

Set-up and implementation plan

Skills4studycampus can be used in a variety of ways to meet a range of learning needs. This implementation plan illustrates the set-up choice, roll-out plan, initial experiences and planned next steps for the University of Portsmouth (skills4studycampus subscribers since July 2010).

Background:

The University of Portsmouth subscribed to skills4studycampus in July 2010. The resource was integrated with an existing online environment maintained by the Academic Skills Unit within the Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement. Skills4studycampus is available to all 22,000 students at the University of Portsmouth including their 3,000 international students.

Purchasing skills4studycampus:

Skills4studycampus was purchased by the Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement using HEFCE modernisation funding.

Access:

The University initially chose to access skills4studycampus via Blackboard Vista authentication. Following a change of Virtual Learning Environment they now use Moodle authentication, which allows students (using their pre-existing usernames and passwords) to make use of single sign-on to access Moodle and skills4studycampus, both on and off campus.

Roll-out plan:

skills4studycampus was rolled out towards the end of the 2010 academic year, and involved the Technology Enhanced Learning team, Online Course Developers and skills4studycampus champions in each of the five faculties. One of the challenges that the University faced was the integration of skills4studycampus into existing courses. Following this experience the University believes that ideally there should be a twelve-month period of preparation time to include promotion and engagement with sponsor stakeholders in the faculties, and with curriculum design.

Marketing of skills4studycampus:

The University of Portsmouth used a variety of methods to promote the resource to students, including:

- **Customised posters provided by Palgrave Macmillan** – displayed around campus by Learning Support Tutor colleagues
- **Bespoke training sessions** – held at the library
- **Targeted campaigns** – run during Fresher’s Week and during exam periods
- **Demonstrations** – given to students
- **Content from skills4studycampus** – embedded into existing and new online teaching content by Online Course Developers and unit coordinators

Usage:

Two faculties, Humanities and Social Sciences and the Portsmouth Business School, are the major users of skills4studycampus modules, particularly *Writing skills; Projects, Dissertations and reports;* and *Critical Thinking*. Positive feedback has also been received from lecturers from the School of Health Sciences and Social Work.

Since skills4studycampus was made available to students at the University of Portsmouth in 2010, the number of students using the resource has increased by almost 70%. (This figure comes from a report generated from the admin function of skills4studycampus in December 2013 and is based on the number of registered students from the University of Portsmouth between 2010 and 2013.)

Additionally, students are consistently using the site for longer than the average of 25 minutes per visit (calculated from usage of all skills4studycampus subscribers between 2010 and 2013.)

This is due to targeted use of skills4studycampus – for example, *Reading and note-making* and *Writing skills* are both areas in which students at the University of Portsmouth commonly seek advice, so lecturers direct them to the appropriate modules.

Next steps:

This year the University wants to understand the impact of the structure of its new academic calendar (the academic year has moved from a two-semester to a three-term teaching model) on usage of skills4studycampus and other resources.

The University also has plans to continue promoting skills4studycampus with campaigns including:

- Highlighting the Exam Skills module during the exam period (April – May)
- Promotions during fresher’s week and induction week
- Presentations to faculty Learning and Teaching committees, to help bring the benefits and potential of the resource to a wider audience