



DACEM

Digitized Academic Catalogues for Enhanced Mobility

WP 4. Validation, Training and Guidelines

4.4 Student Survey Report

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06/07/2026

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Please credit this report to:

Ben Rommane, S. (2026). Student survey report. DACEM Consortium.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22932926>



Title	<i>Student survey report</i>
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Dates	<i>July 2026</i>
Status	<i>Final version</i>
Activity related	<i>Activity 4.4 Testing with students</i>
Result N°	<i>R4.4</i>
Description	<i>Descriptive report on the initial DACEM AC testing with students</i>

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1. Executive summary

This report presents the results of a student feedback survey on the DACEM Academic Catalogue platform. Students were invited to test the platform at dacem.eu and complete a structured survey about its homepage, search functions, institution pages, programme pages, course pages, resources and services, and overall ease of use. The analysis is based on 180 valid responses from about 1800 involved students.

Overall, the results are positive. Students rated all main areas of the platform above 4.0 on a 1-5 scale. This indicates that the platform concept, information architecture and core content respond to real user needs. The strongest findings relate to clarity and understandability: 88.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the information on the website is easy to understand.

At the same time, the survey points to clear development priorities. Students want more precise search and filtering options, more complete and up-to-date coverage of universities, programmes and courses, stronger practical mobility information, and technical improvements to search, language selection and mobile usability. These points do not undermine the value of the DACEM platform. Rather, they show what is needed for the platform to move from a successful pilot and demonstration environment to a trusted tool for mobility decision-making.

1.1. Key findings

- 65.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their own institution's academic catalogue is helpful for mobile students, but 23.9% were neutral and 10.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This confirms that catalogue quality remains uneven from the student perspective.
- The DACEM homepage was evaluated positively, with mean scores of 4.20 for organisation, 4.20 for clarity and 4.06 for design.
- Search and results were seen as useful: 78.9% agreed or strongly agreed that the search functions and categories make it easy to find programmes or courses, and the same share agreed or strongly agreed that the results list is helpful.
- Institution, programme, course, and resources/services pages all achieved mean ratings above 4.1, showing consistent approval across the platform rather than isolated satisfaction with one feature.
- The main qualitative improvement themes were search/filtering, technical issues, readability and layout, practical mobility information, data coverage, and data currency.

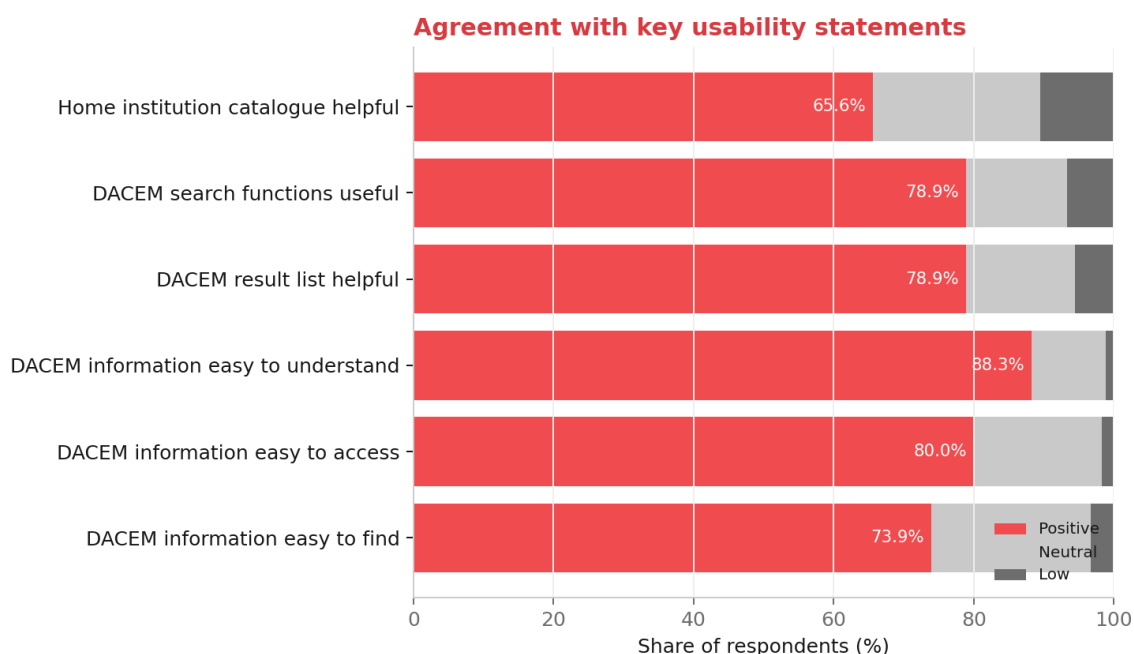


Figure 1. Agreement with key usability statements.

