



Top UK university develops IT staff with Lynda.com

Durham University is a prestigious institute of higher education, consistently ranking among the top 10 in the United Kingdom. Founded in 1832 and located in Durham in northeast England, the university has more than 17,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Challenge: Prepare employees for key certification

Like most public sector organisations, Durham University seeks to maximise its investments and get the most from its annual budgets. Within the Computing and Information Services Department, IT leadership sought to make 200 staff members more technically competent—and to prepare them all for ITIL® Foundation certification, an industry standard for IT services management and delivery.

“We wanted to raise the standards of how we provide support, and we wanted to change the mindset and attitude of the staff, to make them realise that the small parts they play have a great role in the much bigger picture of organisational success,” said Crispin Bloomfield, Durham IT Business Partner for Education.

Sending employees offsite for IT training proved too costly and complicated. The IT department needed a cost-effective and more efficient way to provide expert-led instruction and accomplish its ambitious goals.

Solution: Lynda.com from LinkedIn

Impressed with its vast on-demand, video-based instructional library, Durham IT leaders chose Lynda.com from LinkedIn for department-wide learning after a one-month pilot resulted in user engagement that Bloomfield described as “tremendous.” He added that Lynda.com is cutting edge, easy to use, and constantly updated.

“Lynda.com is great because it lets users learn anytime, anywhere,” Durham CIO Paul Featherstone said. “I see this form of digital learning as core to institutional success as we move forward.”

Lynda.com provides a wide range of instruction on topics central to the ITIL exam and IT services in general—covering help desk strategies, operating systems, network administration, security, and more.

The IT department combines Lynda.com instruction with onsite, in-person training sessions in a blended learning approach designed to get staff up to speed quickly. Ten hours of self-paced learning organised into a



Challenge

- Wanted to maximise IT staff training budget
- Needed to prepare all 200 IT employees for a key industry certification
- Sought cutting-edge, convenient learning

Solution

- Provides dozens of IT courses and bite-size video tutorials
- Delivers expert-led content in an easy-to-use, cloud-based format
- Lets learners access training—anytime, anywhere, on any device
- Offers a wide range of analytics for measuring success

Result

- Certified IT staff grew by 20% in three months following Lynda.com rollout
- 100% of employees who took certification exam passed
- IT department on track to train and certify all employees in one year
- University expected to save more than £20,000 in certification training costs
- Learning is more accessible and convenient

custom Lynda.com playlist assigned to employees precedes a one-day “cram and exam” session of in-person intensive review followed by the ITIL certification test.

To drive adoption of Lynda.com, the IT department has promoted the service by word of mouth, with email announcements, and by carving out time for employees to log in and get started.

Result: High scores, lower costs

Using Lynda.com, the proportion of Durham IT department staff with ITIL certification grew from 10% to 30% in only three months. And the department was on track to train and certify 100% of employees within one year.

In addition, “We’ve had a 100% ITIL certification pass rate using our innovative approach, with some staff getting 100% on the exam,” Bloomfield said.

The budget ramifications are dramatic. By incorporating Lynda.com, the IT department expected to save more than £20,000 in ITIL certification training costs in a year.

“And that’s not including any of the other training you might want to do,” Bloomfield said. “The impact and benefits of Lynda.com were immediate and obvious. It’s been transformational. The value is terrific. We’re getting staff confident in using digital learning resources, and they have access to all of the Lynda.com content, so the breadth of development we can support is huge.”

IT Service Desk Apprentice Jack Ross uses Lynda.com to develop customer service and technical skills.

“Lynda.com increases my knowledge,” Ross said. “The customer service videos help me understand things from our end users’ points of view, giving me insights into how they’re feeling.”

Using Lynda.com analytics and robust reporting, the IT department checks user data including individual course completions to identify employees who are ready for that final “cram and exam” session of in-person training followed by the ITIL test.

The old model of training employees offsite is inconvenient, Bloomfield said, noting they often have to drive and park, take a train, then walk to their destination. “It’s a long day. And it’s a one-off opportunity. If you miss it, you have to wait until next year.”

But with Lynda.com, employees can learn when and where they want. Most view Lynda.com content on their mobile devices in addition to desktop computers. The IT department encourages staff to explore any topic covered by Lynda.com, not just IT skills courses, which drives even more budgetary value.

“Lynda.com has become quite a regular lunchtime habit for people,” Bloomfield said. “Sometimes it’s work related. Sometimes it’s personal. They’re engaging in online learning, becoming comfortable and familiar with it. That’s the important thing for us.”

With Lynda.com, it’s easy to revisit any topic, Bloomfield said. “You can do that at any time, so you’ve got that longevity of the resource.”

Following its success with the Durham IT team, the leaders of other departments at the university appeared ready to embrace Lynda.com, Bloomfield said. “They’ve asked, ‘How can we get this for our staff?’ My interest at an institutional level is now trying to grow this. We’re getting a really good return on our investment.”

“The impact and benefits of Lynda.com were immediate and obvious. It’s been transformational. It’s allowing us to drive great value from our investment, and to realise strategic goals.”



Crispin Bloomfield
IT Business Partner for Education