TAs"

[11] "Do you have any suggestion or improvements your course could do to make it more accessible and inclusive"

[12] "Any other thoughts on the issue"

Columns for the renamed LENS Compliance Survey

*For data analysis

*NaN is Not a Number (undefined value)

[1] "School"

The school or department within Trinity, including various disciplines like Languages, Business, Histories and Humanities, Nursing and Midwifery, and Medicine.

[2] "Year"

The academic year or level of the students providing feedback, ranging from freshman (JF) and sophomore (SF) to senior (SS) and postgraduate years.

[3] "Accommodations_met"

Indicates whether the students' accommodations were met (Yes/No).

[4] "Mention_lecturer"

Whether lecturers were mentioned in the feedback (Yes/No/NaN).

[5] "Mention_TA"

Whether teaching assistants (TAs) were mentioned in the feedback (Yes/No/NaN).

[6] "Third_party"

Indicates the involvement of a third party (Yes/No/NaN) such as Trinity disAbility Service, TCDSU, tutor.

[7] "Experience_difficulty"

Whether the student experienced difficulty (Yes/No/NaN).

[8] "Difficulties"

A description of the difficulties encountered.

[9] "Difficulties_resolved"

Status of whether the difficulties were resolved.

[10] "Positive_experiences"

Descriptions of any positive experiences related to accommodations.

[11] "Suggestions"

Suggestions for improvement.

[12] "Other_thoughts"

Additional thoughts or comments.

Accommodations met

There were a total of 321 ($n=321$) responses to this question.

No	Yes
155	166

Percentage: No (48.2%) Yes (51.7%)

- 51.71% (166) of respondents reported that their LENS report reasonable accommodations were met without having to ask.
- 48.29% (155) indicated that their accommodations were not met without intervention, highlighting a significant area for improvement in ensuring proactive compliance with LENS accommodations.

