

## Case Study: SkilSure

**Centre:** Adult Education Service, Coventry City Council

**Qualification:** ITQ

**E-portfolio:** SkilSure

Elaine Agnew, ICT Programme Manager, talks to us about successfully implementing an e-portfolio.

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"Adult education is run out of many venues across the city with IT suites in over 20 different locations making the collection and storage of paper portfolios for 'I'ving' and 'E'ving' more difficult. When we started to run ITQ three years ago with a new team we wanted an electronic solution.

For the first two years we used our own VLE where we could, but a small part of the portfolio still had to be done on paper. Our VLE just couldn't deliver everything that we needed, mainly automatically tracking evidence against the standards. One big issue was we couldn't amend online, we had to download and upload again every time. The candidate numbers were growing and we needed to move on. We knew what we needed - more flexibility. Plus we really wanted to stop using paper portfolios altogether.

We started to look carefully at e-portfolios. We didn't choose SkilSure for its looks but it seemed they had what we needed, all in one place. It was essential that City & Guilds endorsed the product and that there was a commitment there. We could see that perhaps eventually our E'ving may be carried out remotely.

If a change or enhancement to the product can benefit other centres then SkilSure are keen to introduce it. They've been excellent. All of the ITQ assessors have given them lots of feedback on developing and fine tuning the system and I think we've had quite an impact. For example, we asked for the comment facility to be changed so that there was an auditable trail of any comments made by the team or candidates against evidence. I think the product has developed even more than SkilSure originally intended. It's much more than an e-portfolio now; it really manages the whole ITQ qualification. It's a really good product.

There's a credit calculator tool. When we input a new candidate SkilSure tells us how many credits the learner can gain towards the award, certificate or diploma. It helps us keep an eye on progress. We can easily build units they've already obtained into the plan of learning and we put their scanned certificates into the e-portfolios as evidence. We also use the online resource area for workbooks and other materials. All candidates can access this area at any time, allowing them to continue to learn outside of the class.

# Case Study

It offers real accessibility for our learners, assessors and IVs. Everyone can access remotely from wherever they are, no-one has to carry portfolios and so travelling time is reduced. As we pay assessors their travel time this has been a cost-saving too. This means staff can be more efficient and flexible with less diary planning well in advance.

As a manager I use it to have an overview of all assessors, making sure that candidates are on target to achieve. I can clearly see their progress via a colour-coded screen. It's very efficient as both the assessor and myself can log on to view and discuss anything at the same time. It's a very good tool for communication.

We have 143 ITQ learners using it now. We were a bit skeptical about level 1 learners initially but they all take it in their stride. They are happier than with paper based as they can progress at whatever speed they want and they do use it at home. You see who is accessing and who isn't so you can easily identify which learners may need a bit of extra support.

Our key driver has always been accessibility for our learners but it is also saving us time and ultimately money. As a City Council we also have an agenda to reduce paper usage. We are really contributing to reducing that wastage. It's the way to go.

We want to bring the same benefits to all staff and candidates within Adult Education. Every NVQ area here is either using or piloting SkilSure this year - Business Admin, Advice & Guidance, CCLD & STLS. They've seen what we've done with it and there's real interest.

Our advice for centres is have a trial first. We asked for a logon on for trial candidates IVs and assessors. We played with it for two weeks - uploading work and doing dummy runs with the real system. We had a half-day training and then myself and a colleague trained the assessors, in stages, with the basics first. There's a lot of functionality on there so just start with the essentials which are straightforward. They found it easy to use. It's important they are also familiar with the screens and actions the candidate needs to use. Once they see the benefits themselves they get hooked."

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SkilSure is available as a bundle-deal with Customer Service, Business Administration and ITQ registration. It is also available separately with these qualifications.