University Case Study

IT SKILLS PATHWAY

LEVEL THREE
LEVEL TWO
LEVEL ONE
ENTRY

NHS

Using the NHS IT Skills Pathway in Health and Social Care Education

A year ago, the IT Skills Development Team at DH Informatics contacted a large number of Universities in the UK to let them know about the NHS IT Skills Pathway. The letter detailed how the Pathway could assist their health and social care students obtain the recognised standard for IT skills that would prepare them for work in the healthcare sector.

This case study highlights the experiences of a few of the universities that have started to implement the IT Skills Pathway in their curricula and the subsequent benefits that have been realised.

Implementing the Pathway

Each of the universities has gone about implementing the Pathway into their curricula in different ways.

Using their existing Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Liverpool have broken down the entry level course into bite size chunks and allocated one section for 9-10 weeks of the students first term.

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Teesside have used Blackboard to deploy customised courses with names appropriate to the learners that will undertake the courses such as "IT skills for Dentistry". Barbara described this as *"….a gentle way to roll out the courses. We want the IT to be an enabler for their work, not to be seen as the end result in itself"* Using customised courses also means that they can more easily track student's progress by their university course.

Using a Moodle site, Portsmouth have been able to provide links to all of the courses in one place and allowed students to self register for the appropriate courses. Jason explained *"We've also integrated the Pathway into existing course units. For example, where a course already had a unit about IT and communications then we've replaced the IT with the Pathway. In other cases we've made it part of the unit e.g. Study Skills"*

About the Universities

Dr Stuart Mackay is a senior lecturer in the Directorate of Medical Imaging and Radiotherapy at the University of Liverpool. So far, they have around 80 students utilising the IT Skills Pathway.

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Jason Oakley, Emma Coppins and Sarah Cooper are from the University of Portsmouth Science Faculty and School of Health Sciences and Social Work. They have made the IT Skills Pathway available to a wide range of courses and students with 1st year students their priority.

John Waine and Barbara Wilford are from Teesside University. They have over 250 students from a variety of health and social care courses accessing the training.

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.

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