

Hyfforddiant Mon Training

Area	e-testing and e-portfolios
Programmes supported qualifications: retail and computers	e-Testing currently operates for the following <ul style="list-style-type: none">• technical certificates for hospitality and catering, customer service• basic skills diagnostics on desktop and laptop• European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)
Awarding bodies glazing), EAL	City & Guilds, EDI/Goal, GQA (glass and
Number of learners covered by this case study	6 catering and hospitality (e-testing)
Contact	Alan Jones
Background	<p>Hyfforddiant Mon Training is a DCELLS-approved work-based learning provider that operates under the umbrella of the Isle of Anglesey County Council. Almost all students recruited are placed/employed within industry, commerce and business, or within the local authority.</p> <p>The objectives of its pilot were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide initial feedback on the guide related to its use for the centre (desk research)• provide an improved e-testing process for six catering and hospitality learners• use the guide to help select a suitable e-portfolio system. <p>Use of the guide</p> <p>As Hyfforddiant Mon has been operating an e-testing facility for the last three years, the guide helped the centre to plug the gaps in its existing strategy. It found that the e-testing role matrix was particularly useful.</p> <p>The guide was also used to improve on existing systems and structures of the team and the centre is still in the process of adopting most of the guide's suggestions.</p>

Commitment to e-testing

Hyfforddiant Mon has made further financial commitments to e-testing by providing internet access within other training rooms at its centre, which will enable further capability for e-testing.

For catering and hospitality learners, laptops are being provided to staff to enable them to visit work placements with a view of carrying out online e-testing at the place of work. Careful planning will be needed to take into account requirements for examination conditions and the guide will help with this.

Selecting an e-portfolio

For the pilot the administration/IT team were asked to look at and use an e-portfolio system, as this team were best placed to determine which system would be the best for their use.

At present, Hyfforddiant Mon is still at the stage of deciding which e-portfolio to pilot. To help decide which system to select, the centre will be using the functionality checklist in annex A6. The cost of the systems will also be taken into account.

Due to the relatively short interval of time of the pilot period the centre has not moved as far forward as it would have liked. However, three systems have been demonstrated. Two were relevant for the purpose but the third was not. Before making a final decision, the centre wants to look at more systems.

This careful approach is partly due to the need to consider the council's procurement rules if purchasing above a certain limit. Costs will have a major influence on choice. One quote so far is for £3,500 for 20 users, which would have major implications in terms of ongoing costs, so the decision is not to be made lightly. Hyfforddiant Mon says, 'From experience we know that this sort of decision can be costly and time-consuming if we get it "wrong".'

In the meantime, this has prompted the centre to develop a system devised in-house, which it admits is far more basic and offers at the moment a bank of resources. However, it gets Hyfforddiant Mon started down the e-portfolio route.

Key issues encountered to date

1. Convincing staff that e-assessment is better than conventional systems has been a challenge. Current achievement rates have increased but other factors as well as e-assessment may have contributed to this.
2. Staff development issues in learning how to use new software systems and new technological advances are proving costly. It is hoped, though, that this investment will pay dividends in the returns that the centre and learners will receive as a result of e-testing.

Staff who have been identified as having a significant role in e-assessment are well-qualified and have considerable experience. These members of staff attend forums and events linked with e-learning. The centre looks to these people to provide training and assistance for other members of staff.

Feedback on the guide

Hyfforddiant Mon says that the guide is helping with decisions on matters which need to be addressed, and it believes that without the guide less informed decisions might have been made. However, the centre also feels that the guide is heavily weighted towards larger organisations, and that it would be helpful if a condensed/summarised version for smaller organisations could be developed.

Conclusions/next steps

The centre is comfortable that e-testing has been appropriate for its uses. It hopes to expand this facility within the organisation to cover other vocational areas.

In the main, e-testing has been used for MCQ. This is seen as an excellent way to carry out this kind of assessment as the results are fed back quickly. The centre has also indicated that it would like to increase its e-testing provision steadily in future years.

In relation to e-portfolios Hyfforddiant Mon needs to conduct more research to determine which system suits its needs best. It recommends the guide to others as an “excellent” resource that will give providers the questions they need to ask before they commit to any system.