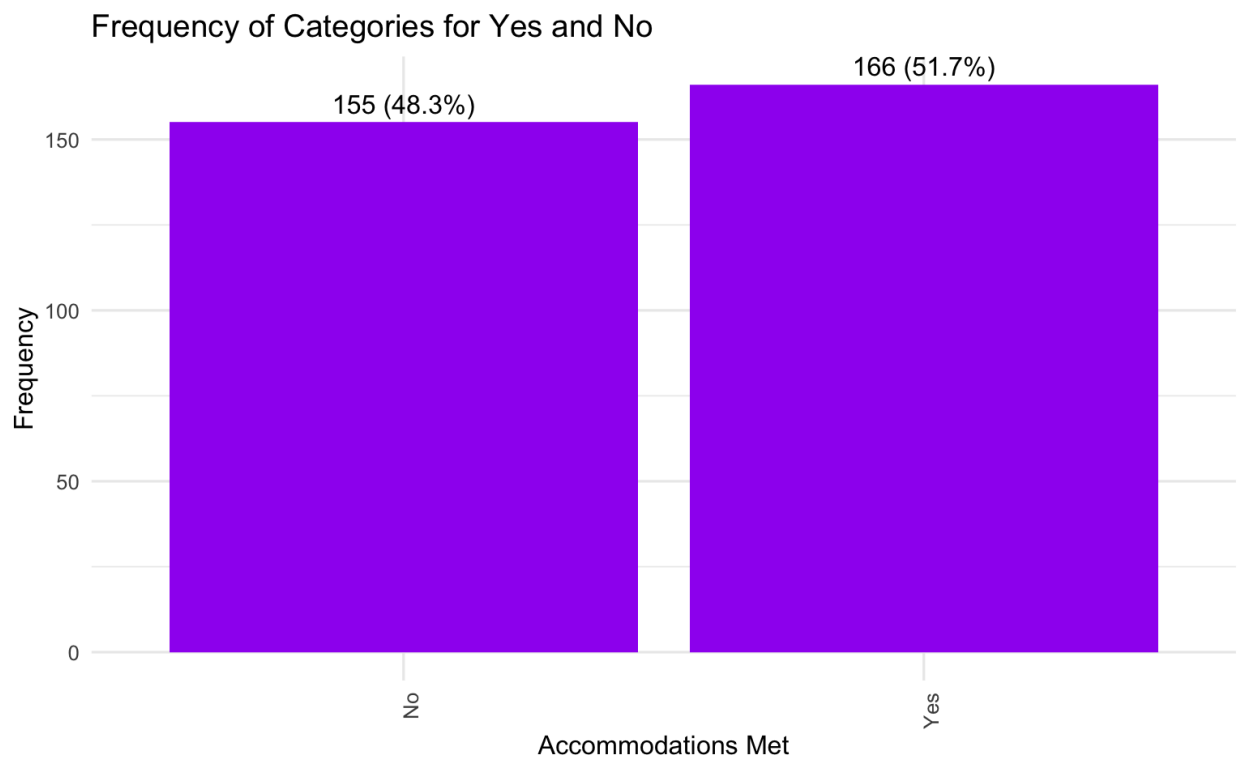
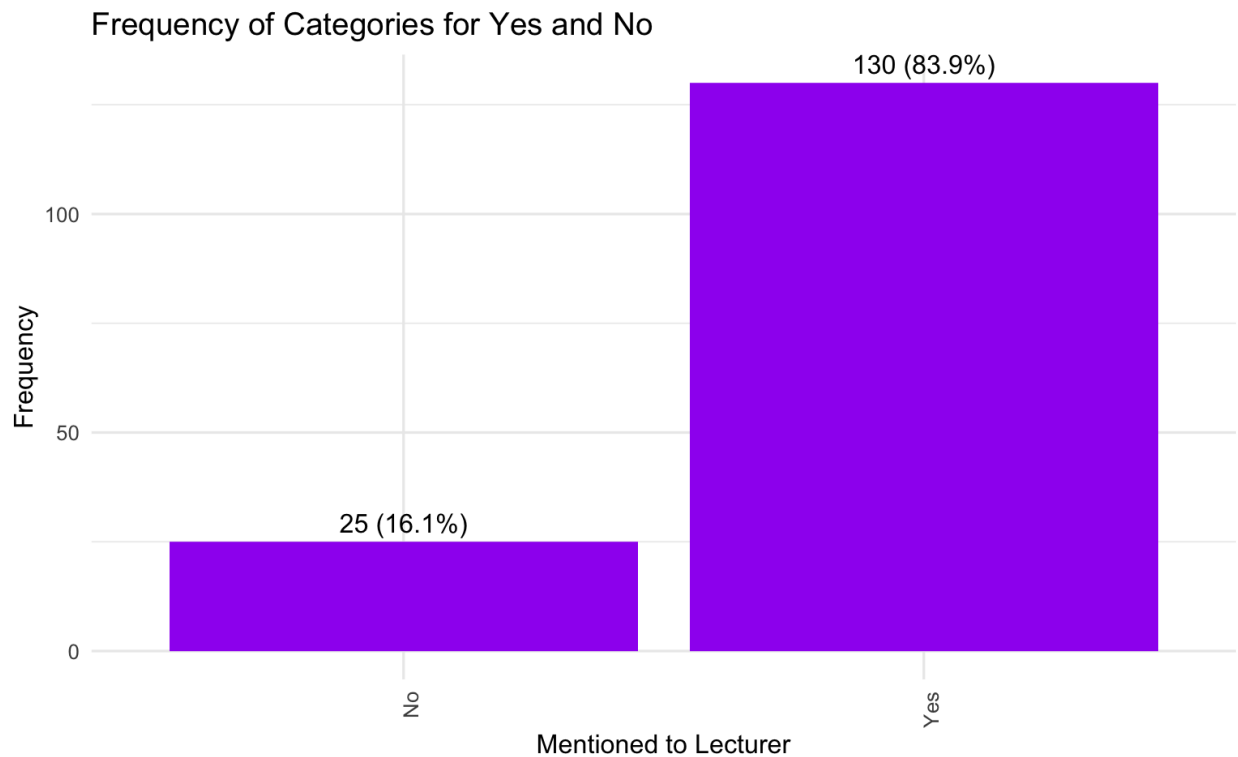


Figure 1 - Frequency of Accommodations Met (Yes/No)

Overview

This indicates a nearly even split between those who felt their needs were adequately addressed and those who did not, suggesting that while a significant portion of students receive the accommodations they require, there is also a substantial number of students whose needs are not being fully met. This highlights areas for potential improvement in ensuring that accommodations are consistently provided to all students who require them.

