Birmingham City University Uses TestReach to Provide an Outstanding Candidate Experience for Students of All Abilities

BIRMINGHAM CITY University

The department was delighted to see that the midwifery students who used TestReach found it easy-to-use in practice, particularly welcoming the opportunity to sit their exam in a familiar online environment.

"It is so quick to do the marking and moderation of results, and this has been a huge advantage to us. I also like viewing the detailed breakdown of statistics on questions and I can easily see if a particular question isn't performing well... It's a very positive experience working with TestReach. The services team are easy to get hold of and the communication is great."

Background

With 24,000 students from over 80 countries, Birmingham City University (BCU) has grown over the years to become one of England's leading universities. The School of Nursing and Midwifery is one of the primary sources of employees for the NHS. The school provides a dynamic and forward-thinking learning environment, supported by more than 100 qualified and expert academic staff.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery began looking at online assessment in 2015, a move motivated by various considerations. Paper-based exams did not facilitate the increasing number of students with disabilities, and computer-based assessment would better suit their needs when sitting exams. Streamlining the management of questions, the generation of exam papers and making the marking process quicker and easier-to-manage was a priority.

When selecting a supplier of online assessment software, it was therefore crucial that the application was easy-to-use for students of all abilities, with a clean and intuitive interface. The solution would also need advanced functionality for authoring and managing questions, test assembly, marking and moderation.

Solution

TestReach was chosen by BCU as their supplier of online assessment software, as it provided all the features required for question authoring, test assembly, exam delivery, marking, moderation and reports. Its modern, accessible and clean interface was easy for all candidates to use.

TestReach was initially used for neonatal exams, taken by students studying the BSc (Hons) in Midwifery. These 2-hour exams are run online at test centres on campus, using a mix of multiple choice and short form text answers. About 25% of the paper is auto-scorable, and other questions requiring manual marking are automatically routed to a range of individual markers to score. Post-exam evaluations are run in order to gauge student reaction to sitting their exams on TestReach.

Results

The department was delighted to see that the midwifery students found TestReach easy-to-use in practice, particularly welcoming the opportunity to sit their exam in a familiar online environment.

The department has benefited from the ease and speed of marking the final papers. With automated workflows for multiple markers, questions can be easily routed to individual markers, who are given passwords to access the relevant section of the paper. All activity is fully audit-trailed. The mark schema and marking guidelines are available on screen alongside the students' answers, so markers can easily allocate the correct marks in a standardised fashion as they work through the papers.

Tools provided by TestReach facilitate speedy results' moderation across a cohort of candidates, turning a time-consuming and difficult job into something straightforward. By adjusting marks granted for certain questions, the impact on the overall pass rate is immediately displayed on colour-coded charts.

The department welcomed the ability to view clear data and reports on question efficacy. The range of statistical information provided on results data enabled the team to determine the effectiveness of tests, test items and question distractors, providing all the data needed to improve the quality and accuracy of questions over time.

"It is so quick to do the marking and moderation of results, and this has been a huge advantage to us. I also like viewing the detailed breakdown of statistics on questions and I can easily see if a particular question isn't performing well," said Natasha Carr, Senior Midwifery Lecturer at Birmingham City University. "It's a very positive experience working with TestReach. The services team are easy to get hold of and the communication is great."

"We are now looking at expanding our use of TestReach to incorporate other topics, and we're in a good position to explore using online assessment for other courses and exam types," she added.

About Birmingham City University

With 24,000 students from over 80 countries, Birmingham City University (BCU) began as the Birmingham College of Art in 1843 and has grown over the years to become one of England's leading universities. The University has an enviable reputation for providing quality, student-focused education in a professional and friendly environment.

With a wide range of highly regarded courses and state-of-the-art facilities, the university's focus on practical skills and professional relevance is producing some of the UK's most employable graduates.

About TestReach

TestReach is a unique cloud-based solution for running computer-based exams. It covers the end-to-end exam process, with advanced functionality for exam authoring, test assembly, delivery, marking, moderation and reporting. All exam delivery methods are provided, including online, offline and live remote invigilation.

Because remote invigilation is an integral part of the application, it can be switched on easily whenever required. With this option, candidates are invigilated over the Web by a team of trained supervisors who connect securely to the candidate for the duration of the exam. As a SaaS solution, TestReach is secure, easy-to-use, cost-effective and offers the flexibility to meet a variety of assessment needs all within one single application.

Learn more at www.testreach.com
© TestReach