

North West Regional College

Area	e-portfolios
Programmes supported	NVQ level 3 in Early Years Care and Education NVQ level 3 in Care
Awarding body	City & Guilds
Number of learners covered by this case study	30
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Background

North West Regional College is one of the six area-based Further Education colleges in Northern Ireland.

The initial e-assessment developments have been led by the caring team within the caring, hairdressing and beauty therapy department in the college. The caring team offer a range of full- and part-time care programmes to a range of learners who are based across a wide geographical area, covering most of the north-west of Northern Ireland and Donegal in the Republic of Ireland. Many of the NVQ part-time learners are in full-time, shift-based employment with small caring sector organisations.

The team has recognised for some time that to enable a more flexible approach to accessing the NVQs, they need to improve the use of technology. They decided to work initially with two groups, both taking City & Guilds NVQ level 3 Early Years Care and education and Care respectively.

How they started

The team felt that the use of an e-portfolio system would encourage learners to achieve their programmes. They wanted to use an e-portfolio system that would enable learners, assessors and tutors to manage their NVQ portfolios electronically and, where necessary, allow the portfolio to be accessed remotely and at times best suited to the working patterns of the learners. At the same time, the team also wanted to develop innovative ways of assessing these programmes and considered that this would be possible using an e-portfolio system. The vision of how both learners and staff would use and benefit from the system was an important element in driving the project forward.

The team brought their awarding body into the project at a very early stage and kept senior management updated of progress and decisions to ensure that the project was fully informed both strategically and operationally. They explored many options and decided to use Learning Assistant eportfolio system.

Issues

The main issue that the team had to address was that of finding support, either internally or externally, with the necessary experience and expertise to ensure they implemented their e-assessment plans effectively.

The college worked with the support of the Ofqual e-assessment team using the efutures website for guidance to gain an understanding of what was needed if they were to successfully introduce an e-portfolio system.

Progress

To date NWRC have introduced their eportfolio system across a number of NVQ programmes in the Care depart including the Assessor and Verifier awards. The college is keen to roll out e-assessment and the use of eportfolios across other departments and qualifications. Feedback from management, tutors learners and administrators has all been very positive.