Accommodations Met by Lecturer and TA



Mentioning LENS Report to Lecturers

- 83.87% (130) of students who had to mention their accommodations reported needing to inform their lecturers to have their reasonable accommodations met. This suggests a gap in lecturer awareness or readiness to implement LENS accommodations without prompting.
- 16.13% (25) reported not having to mention their LENS report to lecturers, indicating a relatively small proportion of cases where accommodations were seamlessly integrated.

Overview

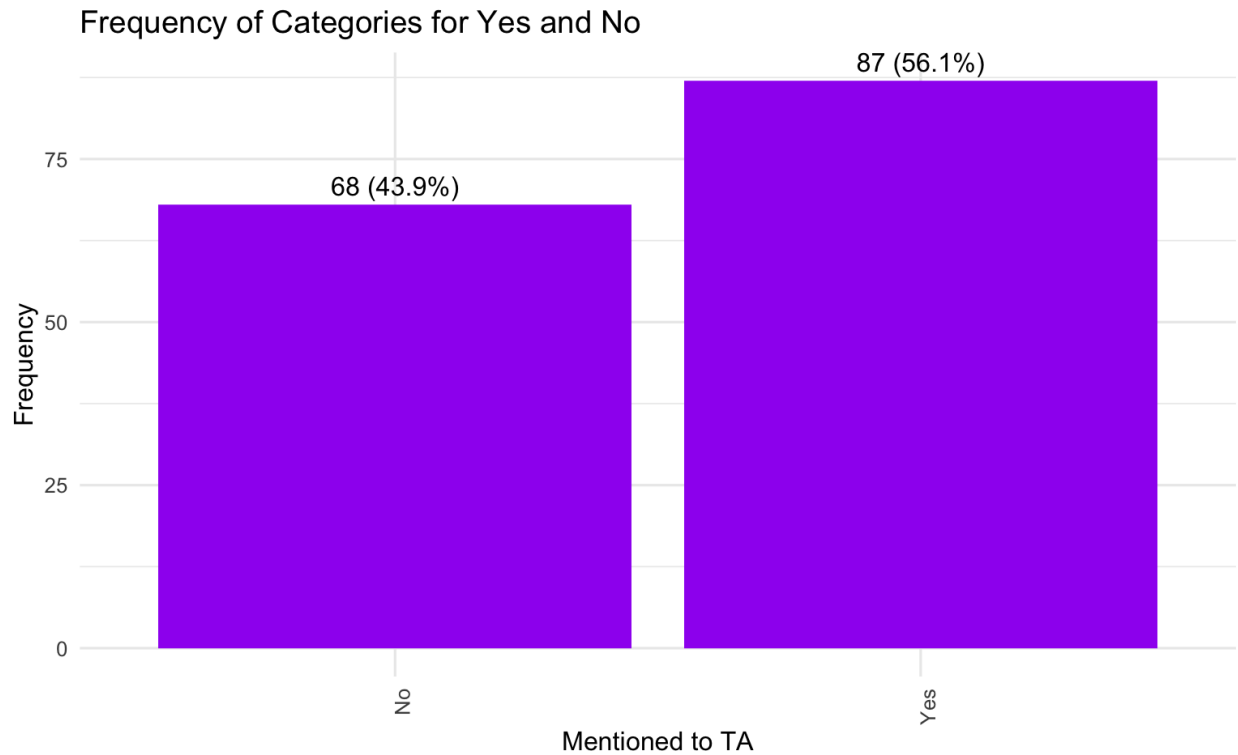
130 respondents mentioned lecturers in their feedback.