2. Methodology and survey scope

The survey was designed as a user-testing exercise. Students were asked to explore the DACEM Academic Catalogue and then provide feedback through a structured questionnaire. The survey combined closed questions, 1-5 rating scales, agreement statements and open-ended questions. This made it possible to assess both measurable satisfaction and more detailed user needs.

The DACEM platform itself (dacem.eu) is the interpretative framework itself for this report. The platform helps students explore universities, discover programmes and find practical information in one place. The platform also foresees two main user journeys: searching by programme and browsing by institution. The survey questions follow this same logic by asking students to evaluate the homepage, search and results, institutional information, programme pages, course pages, resources and services, and general ease of understanding, access and discovery.

The report combines quantitative analysis with qualitative interpretation. Quantitative figures show how students rated platform areas and statements. Qualitative comments explain why certain areas matter, where students experienced friction, and what improvements would make the platform more useful in real mobility preparation.

2.1. Limitations

The sample should be understood as a feedback sample rather than a statistically representative sample of all European mobile students. Responses were collected through DACEM partners, with a higher concentration of respondents linked to some partner institutions. The platform was also being tested as a demonstration and validation environment, which means that some comments about incomplete content, limited institutional coverage or missing courses should be interpreted in light of the development stage of the platform. However, these comments are still valuable because they identify the conditions that students would expect from a fully operational platform.

3. Platform structure tested by students

The DACEM Academic Catalogue is organised around the student mobility journey. Students can start from the homepage and use “Find a Programme” to search across study opportunities, or browse available institutions first. Both routes are intended to help students compare options and understand whether a programme or institution fits their academic and practical needs.

3.1. The main sections assessed in the survey were the following:

Homepage: First entry point to the platform, including the general message, featured institutions, programme search route, institution browsing route, map and feedback options.

Search and results: Search and filtering functions for programmes and courses, including categories such as field, level, language, country and mobility suitability.

Institutional information: Institution-level information such as description, contacts, mobility information, admission, policies, campuses and organisational units.

Programme pages: Programme-level information such as general data, overview, curriculum, admission, assessment, mobility, practice and careers.

Course pages: Course-level information such as overview, general data, course edition information and other course-related content.

Resources and services: Practical information such as student affairs, facilities, student mobility, university life and extra-academic activities.

This structure matters because academic catalogues are not only repositories of information. For mobile students, they are decision-making tools. Students need to understand what they can study, whether it fits their degree, which language is used, how

many ECTS credits are attached, whether the option is open to mobility students, and which practical conditions may affect their stay.

4. Respondent profile

The survey gathered 180 valid responses. The respondent group included students with different levels of mobility experience, which is useful because the platform is relevant both to students who are already mobile and to those who are still exploring mobility opportunities.

Almost half of respondents (48.9%) were either currently in mobility or had already participated in mobility. A further 40.0% had applied for mobility or considered it without applying. This means that 88.9% of respondents had at least considered mobility, making the sample highly relevant for testing a platform designed to support mobility preparation.

