New College Durham: Interactive Induction Programme

Summary

The ILT team at New College Durham designed and developed an interactive Induction Programme which includes all of the resources that staff need to access and present to students on Welcome Day and during Induction.

The Induction Programme contains a video of the Principal’s Welcome speech, handbooks, checklists, Health & Safety videos and more; all resources have been made available to staff and students through the College’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Blackboard.

Comments from induction

Any other ideas, comments or feedback?

The speech by the Principal was commented on by students as being directed towards younger students - they felt it wasn’t really geared towards the mature student.

It was extremely useful to have all information and documents needed in one place and also knowing it was the correct documentation to use.

I am very new to all the Induction process etc. - so this has helped me greatly and also I received some good verbal comments from students.

I think it is fantastic, easy to use, everything is clear - absolutely brilliant - well done to you all x

Using the online docs on the mac there was a problem entering text. I have printed them out and students are filling in paper based versions, which will require scanning at a later date.

Good to see something so easy to use.
About New College Durham

New College Durham is the largest provider of Further and Higher Education in County Durham and was awarded Beacon status in 2010.

The challenge

The Information and Learning Technology (ILT) team wanted to improve the induction process for both staff and learners.

The induction materials, such as student handbooks and checklists, were held in different places; on the shared drive, intranet and the VLE, which made locating the materials time consuming. Some of the materials used by tutors were out-of-date and most were paper-based, which was environmentally unfriendly and learners often misplaced the hand outs provided.

The ILT team decided to develop an interactive, college-wide induction programme which would be available through the VLE. This would:

- Make the induction process easier and more efficient for staff.
- Increase learners’ engagement.

Ensure the induction process is uniform and up-to-date.

The activity

To develop the new package, the ILT team spoke to tutors and Heads of Schools, asking them what information they thought should be included in the Induction Programme and collected and updated old induction materials. The team also created many new online tools and resources:

- The team created an interactive map using Adobe Captivate and filmed the library staff using a FlipCam.
- Captivate was also used to create some screen capture style tutorials such as “How to Create an Email Address”.
- The eBook versions of all the guides and handbooks were created using a program called Flash Catalog.
- The Health & Safety and Safeguarding resources were developed as a mixture of interactive PowerPoints and Blackboard tests.
• The Induction Checklist and Student Agreements were all created in Microsoft Word using the Developer tab to create interactive forms.

The outcomes

The new interactive Induction Programme was ready by the start of the new academic year and it includes:

• A video of the Principal’s welcome speech, which is also available in sign language.

• Student handbooks in e-book format.

• Videos and podcasts, many produced by learners, including a Health and Safety video and an Alcohol misuse video.

• An interactive map of the library

• A Prezi presentation of College facilities including restaurant opening times and how to make an appointment at the College’s Hair and Beauty salon.

• Interactive quizzes on Health and Safety and Alcohol and Drugs use.

• Numerous guides for tutors and students eg on how to use the VLE, Edutext tool in Blackboard and how to set up email accounts (for example in hotmail or yahoo).

• A PowerPoint presentation with music, quotes and success stories of former students of New College Durham which keeps new learners entertained while waiting for their induction to start.

• Interactive Microsoft word forms developed as checklists for Learner Agreement & Induction checklist enabling electronic storage of previously paper documents.

All students were automatically enrolled on the Induction Package to ensure any delays in course enrolment didn’t prevent instant access. Tutors were also trained by the ILT team to add a link on their course to the Induction Package, giving enrolled student’s access directly through their course.

The impact

At the start of the new academic year all students received their induction supported by the new Programme and the programme has received very good feedback from tutors. It was top of the leader board of ‘most used’ Blackboard course for weeks.

The ILT team surveyed the lecturers and students about the new package and asked for feedback. The feedback was 100% positive and the ILT team has taken ideas from the staff onboard and incorporated them in the new version for next year. The Induction Programme has made a big difference to the Induction process:

• All learners, including late starters, receive the same induction, it is now a uniform and consistent process.
• It has saved lecturers’ time. They don’t each have to prepare their own Induction Programme and finding the different handbooks and checklists.

• It is more environmentally friendly; all parts of the Programme are online. In the past, lecturers would find the paper handouts on the drive of the college!

• The new Programme is interactive which makes it more engaging for learners.

• It showcases how technology can be used and inspires lecturers on how they can use it in their own lessons.

• The new Programme is easy to find and available at any time for learners and staff.

• It contains the most up-to-date information available.

A tutor commented: “It was extremely useful to have all information and documents needed in one place and also knowing it was the correct documentation to use”.

Another said: “I am very new to all the induction process etc. - so this has helped me greatly and also I received some good verbal comments from students”.

Tip:

To create a similar resource, the ILT team at New College Durham advises working closely together with the IT team and cross college departments, as well as senior management.

Useful links

New College Durham

Jisc RSC Northern

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