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Aptem at work —
Keele University

Case study —
Keele University — implementing Aptem for degree apprenticeships

Keele University is a prestigious institution, scoring the top slot for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey in 2018 and The Guardian University league tables in 2019, rating Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework, and with 97% of its research rated world leading or of international importance.

No better place, then, to host some of the most exciting degree apprenticeships. Keele offers apprenticeships in Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Level 7), Academic Professional (Level 7), Senior Leader (Level 7), Research Scientist (Level 7), Data Scientist (Level 6), Registered Nurse (Level 6) and Nursing Associate (Foundation degree/Level 5).

Keele
UNIVERSITY

Before Aptem

Before Aptem, Keele was using a combination of electronic documents and paper-based materials to manage front-ended apprenticeship compliance. On the programme, the University was similarly using templates to manage off-the-job learning and monitoring at given snapshots through tripartite review meetings.

Lou Taylor-Murison, Head of Apprenticeships and Experiential Learning at Keele, says:

"*As our programmes grew, the administration was getting overwhelming. So we were looking for a way to limit the risk and administrative burden as our provision scaled up. In addition to managing the apprenticeships, we were also looking to support account management by providing timely monitoring information to our employers.*

"*It was absolutely critical for us to find a system that could adapt to our needs and was strongly data-driven; that is, one that could provide that systematic monitoring information.*"

Keele chose Aptem Apprentice because of its deep functionality and the fact that it could interface with their Student Records System. Aptem's Higher Education (HE) User Forum also provided some invaluable information, says Lou:

"We were welcomed to the Aptem HE User Forum and spoke to other Universities which helped us get an understanding of how other clients were using it. The system felt robust, while being flexible enough for us to shape the apprentice journey and use it in a way that suited our needs."

Implementing Aptem Apprentice

The implementation process started over the summer of 2020, during the pandemic. This meant that the bulk of the training was online. The situation was also complicated because some of Keele's Aptem internal champions had to prioritise managing other challenges to prepare for September starts.

"*While implementation was challenging,*" explains Lou, "*our consultant and the support she offered were excellent. She was very responsive to our questions and provided options to help us think about what we wanted to achieve from Aptem's functionality.*"

Transforming apprenticeship management

Lou confirmed that Aptem Apprentice has already begun to make a difference to how the University works. This includes:

- A smooth applications process, "*particularly the ability to include a skills scan which can be built into the programme as a tool going forward.*"

- The use of the delivery programme to upload off-the-job hours against the learning plan means "*we have a 'live' means of monitoring whether apprentices are on target.*"

- Like all universities offering apprenticeships, Keele will face Ofsted inspections. Aptem will be vital to help manage that aspect of compliance, and Keele is "*currently thinking more about how we can use Aptem to support reporting and monitoring, as well as ensuring that all apprentices and employers understand about their roles in inspection.*"

Into the future, Keele is *"really looking at how we can build in better usage going forward,"* says Lou. *"The Power BI reports from the integrated dashboards will start to become important in how we monitor our portfolio of programmes, and the employer Customer Relationship Management will really help us start to manage prospects and active employers more effectively."*

As well as enhancing user experience, Keele is aiming to improve guidance for Aptem's stakeholders (staff, apprentices and employers) and to think more creatively about how it can use additional functionality in its programmes.

"I'm really looking at how we can build in better usage going forward."

Lou Taylor-Murison,
Head of Apprenticeships and Experiential Learning at Keele University

Advice to other HE providers

Central to Aptem Apprentice's mission for universities is the sharing of best practice. Our HE User Forum is one way of achieving this. So what advice does Lou have for other universities thinking of contracting Aptem to manage their apprenticeship journeys?

"My main guidance," she says, *"would be to plan very clearly which bits of the system you need to start with, and build from there. It has a lot of functionality and it might be that you start somewhere – by solving the biggest challenges – and have a development plan for where you need to be further down the line.*

"Engaging your programme leads in the implementation and training is key. I think having a few more involved early on would have really shaped our approach."

But what's unique about Aptem, says Lou, is that it is a flexible proposition, meaning that its use can change with a growing apprenticeship offering.

"Aptem provides a range of functionality which is always being developed – our usage can grow to meet the changing needs of our provision."

Lou Taylor-Murison,
Head of Apprenticeships and Experiential Learning at Keele University

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Find out how Aptem can help you with all aspects of AEB, traineeship and apprenticeship delivery.

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email us at **info@aptem.co.uk** or phone us on **020 7870 1000**

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