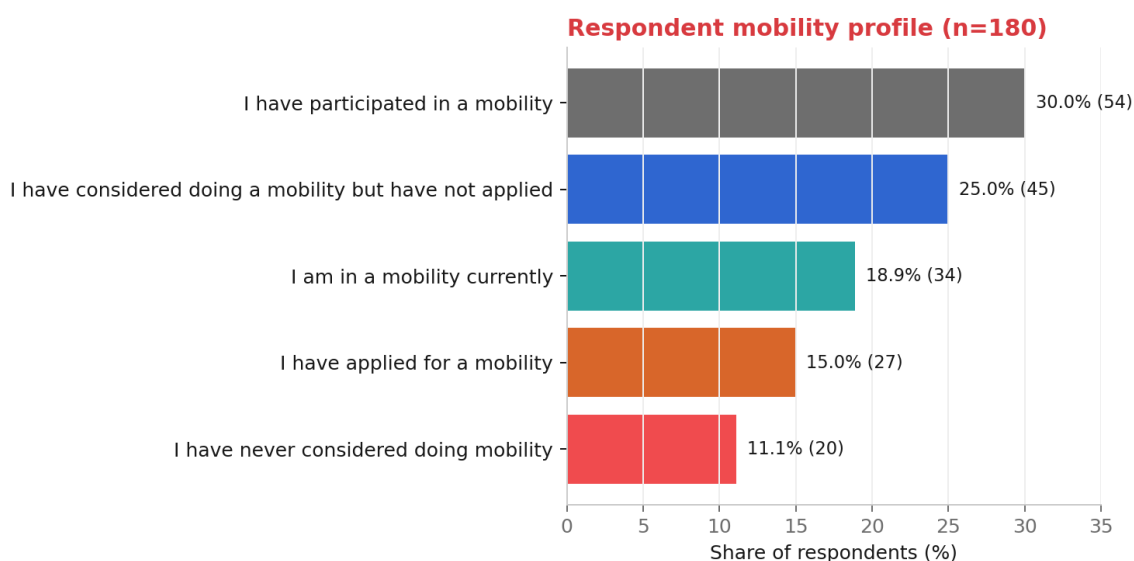


Figure 2. Respondents by mobility experience.

The survey was disseminated through DACEM partners. The strongest sources of responses were University of Vigo, University of Maribor and University of Thessaly. This distribution should be considered when reading the results, as it indicates stronger representation from some partner communities.

Partner	Responses	Share
University of Vigo	70	38.9%

Partner	Responses	Share
University of Maribor	38	21.1%
University of Thessaly	24	13.3%
Erasmus Student Network	13	7.2%
Virtual Campus	10	5.6%
University of Orléans	10	5.6%
Tallinn University	9	5.0%
Charles University	4	2.2%
Other	2	1.1%

Table 1. Source through which respondents heard about DACEM.

5. Main survey findings

This section presents the main quantitative results. The report uses two main indicators: mean score on a 1-5 scale, and the share of positive responses. For 1-5 rating questions, positive responses are scores 4 and 5. For agreement statements, positive responses are "Agree" and "Strongly agree".

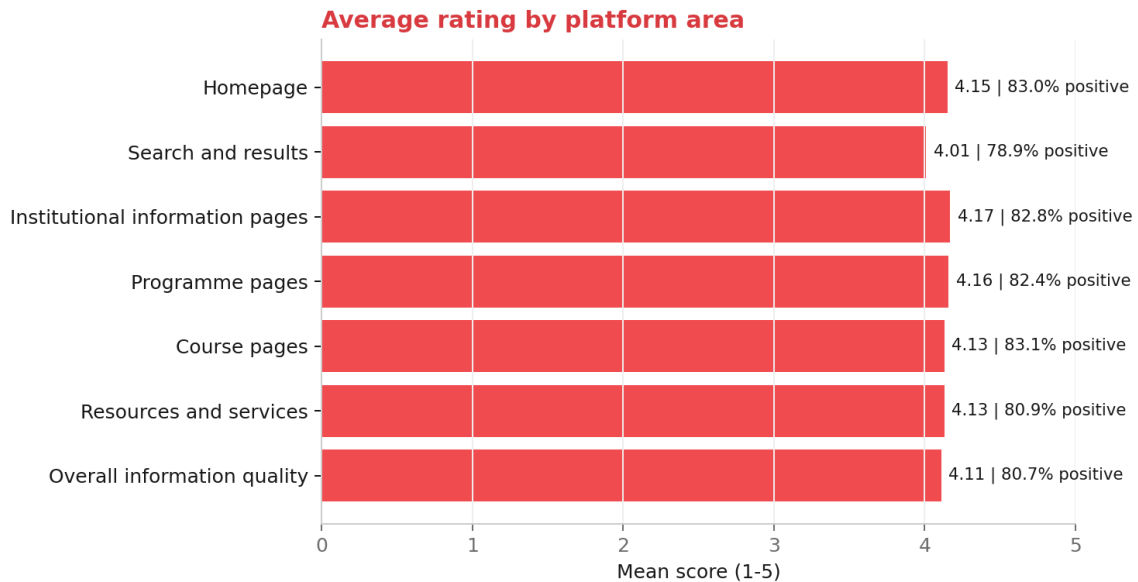


Figure 3. Average rating by main platform area.

