TestReach

BACP Teams Up with TestReach to Transform their Certification Process with All Assessments Delivered via Remote Invigilation

bacp | counselling changes lives

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"We're delighted to see how positive our members are about the experience of taking their assessments using TestReach remote invigilation. The question authoring, test assembly, marking and moderation tools have also streamlined the process and it is very secure and cost-effective to run... they are extremely professional to work with... and the support given is excellent."

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Background

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) is the professional association for members of the counselling professions in the UK. An objective of the organisation is to promote and provide education and training for counsellors and psychotherapists. When a member completes a BACP accreditation course they are eligible to join the BACP Register, which demonstrates to the public that they meet high standards of proficiency. Members who have not completed a BACP accredited course are required to pass an entry assessment to join the BACP Register.

Until recently BACP used an in-house assessment solution for their entry assessment. On a weekly basis, a team travelled to hotels or conference centres, set up 50 laptops and ran the computer-based assessments on a remote server, after which data was uploaded to the assessment system. While this approach was successful for a time, moving computers around the country and repeatedly setting up a working test centre with an in-person invigilator for each assessment day became increasingly stressful and was a logistical challenge. Staff regularly encountered issues where equipment would not work properly or results were difficult to transfer from the remote server. Also, because the system was built in-house and had been altered extensively, it became more unreliable and had little technical support. Things had to change, so the BACP set about investigating the possibilities for a new e-assessment solution.

Solution

BACP reviewed a number of e-assessment suppliers. TestReach particularly appealed because the system incorporated a professional remote invigilation service as part of a complete assessment application. With TestReach remote invigilation, candidates sit their exams from their home or office while being supervised by a trained invigilator who monitors the candidate using audio, video and remote screen-share.

TestReach provides an interface which is easy for members to use, and has innovative question and answer options available to facilitate BACP assessments. These include sequential clinical case studies and questions, structured to mirror the experience of a therapist dealing with an actual client. The full range of requirements are met by the system, plus all assessments can be auto-scored and easily moderated through TestReach's innovative moderation dashboard.

Results

BACP prepared for the new online assessments by developing question banks and papers, and in addition they ran some tests before launching in April 2018. BACP now run six remotely invigilated assessment sessions a month. Members are no longer restricted to attending specific assessment days in test centres. They can sit the assessment soon after completing their qualification, from their home or office, providing a more comfortable and convenient experience.

Part of the preparatory work for the launch involved reassuring members that the process of a remotely invigilated assessment was straightforward. Members were also asked to fill in a feedback form about the experience and this was universally positive, with members commenting regularly on how easy the process was and how friendly and professional the invigilators were. Some members also emailed BACP to convey how happy they were with this new approach.

The assessment includes six clinical case studies and detailed questions. Because the assessment is designed to reflect the experience of working with a client, once a candidate submits an answer to a question they cannot go back and alter it - they must move on to the next phase of the clients' story. Question types include best response and multiple correct answer and all questions are auto-scored. TestReach's innovative moderation dashboard allows a group of moderators to review the pass/fail rate, make adjustments to scores and see the overall impact of these adjustments in clear colour-coded charts.

After years of intensive logistics, support and travel to ensure assessments ran effectively, it was a revelation for BACP to have a system that removed the administrative burden the team were experiencing. "I can't describe how logistically difficult it was to run the assessments before TestReach, and how many resources it demanded," said Eve Orton, Quality Assurance Supervisor at BACP. "It was only through moving to remote invigilation that we realised how much of a strain it was on us all beforehand. Our time has been freed up to concentrate on other projects while being able to trust the system to administer assessments effectively and securely. The benefits are very obvious on a daily basis."

"We're delighted to see how positive our members are about the experience of taking their assessments using TestReach remote invigilation. The question authoring, test assembly, marking and moderation tools have also streamlined the process and it is very secure and cost-effective to run. Aside from all the technical aspects that work very well, the relationship with our project managers is very friendly and they are extremely professional to work with. The communication both ways is really good and the support given is excellent," she added.

Feedback email, sent by a BACP member

"Prior to sitting the test, I felt the instructions sent via email from TestReach were very clear... I was able to familiarise myself with how to log-in and have a play around well in advance of my test. I felt this was a very smooth and problem free process. I logged on without any issues and the invigilator came online very quickly after that. He introduced himself to me and was very pleasant and reassuring.

All in all, I feel this is an excellent way of sitting the test. It saves having to travel into the city which has its advantages with regard to both cost and the inconvenience. Taking exams is always quite stressful and I feel that being able to do the test in the comfort of one's own surroundings goes towards reducing the stress and anxiety around this. I would like to point out that there is absolutely no way that I could have deceived the invigilator whilst taking this test and no way that I could have had any external help from any source that would have aided my performance. I am delighted to say that I passed and feel the online invigilation is the way forward for this test."