25 respondents did not mention lecturers in their feedback.

This suggests that lecturers play a significant role in the accommodation process or in the educational experience of these respondents, as a majority mentioned them in their feedback. The high number of mentions could indicate that lecturers are often involved in the

implementation of accommodations or that their actions and awareness significantly impact the effectiveness of these accommodations.

Mentioning LENS Report to TA



Mentioning LENS Report to TAs

- 56.13% (87) of students found it necessary to mention their LENS report to their TAs for accommodations to be met, suggesting better awareness or compliance among TAs compared to lecturers but still indicating room for improvement.
- 43.87% (68) did not have to mention their LENS report to TAs, which is a positive indicator but still leaves a majority needing to advocate for themselves.

Overview

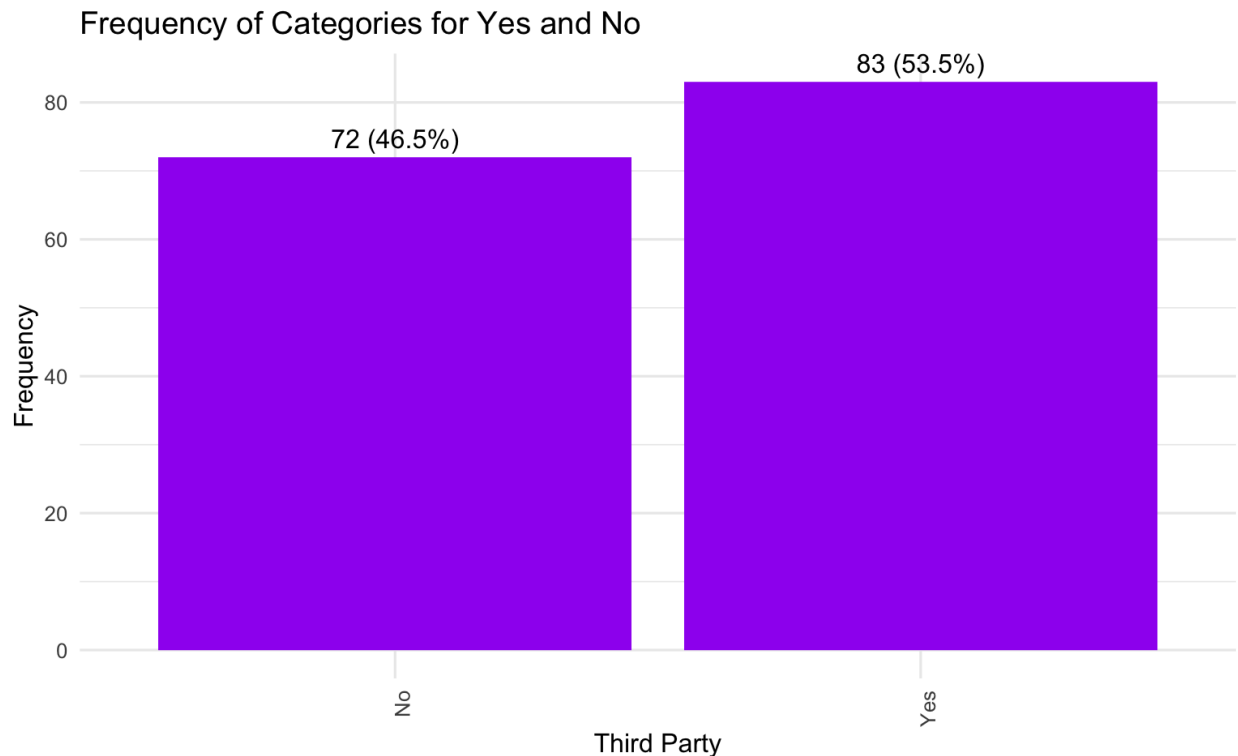
87 respondents mentioned teaching assistants (TAs) in their feedback.

68 respondents did not mention TAs in their feedback.

