

Instructor's Guide to Improving Response Rates

Office of Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research
Office of the Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

This guide gives tips and recommendations for instructors who want to increase their survey response rates. Course evaluation surveys are conducted through Explorance Blue (also known as Blue). The following topics are covered in this guide:

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* **NOTE:** Recommendations listed below are organized into two categories: **Before Live Evaluations** and **During Live Evaluations**. Recommendations under **Before Live Evaluations** are meant to be done before the student survey fill out period begins, ideally early in the academic term. Recommendations under **During Live Evaluations** are meant to be done while the student survey fill out period is active, when students are allowed to fill out and submit evaluations. [The evaluation window dates can be found in your Blue portal by following these instructions.](#)

For more information on the exact student survey fill out dates are, contact the Blue Administrator at uaf-course-evals@alaska.edu

How to Log Into Blue

1. Go to uaf.bluera.com/uaf. And log in using your UAF ID and password.
2. You may be prompted to select which datasource to login as. If this appears, select "Users".

Recommendations

Before Live Evaluations

1. Plan on **setting aside in-class time** so students can complete the survey in class. We recommend setting aside this time to be in the beginning, or close to the beginning of the class period.
2. **Include course evaluations as an item on your course syllabus.** Additionally, you can add a link that [directs them to the Blue](#), or a [QR Code that will link them to the course survey](#). Adding the evaluations onto your syllabus shows students that the evaluations are important to you.

3. **Introduce course evaluations to students near the beginning of the term.** Tell your students why you value their input and give examples of how you've implemented previous survey feedback into your course content or instructional style.
4. **Offer a class-wide incentive** if a predetermined response rate threshold is met. For example, if 80% of the class completes the survey, every student will receive 2 extra credit points added to their final grade. Note that individual incentives are not allowed due to UAF evaluation anonymity policy. Instructors are not permitted to know which students in a course submitted their surveys.

During Live Evaluations

1. (From #1 above) **Set aside in-class time for students to complete the survey.** Allow students 15-20 minutes to complete the survey, and step out of the room during this time.
2. **Monitor survey response rates** through the **Response Rate Monitor** located in your Blue Dashboard. For more information on how to understand and use the **Response Rate Monitor**, review the [Instructor's Guide to the Response Rate Monitor](#).

If response rates are low:

- a. Send an email to students in the course reminding them to complete the survey. A sample reminder email can be found below.
 - b. Remind your students of how you value their feedback and tell them how you've implemented previous survey feedback into your course content or instructional style.
3. **Display a QR Code in class for easier access to the course survey.** Starting in Fall 2023, instructors can display an automatically-generated QR Code to their class which links directly to the course survey. Insert this QR Code into a slide, or simply display it on a projector during the class time you set aside for completing course evaluations. [Find instructions on accessing the survey QR Code here.](#)

Sample Reminder Email from Instructor to Students

Students receive a Blue system invitation email that includes a direct link to the course survey. An additional 1-2 reminder emails that also include the survey link are sent after the invitation email. Even though students receive system-generated emails, an email sent directly from their instructor usually receives more attention and is a great way to increase survey response rates. Below is a sample email that you can send to students reminding them to complete their surveys. This email can be modified in any way you wish, but we recommend including the Blue login link provided.

Suggested Email Subject: Reminder: Please complete your course survey

Suggested Email Content:

Hello to my [course name] students,

Please remember to complete the evaluation survey for this course by [insert date]. The survey is quick and helps me make the course better for the next cohort. To fill it out:

1. Go to uaf.bluera.com/uaf
2. If you're not already logged into your UAF account, you'll be prompted to log in. If you forgot your password, [follow these steps](#).
3. After logging in you'll see a list of course surveys to complete. Click on one, fill it out, and hit submit.

