IT SKILLS PATHWAY

LEVEL THREE

LEVEL TWO

LEVEL ONE

ENTRY

IT Skills for........ Undergraduates

NHS

Judy Jenkins is a Lecturer in Health Informatics in the College of Human and Health Sciences at Swansea University. In this case study, she describes how the NHS IT Skills Pathway has assisted her students as well as the organisation she works for.

How did you hear about the IT skills development programme and the products that it delivers?

The College of Human and Health Sciences has long had a history of offering on site IT skills training for vocational courses. Historically, we used to offer the European Computer Driving Licence, (with the support of the Welsh Government), but it became apparent that the funding for this particular qualification could not be sustained or renewed. A colleague within the health informatics arena suggested that we approach the national IT skills development team to see if their programme would be something that Swansea University could become involved in, and help deliver. Agreement was reached that the College would be able to offer the IT Skills Pathway to students on the same basis as institutions in England. This was important to us as an educational body as it meant that our students, a significant number of whom will go on to work in the NHS in England, are on a par with others already within the service.

Why did you choose to access and deliver products?

After reading all of the information provided by the team about the pathway, it seemed a right fit for us as an organisation. The online nature of the courseware, plus the web based learning and assessment packages make it an ideal method of delivering skills training to large numbers of students, without the need for a substantial number of teaching staff.

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How do you deliver them?

The Entry Level materials are a compulsory component in several of our undergraduate degree schemes. For these students, sessions are timetabled and attendance is mandatory. For our nursing students, for whom it is not compulsory, but is deemed necessary, then the sessions are much more informal, with a weekly drop in session timetabled. Students are able to attend on an ad hoc basis, and browse the courseware or attempt the assessments.

For more information about the NHS IT Skills Pathway, please visit our website at:

http://www.itskills.nhs.uk

Alternatively you can email us at:

it.skills@nhs.net

What are the benefits that have been achieved for learners as a result of using them?

Because the courseware and assessments are geared towards the NHS, it has helped establish the importance of how IT is used within a clinical setting. It has also made students realise that the NHS is taking IT skills training seriously by offering this qualification. Plus, it's more skills that have been gained in an academic environment, which is always a bonus for students, especially when it comes around to pursuing a career when they graduate. In today's competitive job market, it can make all the difference.

How do you intend to use the products in the future?

We will certainly continue to use the products that are part of the IT Skills pathway and in particular the Entry Level courseware as a means of establishing learning benchmarks for students.

What would be your advice to new centres that are thinking of delivering the products?

For us as an organisation, accessing the NHS IT Skills Pathway has solved a multitude of problems (both potential and actual) in one single swoop. Students are taking and making active decisions about how and where they study, bringing freedom of choice to them, and freedom for teaching staff away from the classroom environment.

I would strongly recommend and urge any new centres to at least give it a whirl – the benefits are enormous on so many levels, and can help with staff development, as well as minimising the need for hosts of support staff.

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DID YOU KNOW?

In a survey of over 3500 Learners that undertake Microsoft Office Skills Training:

- 97% of respondents state that what they have learned will help them with their day to day tasks
- 91% stated that partaking in the programme has increased their productivity in the workplace
- 99% would recommend the programme to their colleagues

The NHS IT Skills Pathway covers the full range of competencies for users of IT, from basic through to advanced levels. It has been developed in partnership with the NHS to provide an officially recognised route of learning and certification for the whole workforce.

Its purpose is to encourage everyone working within the NHS to review their current IT skills and knowledge against the national standards, determine what their skill gaps are and then identify their future training requirements based on the products that are available.

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