This data suggests that teaching assistants (TAs) also have a noteworthy role in the educational experiences of students, particularly in relation to accommodations. The fact that a significant number of respondents mentioned TAs indicates their involvement and impact on students' academic support. However, compared to lecturers, TAs were mentioned less frequently, which

might reflect their varying roles or visibility in the accommodation process across different courses or departments/schools.

Third party



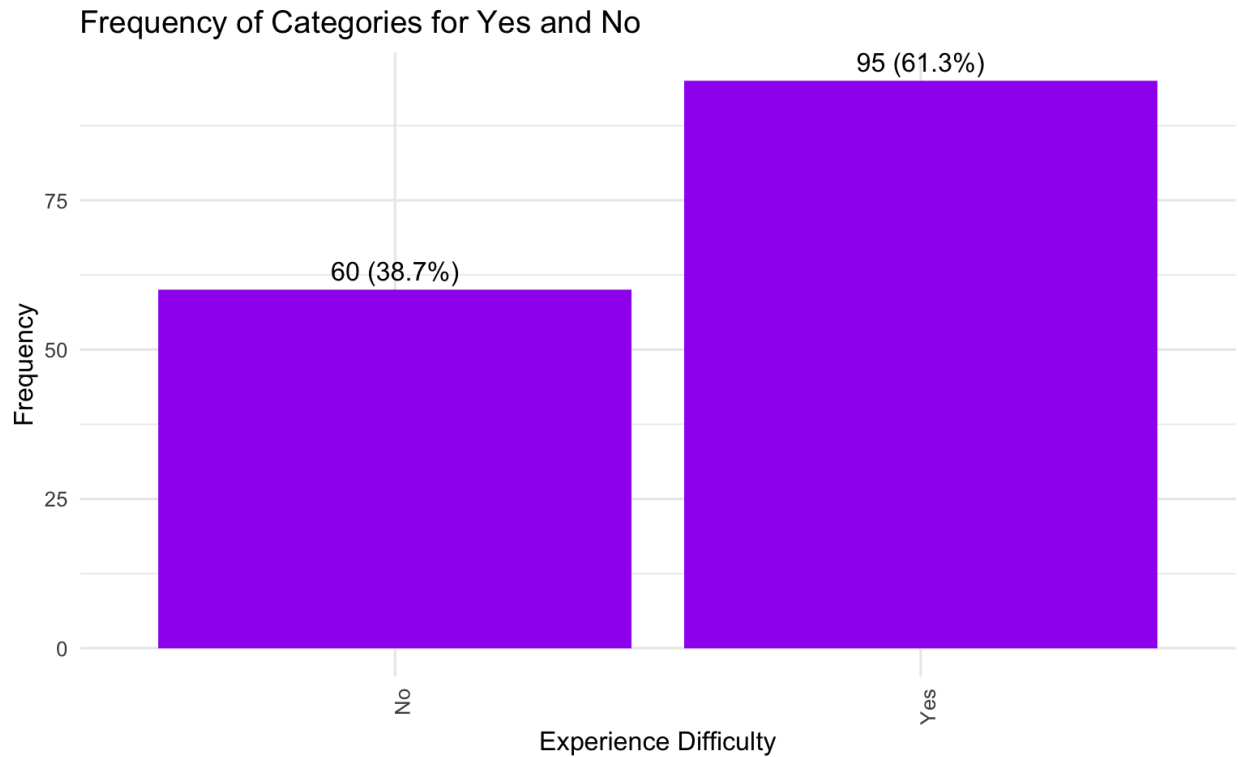
- 83 respondents mentioned the involvement of a third party in their feedback.
- 72 respondents did not mention a third party in their feedback.

This suggests that third parties play a significant role in the accommodation process for a notable number of students. The involvement of third parties could include external support services, specialists, or organisations that assist in providing or advocating for accommodations. The presence of these mentions highlights the importance of external support systems and their contribution to meeting the accommodation needs of students.