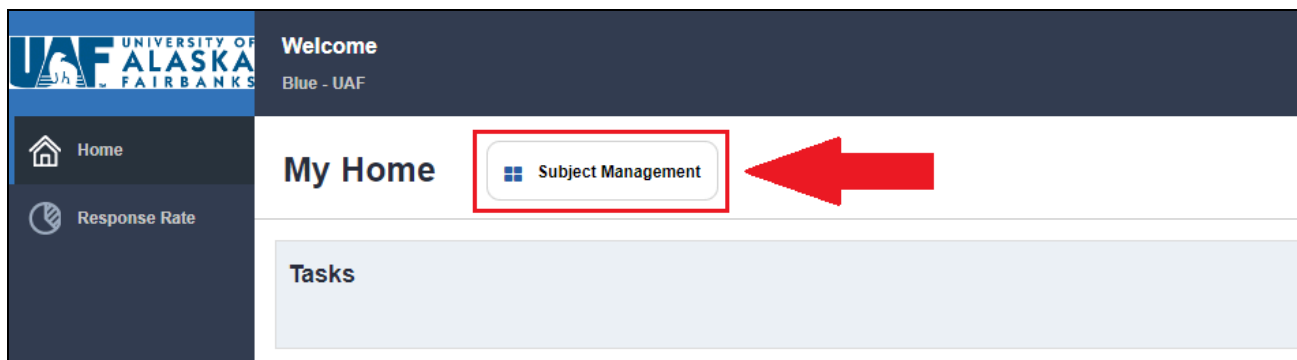
I appreciate you taking the time to complete the course survey, your honest feedback is important to me! [If you set a class incentive: As a reminder if X% of you complete the survey, X points will be added to everyone's grade.]

Thanks,
[signature]

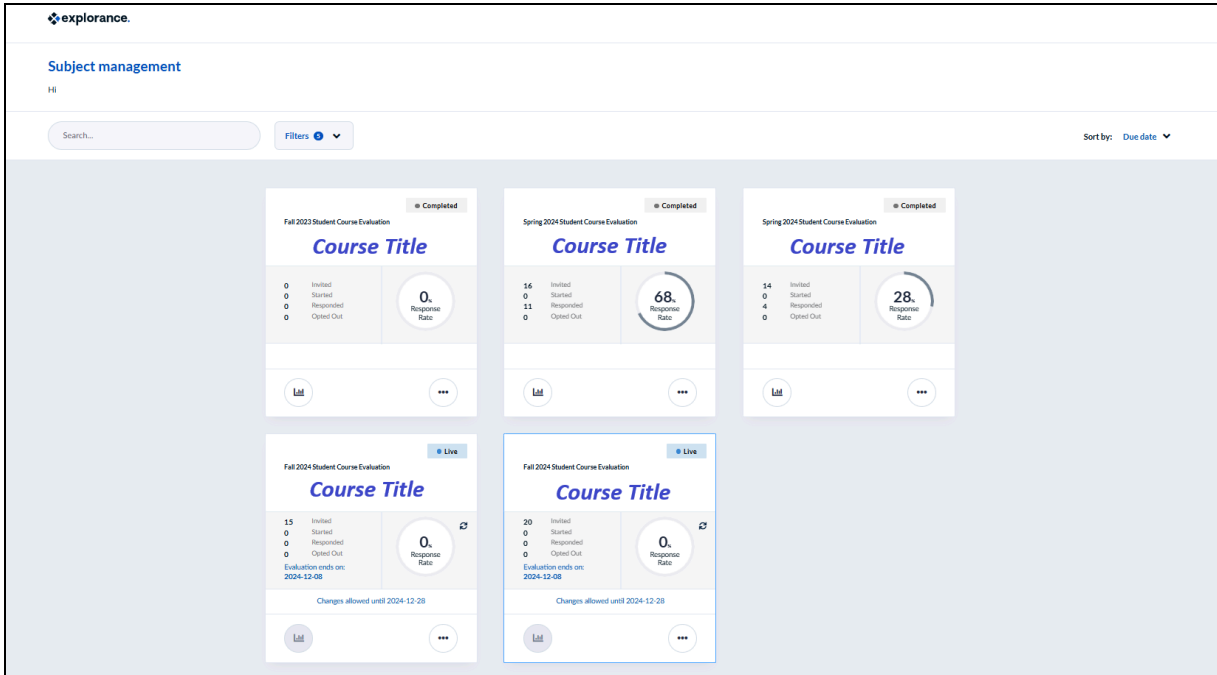
Find Evaluation Window Dates (When Students Can Submit Surveys)

The dates when students are permitted to fill out and submit course evaluation surveys vary from term-to-term and course-to-course. You can find the dates when the evaluation window opens and closes by following these steps:

