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Aptem at work —
University Centre Quayside

Case study —
Using Aptem Skills for remote learning in University Centre Quayside

University Centre Quayside (UCQ) is a higher education institute (HEI) delivering vocational training across further and higher education.

UCQ has two core businesses. One is concerned with work-based higher education, such as degree apprenticeships. The other is within the further education sector, delivering adult education courses to both employed and unemployed learners. Currently, UCQ uses Aptem Skills — designed specifically for adult education learners — for the latter group.

UCQ's degree, part of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship is delivered in partnership with the Open University. However, following a successful registration with the Office for Students, UCQ will be applying for degree awarding powers.

Why choose Aptem?

UCQ came to Aptem, says Kelly Pattison, Quality Manager at UCQ, because of the constraints imposed by the UK's pandemic-response lockdown. Previously students on short-term Adult Education Budget skills courses (anything from two to seven weeks) would complete their portfolios in class. They hadn't looked at ePortfolios for these students. When lockdown came, and remote delivery became essential, they had to find a way to enrol and engage learners. Says Kelly:

"From April 2020, so quite early on, we began looking at what solutions there were available on the market for us to onboard students remotely and get electronic signatures. We never had to do this previously in further education because they were short programmes in the classroom. So that was how we approached Aptem and how we found you. It was to solve the problem of just how we get back to engaging with students again and how can we deliver learning to the new students remotely."

Transforming learning delivery

UCQ uses the onboarding wizard to enrol learners. UCQ's Aptem Skills also hosts detailed learning plans for learners and has electronic assessments set up in assets. Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is also undertaken on Aptem. As Kelly explains, now they have a platform to onboard, deliver online learning and do compliance, UCQ are hoping this will give them sustainable course delivery in the future:

"We are hoping to use Aptem on an ongoing basis once we are back in a classroom. It means learners could do their assessments on tablets or laptops in a classroom rather than going back to paper workbooks."

"It's 'future-proofing' the programmes we run to make sure that if there are any problems then we can finish those off and no student

achievement has to be disrupted. We don't know how long this situation is going to last. But you know what happened in Leicester where they can, with a couple of days' notice, say you have to stop and do things differently again. So yes, it does give us that extra flexibility."

However, it's not just about pandemic management. UCQ have found they can also deliver courses to employed learners because Aptem provides the flexibility to deliver remotely and flexibly. *"In this hybrid model,"* says Kelly, *"they can do it remotely. It means that someone who's working during the day could pick up and get the qualification with us on an evening or a weekend in a way that they wouldn't have been able to engage before. That is quite interesting for us."*

The increased flexibility, says Kelly, means that people with children or disabilities have better access, or those who get a job halfway through a course can complete.

Having Aptem has allowed UCQ to reimagine how it delivers teaching, using many more remote options such as resources and Teams meetings. UCQ intends to provide at least one programme a month online and remotely into the near future:

"We are keeping flexibility and Aptem has just given us more options. If we want to do something online, we've got the facility to do it now. When we first went into lockdown, we didn't have any of those systems set up to enable us to do it because we had been so paper-based."

"We are keeping flexibility and Aptem has just given us more options."

Kelly Pattison
Quality Manager at UCQ

Administration, compliance and data

Aptem also helps the UCQ team to keep on top of administration. As Kelly puts it:

"Onboarding's working well, making sure that everyone's got everything that they need. One of the things that is great about Aptem is that information doesn't have to be double entered on Aptem and then on to our MIS system PICS, so that's a nice bonus. We are also using Aptem trackers to send messages to tutors and to inform the administrator about completions and job outcomes, which keeps all contact about students in one place.

"As I said previously, we've moved to ePortfolios rather than paper ones, allowing student portfolios to be visible at all times. This capability means we can do ongoing quality audits. We can also conduct ad hoc inspections of tutor feedback, ensuring it is robust and high quality."

The kind of data that Aptem generates allows student progress to be tracked more effectively:

"Previously, tracking was just the day-to-day opinion of the tutor about how learners were doing and it was hard to verify. But now I can go in and say to the tutor, 'this student has only done three assessments. What's going on?'. And I can also say, 'you haven't contacted that student for a couple of days. What's going on there?'. So it is really useful."

"One of the things that is great about Aptem is that information doesn't have to be double entered on Aptem and then on to our MIS system PICS."

Kelly Pattison
Quality Manager at

Customer service

Kelly says that UCQ's experience of implementation and customer service has been really positive:

"Viki Ivan, our implementation consultant, was so helpful and responsive. I wasn't involved in the Aptem implementation project for the first couple of weeks because I was focused on getting the resources finalised and ready to go. I joined it a couple of weeks in and then, after that, I became the go-to person for our team on Aptem issues.

"I sent numerous emails to Viki, and she would just come onto a Teams meeting with me and help me resolve it. So yes, really responsive, and she solved those early issues for us. And whenever I send a query through, I get responses back really quickly, and it solves the problem for us."

A personal recommendation

UCQ is happy to recommend Aptem to other providers looking for an online onboarding platform and ePortfolio system:

"I've worked with other ePortfolios in other companies and Aptem is simple and intuitive to use. We have had similar feedback from learners. It's working brilliantly."

"Whenever I send a query through, I get responses back really quickly, and it solves the problem for us."

Kelly Pattison
Quality Manager at UCQ

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Find out how Aptem can help you with all aspects of AEB, traineeship and apprenticeship delivery.

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or phone us on **020 7870 1000**

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