Overview

Experience difficulty

No 38.7% Yes 61.3%



Overview

- Lack of annotated notes as specified in LENS accommodations.
- Issues with lecturers not being aware of LENS reports, requiring students to provide them manually.
- Problems with exam accommodations, such as being placed in a distracting environment contrary to the accommodations outlined in their LENS report.
- Instances of not being provided appropriate resources for exams, like a working computer, despite accommodations outlined in LENS reports.
- Difficulties related to classroom accommodations, such as seating arrangements that don't account for hearing difficulties exacerbated by mask mandates and social distancing.

The above overview highlights a range of issues primarily centered around communication gaps between students and faculty regarding accommodations, inconsistencies in following accommodation policies, and specific logistical challenges related to exams and classroom settings.

Given the uniqueness of each reported difficulty, it suggests that individual attention to accommodation needs and improved communication between students, faculty, and administrative staff might be areas for improvement.

School

School of Histories and Humanities:	37 responses
School of Medicine:	33 responses
School of Social Sciences and Philosophy:	25 responses
School of Natural Sciences:	21 responses
School of Business:	20 responses
School of Nursing and Midwifery:	18 responses
School of Computer Science and Statistics:	18 responses
School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies:	14 responses
School of Engineering:	14 responses
School of Law:	13 responses
School of Social Work and Social Policy:	12 responses
School of Creative Arts:	11 responses
School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences:	11 responses
School of English:	11 responses
School of Chemistry:	10 responses
School of Physics:	9 responses
School of Mathematics:	9 responses
School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences:	8 responses
School of Biochemistry and Immunology:	8 responses
School of Psychology:	6 responses
School of Education:	5 responses
School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies:	4 responses
School of Genetics and Microbiology:	3 responses
School of Dental Science:	1 response

	School	Percentage
1	School of Biochemistry and Immunology	2.4922118
2	School of Business	6.2305296
3	School of Chemistry	3.1152648
4	School of Computer Science and Statistics	5.6074766
5	School of Creative Arts	3.4267913
6	School of Dental Science	0.3115265

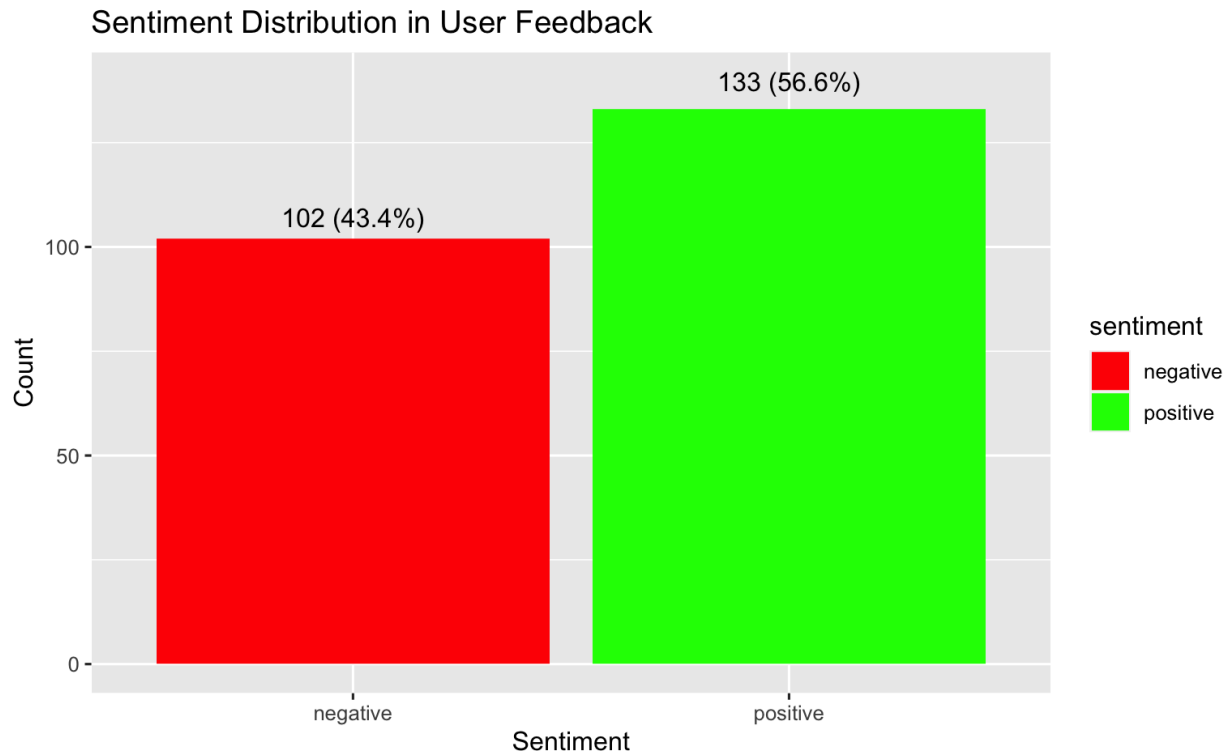
7	School of Education	1.5576324
8	School of Engineering	4.3613707
9	School of English	3.4267913
10	School of Genetics and Microbiology	0.9345794
11	School of Histories and Humanities	11.5264798
12	School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies	4.3613707
13	School of Law	4.0498442
14	School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences	3.4267913
15	School of Mathematics	2.8037383
16	School of Medicine	10.2803738
17	School of Natural Sciences	6.5420561
18	School of Nursing and Midwifery	5.6074766
19	School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences	2.4922118
20	School of Physics	2.8037383
21	School of Psychology	1.8691589
22	School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies	1.2461059
23	School of Social Sciences and Philosophy	7.7881620
24	School of Social Work and Social Policy	3.7383178