5.1. Baseline: students' own institutional catalogues

Before assessing DACEM, students were asked whether the academic catalogue of their own institution is helpful for mobile students. The mean score was 3.80 out of 5. In total, 65.6% agreed or strongly agreed, while 23.9% were neutral and 10.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

This result shows that many students already recognise the value of academic catalogues, but it also confirms that existing catalogues are not uniformly perceived as helpful. A sizable neutral group suggests uncertainty: students may find some information available, but not necessarily complete, timely or easy enough to use for mobility planning. This creates a clear space for DACEM as a platform that can make academic information easier to search, compare and understand across institutions.

5.2. Homepage

The homepage received positive ratings across all three assessed dimensions. Organisation and clarity both scored 4.20 on average, while design scored 4.06. The slightly lower design rating is consistent with several open comments asking for clearer visual hierarchy, shorter text, stronger readability and better screen responsiveness. The implication is that the homepage is understood, but could still become more visually efficient.

Item	Mean	4-5	3	1-2
Homepage organisation	4.2	85.0%	13.3%	1.7%
Homepage clarity	4.2	86.1%	11.1%	2.8%
Homepage design	4.1	77.8%	14.4%	7.8%

Table 2. Homepage ratings.

5.3. Search functions and results

The search component is central to DACEM because students need to move from broad interest to usable academic choices. The survey results show a positive starting point: 78.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that search functions and categories make it easy to find programmes or courses, and 78.9% also agreed or strongly agreed that the list of results is helpful.

However, the qualitative feedback shows that search is also one of the most important areas for improvement. Students asked for additional filters such as ECTS, semester, year of study, campus location, university, faculty, language requirements, timetables and Learning Agreement relevance. Some respondents also reported functional issues with the search bar, sorting, dropdowns and mobile display. In practice, this means that search is not only a usability feature; it directly affects whether students can trust the platform as a decision-making tool.

Item	Mean	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Search functions and categories	4.0	78.9%	14.4%	6.7%
Search results list	4.0	78.9%	15.6%	5.6%

Table 3. Search and results agreement.

5.4. Institutional information pages

Institutional information pages performed strongly, with all assessed sections scoring above 4.0. Contacts and campus information were the strongest areas, both receiving positive ratings from 85.0% of respondents. Mobility, admission and policy sections were also positively assessed, though their slightly lower scores suggest that students may expect more practical and action-oriented detail in these areas.

For students, institutional information helps connect academic choices with real-life mobility planning. A programme may be academically suitable, but the decision also depends on contacts, academic calendar, mobility procedures, campuses, services, language support, housing and transport. The positive ratings indicate that DACEM is on the right track in bringing these elements together, while the open comments show that students want this information to be specific, current and consistent across institutions.

5.5. Programme pages

Programme pages were also rated positively. The general data area scored 4.22, the overview scored 4.19, the curriculum scored 4.14, and the remaining programme content scored 4.10. The general data area was particularly important because it gives students quick access to high-value information such as level, ECTS, language, learning mode and mobility availability.

The findings suggest that students appreciate a clear programme-level summary, but also need enough detail to judge compatibility with their home degree and Learning Agreement. Several comments asked for timetables, language certifications, schedules and clearer course availability. These are not marginal details: they are the information students need before committing to a mobility path.

5.6. Course pages

Course pages were rated consistently well, with the course overview reaching 4.19 and course edition information reaching 4.16. This indicates that students can understand and use the course-level structure. At the same time, the lower score for “the rest of the contents in the course page” suggests that more complex content areas should remain concise, clearly labelled and easy to scan.

Course-level information is essential because students often need to compare individual subjects rather than only full programmes. Course pages should therefore continue prioritising learning outcomes, ECTS, language, assessment, semester availability, timetable information and mobility eligibility.