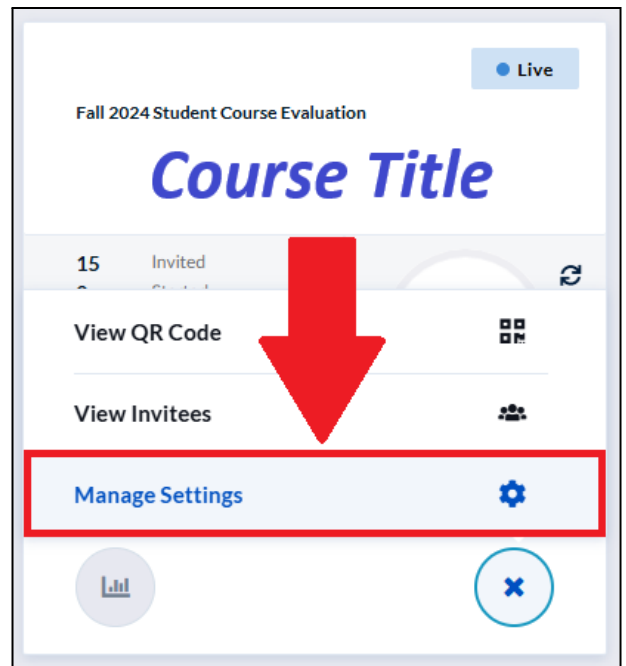
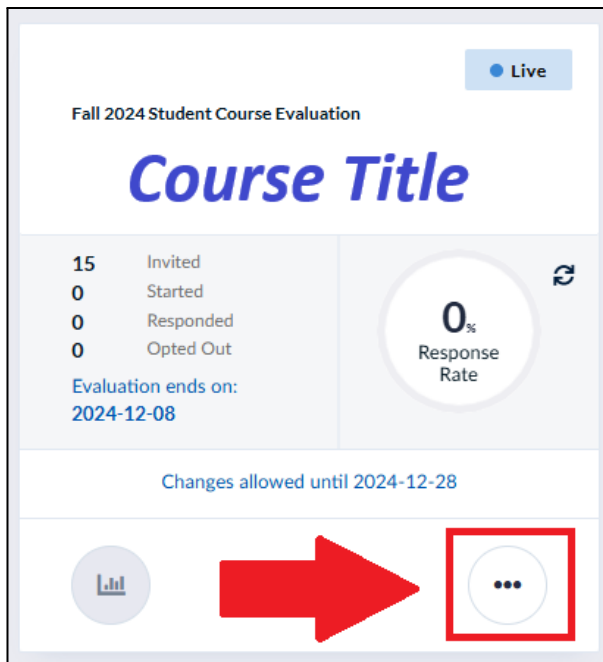
1. Log into Blue
2. In the top left of the home page, click on the **Subject Management** button. This will open the **Subject Management** view in a new tab.



- On this page, courses you are teaching are displayed in boxes. Each box is labeled with the course title.



- Locate a course that you wish to find the evaluation window dates for and click on **the three dots (ellipses)**, then **“Manage Settings”**.



5. In the pop-up window, the **Start Date** is the date and time when students are first allowed to fill out and submit the survey for that course. The **End Date** is the date and time when students are no longer allowed to fill out and submit a survey for that course. These are the evaluation window dates.

Fall 2024 Student Course Evaluation Cancel ✕

Course Title

Changes allowed until 2024-12-28

Preview questionnaire ▶ ➤
Done - Updated 2024-11-08

Choose timing Scheduled

Start Date	2024 - 11 - 25	10 : 00	📅
End Date	2024 - 12 - 08	23 : 59	📅

How to Use Course Evaluation QR Codes

Starting in Fall 2023, instructors are able to use an automatically-generated QR Code that links directly to that course's survey. Information on what QR Codes are, how to find a course's QR Code, and how to use that code are listed below.

What is a QR Code?

A QR Code (Quick Response Code) is a type of barcode that when scanned by a phone's camera, will link directly to a specific webpage. Each QR Code is unique and consists of black squares arranged in a grid on a white background. QR Codes are able to be screenshotted or downloaded as an image file (.jpg or .png) to distribute them.

How Do Course Survey QR Codes Work?

Instructors are now able to use QR Codes to direct students to a specific course evaluation survey. Starting two weeks before the term start date as reported in the Academic Calendar, you as an instructor are able to access course evaluation QR Codes. Students do not have access to these QR Codes unless you distribute them.