This distribution suggests a wide engagement across a range of disciplines, with the highest number of responses coming from the School of Histories and Humanities, followed by the School of Medicine, and the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy.

The diverse representation across schools highlights the widespread relevance of the survey topics, such as accommodations and educational experiences, across different fields of study.

Sentiment Analysis of Other Thoughts

Using the Bing Lexicon.



R code was used to perform a sentiment analysis on user feedback data (the column used was 'Any.other.thoughts.on.the.issue.' from the LENS Compliance Survey), categorising sentiments into groups (e.g., positive, negative) and visualising the distribution of these sentiments through the above bar plot.

Sentiment analysis was then conducted on a collection of user feedback to identify the overall sentiment expressed in the comments. Each piece of feedback was analysed to determine whether it conveyed a positive or negative sentiment.

This sentiment analysis provides an overview of user sentiment, helping identify overall satisfaction levels and areas needing attention. The combination of counts and percentages enriches the analysis, offering both a broad and detailed view of the sentiment landscape within the user feedback.

Overview

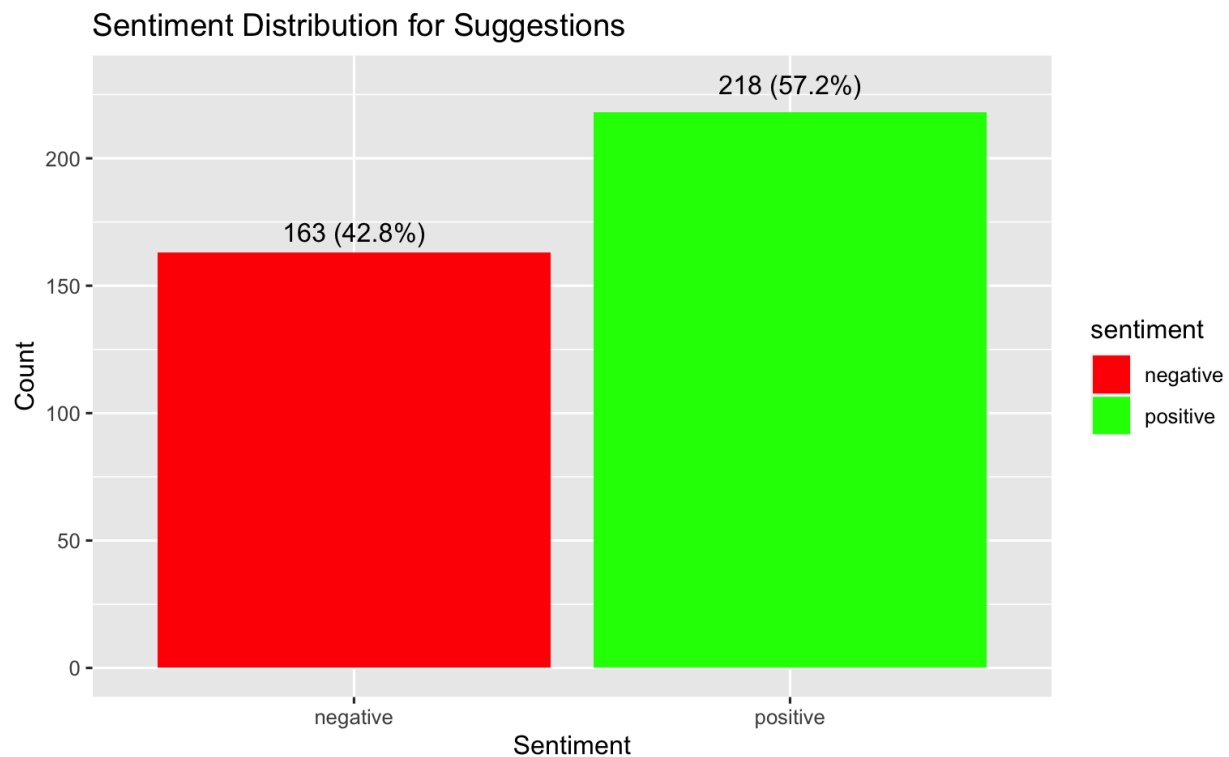
The analysis of the "Other_thoughts" column reveals that the most frequently occurring entry is "No," which appeared 13 times, indicating that a significant number of respondents either had

no additional thoughts to share or were satisfied with the feedback they had already provided in other sections of the survey.

Similar to the analysis of difficulties and suggestions, the "Other_thoughts" responses are highly diverse, with each unique response mentioned only once beyond the most common "No." This diversity underscores the individuality of the respondents' experiences and perspectives. Due to the specific nature of each response, it suggests a wide range of personal reflections on the accommodations process, the effectiveness of support received, and the overall educational experience.

Given the prevalence of "No" as a response, it seems that many students did not have further comments beyond what was captured in other sections of the survey. However, the presence of unique responses also highlights the value of open-ended feedback in capturing a wide array of student experiences and insights that may not be directly addressed in more structured survey questions.

Sentiment Analysis of Suggestions



The data showed that many suggestions are unique, reflecting the specific needs and experiences of each respondent. However, the most frequently occurring suggestion is simply "No," indicating that a number of respondents did not have any suggestions to offer, which occurred six times. Some specific suggestions that appeared (though mentioned only once each, reflecting the wide range of feedback) include:

- Satisfaction with current supports, where a respondent specifically stated they were very pleased with the supports they currently receive.
- Calls for LENS (likely a reference to a formal accommodation program) to be reviewed more often by lecturers.

Given the broad spectrum of individual suggestions, it suggests that while some students are satisfied with their current accommodations, there is also a call for ongoing review and perhaps more consistent application of accommodations policies. The diversity in responses highlights the importance of personalised attention to accommodation needs and suggests that Trinity could benefit from regularly soliciting and acting on feedback from students regarding their accommodation experiences.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The survey reveals a mixed picture of LENS compliance across different faculties and departments. While there are positive reports of accommodations being met and supportive experiences with some lecturers and TAs, a significant proportion of students still need to advocate for their accommodations. This suggests a need for:

- **Increased Awareness and Training:** Enhancing lecturer and TA understanding of LENS accommodations and the importance of proactively implementing these measures.
- **Improved Communication:** Establishing clearer channels for students to communicate their needs and for staff to access and understand LENS reports.
- **Policy and Process Review:** Evaluating current policies and processes to identify and address gaps in compliance and support.
- **Sharing Best Practices:** Identifying and disseminating effective practices for supporting students with accommodations across departments.