5.7. Resources and services

The resources and services area had mean scores between 4.09 and 4.18. The student mobility section was the highest rated item in this group, which confirms that respondents value practical support information linked directly to mobility. Facilities, university life and extra-academic activities were also positively assessed, but open comments indicate that students want more detail in areas such as accommodation, cost of living, student associations, clubs, activities and student experiences.

This is strategically important for DACEM. A catalogue platform can become more useful than a traditional course list if it connects academic data with practical mobility information. Students do not only ask “Can I take this course?” They also arguably ask themselves questions like “Can I live there, understand the requirements, get support, and make a confident decision?”

5.8. Overall ease of use and access

The strongest overall result is that 88.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the information is easy to understand. Access was also strong, with 80.0% positive responses. Finding information was the lowest of the three general usability indicators, with 73.9% positive responses.

This pattern is important. It means that once students reach the relevant information, they generally understand it. The main barrier is not the basic clarity of content, but discoverability: students need even better ways to search, filter, navigate, compare and return to relevant information. This reinforces the priority of improving search, navigation and information architecture rather than rewriting the platform from scratch.

Area	Mean score	Positive responses	Low responses
Homepage	4.2	83.0%	4.1%
Search and results	4.0	78.9%	6.1%
Institutional information pages	4.2	82.8%	3.3%
Programme pages	4.2	82.4%	2.6%
Course pages	4.1	83.1%	2.6%

Area	Mean score	Positive responses	Low responses
Resources and services	4.1	80.9%	3.7%
Overall information quality	4.1	80.7%	2.0%

Table 4. Summary of platform area scores.

6. Open feedback and qualitative insights

Open comments were analysed thematically across four open questions: additional search or browsing options, missing information, website errors, and final comments. The qualitative feedback is particularly useful because it shows what students would need in order to rely on DACEM in real mobility planning.

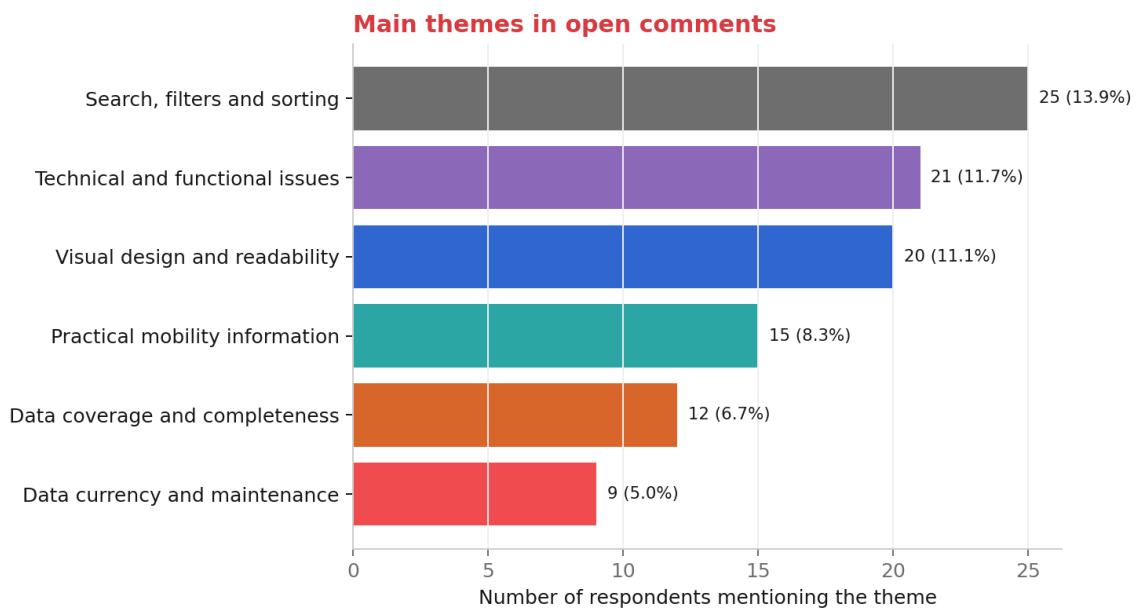


Figure 4. Main themes in open comments.