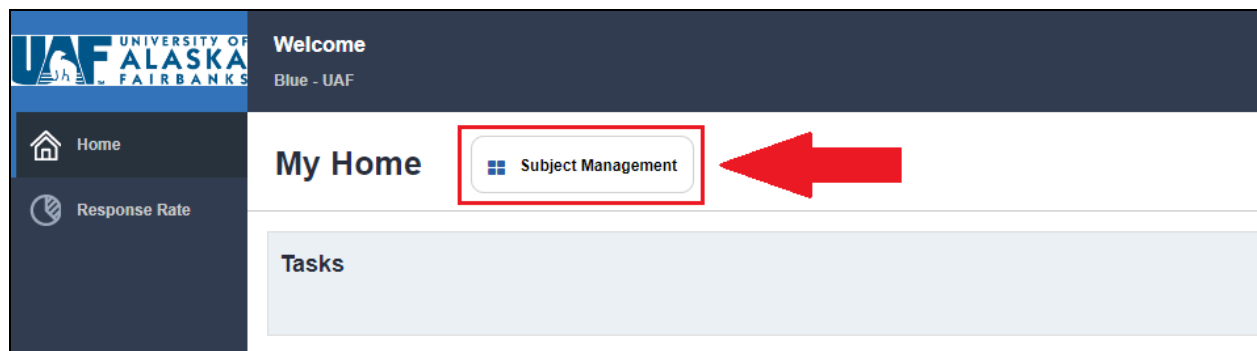
Each course evaluation QR Code is unique to that course (including section), meaning every course in a term is assigned a unique QR Code. The code will only link to the survey for that specific course. If a student scans a QR Code for a course they are not in, or when the survey submission window is not yet open, the link will not work.

We recommend displaying the QR Code to the class through a projector during the in-class time you have set aside for students to fill out and submit their surveys. You can also add a screenshot of the QR Code to your lecture slides if you prefer this method.

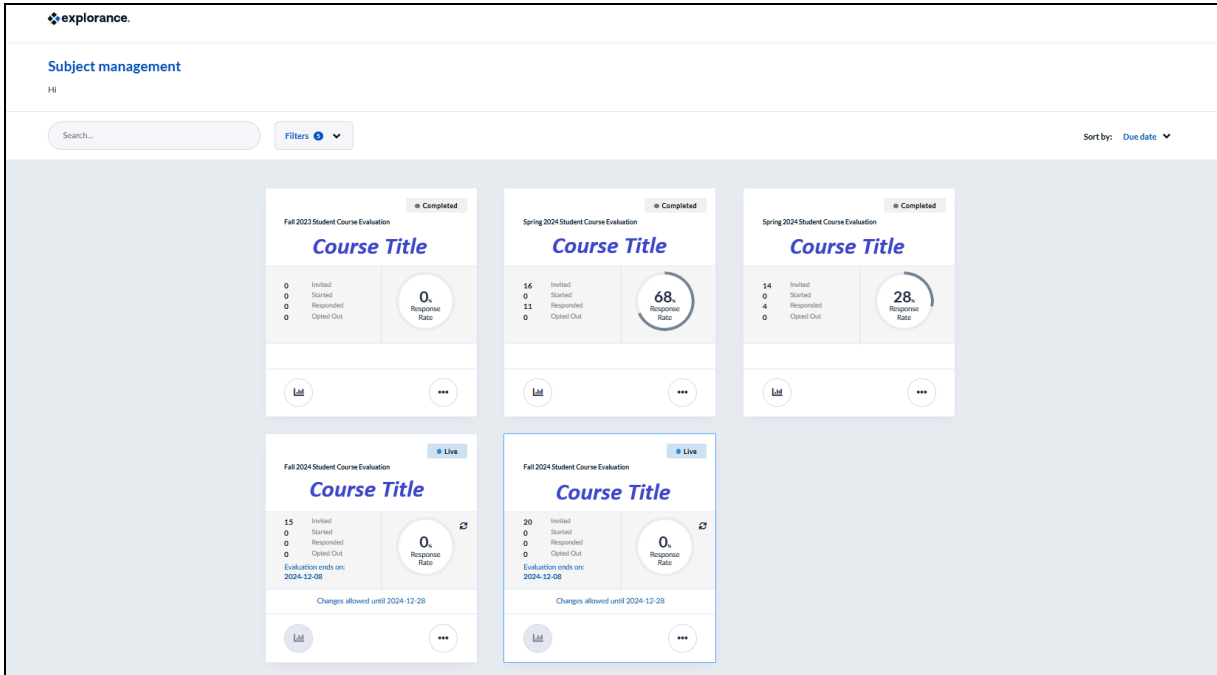
Using QR Codes to direct students to their course surveys is optional, but can make distributing a survey link to your class easier.

How Do I Find a Course's QR Code?

1. Log into Blue
2. In the top left of the home page, click on the **Subject Management** button. This will open the **Subject Management** view in a new tab.



3. On this page, courses you are teaching are displayed in boxes. Each box is labeled with the course title.



4. Locate a course that you wish to view the QR Code for and click on **the three dots (ellipses)**, then **“View QR Code”**.

