



## CASE STUDY SERIES

### The University of Limerick

#### SUMMARY

External recognition of online training by a leading institute is a key determinant to successful uptake. There are various methods of incentivisation that translate to higher completion rates. Here we present The University of Limerick's Human Resources (HR) Division's efforts to maximise the impact of a triplet of Epigeum course programmes including *University Leadership & Management (ULM)*, *Research Skills (RS)* and *University & College Teaching (UCT)*. The Learning, Development & Equal Opportunities team within HR pursued the endorsement of all three programmes by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). ILM is an accrediting body set up to support, develop and inform managers at every stage of their careers. They offer a wide selection of flexible leadership and management qualifications and specialist member services.

#### ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Limerick (UL) was established in 1972 as the National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick and gained university by status in 1989. Last year it celebrated its 40th Anniversary as a Higher Education Institute. The university is located along the River Shannon, 5km from the heart of Limerick. UL has 1,300 employees, 11,000 full-time undergraduate students and 1,500 part-time students. 800 research postgraduates and 1,300 taught postgraduate students.

## THE CHALLENGES

- Increasing awareness and encouraging engagement of staff in the range of eLearning programmes provided specifically for those on the tenure track who the university actively supports and nurtures on the path to securing tenure and to gaining senior academic positions.
- Gaining support from senior management in promoting engagement of their staff in the e-Learning programmes provided.
- Obtaining a suitable hosting solution for the courses that could deliver on-going reports on activity and completion records to enable certification of programmes

## THE ACTIVITY

- UL had to make headway on two fronts in order to achieve its goal of accreditation:
  - Applied to the ILM 
  - Provided detail on aspects of the programme content. Clearly set out how the programmes would be utilised and promoted within the university and how evidence of successful completion would be provided.
  - ILM, through detailed discussion and a thorough review of the programme content, quizzes etc. endorsed the programmes.
- On the 7th November 2012 Vice President Academic and Registrar, Professor Paul McCutcheon formally launches the Epigeum programmes. The launch was attended primarily by senior academics. An overview of the structure and pedagogical content of the programmes was provided by Prof. McCutcheon, David Babington-Smith, CEO (Epigeum) and Ben Hutchens, Senior Learning Consultant (Epigeum). Mr. Ronan Haughey Development Manager (ILM) also attended the launch and set out the value of having ILM endorsement of the programmes.



Above: The formal launch of Epigeum course programmes with a speech by Pro-vice chancellor Professor Paul McCutcheon

## THE OUTCOMES

- Three ILM ENDORSED development programmes where completion is recognised with a certificate which can provide evidence for staff required to produce CPD (Continuous Professional Development) records. UL is the first institution in Ireland and the UK to gain such accreditation.
- Internal promotion of the courses, with feedback from administrators who were unaware of the courses indicating that the *University Leadership & Management* would be very useful as leadership training is perceived as something usually reserved for senior academics i.e. Deans, Heads of Department, but the courses are easily accessible and available to all staff.
- Some academics are blending aspects of the eLearning programmes in conjunction with their teaching content in addition to actively encouraging Postdocs, Tenure Track employees etc. to undertake the programmes as part of their personal development.

## KEY LESSONS LEARNT BY THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

- From the outset, within UL, the Epigeum Programmes were actively promoted and supported by two senior members of the University's Executive Team - Professor Paul McCutcheon, Vice President Academic & Registrar and Mr Tommy Foy, Director Human Resources, both of whom also addressed the launch. The Learning & Development Department within UL would cite having members of the Executive Team as champions of eLearning as one of the key aspects to the successful role out of the programmes to-date as it ensured credibility in the programme content and value in eLearning.
- Having members of the Senior Management Team involved in the design and development of the programmes also ensured further buy-in for UL as they acted as ambassadors in endorsing the programme content.
- Ensuring that the hosting arrangement for the programmes could provide the required up to date data was also a further key requirement. UL opted for the Epigeum hosted arrangement and have been very happy with the service that this has provided for them.

## THE IMPACT

Evidence of how the courses are being used is being compiled by the Learning & Development team headed by Alison O'Regan (alison.oregan@ul.ie)

## USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.ul.ie/hr/elearning> (UL's web page dedicated to the course programmes)

<http://researchskills.epigeum.com> (Research Skills course programme)

<http://ulm.epigeum.com> (University Leadership & Management course programme)

<http://learningtechnologies.epigeum.com> (University & College Teaching course programme)



Over 150 institutions worldwide are transforming research, teaching and learning with the help of Epigeum online course programmes.

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