6.1. Search, filters and sorting

The most frequent improvement area was search and filtering. Students asked for more granular filters, especially by ECTS, semester, year of study, campus location, university, faculty, language requirements and specific mobility conditions. One important point was that students often cannot freely choose any institution; they need to identify institutions and programmes that are actually available through their home university agreements.

The repercussion for the platform is clear: search should progressively move from “finding information” to “finding personally relevant mobility options”. Filters connected to home institution, existing agreements, faculty, level, semester and language would make the platform more decision-oriented.

6.2. Technical and functional issues

Several respondents identified technical issues affecting search, language selection, sorting, links, SSL/security behaviour, mobile display and dropdown overlaps. Even if these issues were not reported by the majority, they are important because they affect trust. A student preparing mobility may abandon a platform quickly if search feels unstable, if a link does not work, or if the mobile interface makes filters difficult to use.

These comments should be treated as actionable quality assurance input. The most urgent fixes relate to search bar behaviour, sorting, mobile responsiveness, language-switching behaviour and validation of links across institution pages.

6.3. Completeness, coverage and updates

Respondents repeatedly noted that the platform would become more valuable if more universities, programmes and courses were added. Some comments also stressed the need for update information, such as showing when content was last checked or updated. This point is central for academic catalogues: the value of the platform depends not only on good structure, but also on content reliability.

A clear timestamp, source indication and update workflow would help students decide whether information can be trusted or whether they need to verify it directly with an institution. This would also support institutions by making responsibility for data maintenance clearer.

6.4. Practical mobility information

Students asked for information that goes beyond academic content, including timetables, documents required for application, housing, residences, cost of living, student associations, testimonies, clubs, sports, transport and campus layout. This confirms the design logic of DACEM: mobility decisions are academic and practical at the same time.

The platform can create added value by connecting programme information with the practical information that students normally have to search for separately. This would reduce uncertainty and make the platform more useful before students contact international offices.

6.5. Readability and layout

Some respondents described the platform as clear and helpful, while others asked for shorter texts, stronger visual hierarchy, clearer subheadings, more readable layout and better screen adaptation. This suggests that content should remain comprehensive but more scannable. Students want enough detail to decide, but not so much unstructured text that key information becomes difficult to find.

7. Overall assessment and implications for the platform

The survey provides a strong validation of the DACEM concept. Students rated the platform positively across all tested areas, and open comments frequently described the idea as useful, helpful and relevant for mobility planning. The platform addresses a real problem: students need academic and practical information to be easier to find, compare and trust across institutions.

The most important conclusion is that DACEM should not be seen only as a catalogue display tool. Students evaluate it as a mobility decision-making environment. This changes the development priorities. A successful platform must combine structured academic data, practical mobility information, reliable search, consistent institutional coverage and visible update mechanisms.

The difference between “easy to understand” and “easy to find” is particularly meaningful. Understanding received very high approval, while findability was lower. This means the platform’s content model is broadly effective, but navigation and discovery should be further refined. Improvements in filtering, search behaviour, internal linking and page layout could therefore have a strong impact on the overall user experience.

Another important implication concerns trust. Students need to know whether data is complete, current and relevant to their mobility possibilities. If a course exists but is not available to mobility students, or if a programme appears on DACEM but is not connected to their home university agreement, students may spend time on options that are not actually feasible. Future development should therefore prioritise not only more data, but more actionable data.

8. Recommendations

Based on the quantitative results and open feedback, the following recommendations should be prioritised for future development and refinement of the DACEM Academic Catalogue platform.

Strengthen search and filtering: Add or improve filters for university, faculty, campus, semester, study year, ECTS, language requirements, available places, mobility eligibility and

existing inter-institutional agreements. Consider a “my home institution” pathway that shows only realistically available mobility options.

Improve technical reliability before wider roll-out: Prioritise fixes for the search bar, sorting, language selection, mobile dropdown behaviour, responsive layout, broken links and certificate/security issues. These are trust-critical for a mobility planning tool.

Expand and standardise content coverage: Increase the number of institutions, programmes and courses, while ensuring that the same core fields are populated consistently. Avoid creating a platform where some institutions look complete while others have empty or uneven sections.

Make data currency visible: Display source and last-update information clearly for programmes, courses and institution pages. Consider showing whether content has been validated by the institution for the current academic year or semester.

Add practical mobility information: Where possible, include timetables, application documents, language certificates, accommodation, cost of living, student services, campus maps, transport, student associations and student experience information.

Improve readability and scannability: Use shorter paragraphs, clearer headings, collapsible sections, summary boxes and sticky side information for key data such as ECTS, language, level and mobility availability.

Introduce user feedback loops: Keep the “Found something wrong?” and feedback functions visible and easy to use. Feedback should feed into a structured correction workflow with institutions and platform administrators.

9. Conclusion

The student survey shows that the DACEM Academic Catalogue platform has strong potential to support student mobility by making academic and practical information easier to access, understand and compare. Students responded positively to the overall structure, homepage, search concept, institution pages, programme pages, course pages and resources/services areas.

The platform’s strongest added value is its ability to connect different layers of mobility information in one place. Instead of forcing students to search across disconnected institutional websites, PDFs and contact points, DACEM can provide a more coherent route from initial interest to informed decision-making.



Based on the responses data, the next development stage should focus on reliability, coverage and actionability. Students do not only need information; they need information that is complete, current, searchable, relevant to their mobility possibilities and easy to use on different devices. Addressing these points would strengthen DACEM's role as a practical mobility support tool and contribute to more transparent, student-centred academic catalogues across Europe.



10. Annex A. Detailed survey tables

This annex provides more detailed quantitative summaries of the main platform sections. Percentages are calculated out of all valid responses for each item.

10.1. Institutional information page items

Item	Mean	4-5/Agree	3/Neutral	1-2/Disagree
Description section	4.2	83.9%	12.8%	3.3%
Contact section	4.2	85.0%	12.2%	2.8%
Mobility section	4.1	81.7%	15.6%	2.8%
Admission section	4.2	80.6%	16.1%	3.3%
Policies section	4.1	81.1%	14.4%	4.4%
Campuses section and page	4.2	85.0%	12.8%	2.2%
Organisational units section and page	4.1	82.2%	13.9%	3.9%

10.2. Programme page items

Item	Mean	4-5/Agree	3/Neutral	1-2/Disagree
Programme general data	4.2	85.0%	13.3%	1.7%
Programme overview	4.2	81.7%	16.7%	1.7%
Curriculum section	4.1	82.8%	13.3%	3.9%

Item	Mean	4-5/Agree	3/Neutral	1-2/Disagree
Other programme content	4.1	80.0%	16.7%	3.3%

10.3. Course page items

Item	Mean	4-5/Agree	3/Neutral	1-2/Disagree
Course overview	4.2	86.1%	11.7%	2.2%
Course general data	4.1	81.1%	15.0%	3.9%
Course edition information	4.2	83.3%	14.4%	2.2%
Other course content	4.1	81.7%	16.1%	2.2%

10.4. Resources and services items

Item	Mean	4-5/Agree	3/Neutral	1-2/Disagree
Students affairs section	4.1	82.2%	13.3%	4.4%
Facilities section	4.1	77.8%	18.3%	3.9%
Students mobility section	4.2	83.9%	12.2%	3.9%
University life section	4.1	78.9%	18.9%	2.2%
Extra-academic activities section	4.1	81.7%	14.4%	3.9%

10.5. Overall information quality items

Item	Mean	4-5/Agree	3/Neutral	1-2/Disagree
Information easy to understand	4.2	88.3%	10.6%	1.1%
Information easy to access	4.1	80.0%	18.3%	1.7%
Information easy to find	4.0	73.9%	22.8%	3.3%

11. Annex B. Interpretation notes and raw data

The open feedback was interpreted thematically. Some comments were positive, some identified missing information, and others reported technical or functional issues. The same respondent could mention more than one theme, so qualitative theme counts should not be summed as if they were mutually exclusive categories.

The report treats comments about incomplete data as both a limitation and a useful finding. Since the platform was tested in a project and validation context, limited coverage is expected. However, students' reactions show that future trust in the platform will depend heavily on institutional coverage, quality assurance and visible update mechanisms.

The full raw respondents' data can be found at:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1o_wrYCJuOzoILFJ2vMbIhKckSp2nFwHn/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=107887405114758962848&rtpof=true&sd=true