

Belfast Met - Microsoft Certification Success Story (May 2016)



Belfast Met is the largest further and Higher Education College in Northern Ireland and one of the largest in the UK. Founded in 1906 and with some 37,000 student enrolments, Belfast Met works at a strategic level in providing education, training and skills to enhance individual, community and economic success. The College has built an excellent reputation with employers for offering relevant, high quality learning.

Outstanding Centre of Excellence

The College recently received the first **Outstanding Centre of Excellence** Award from Prodigy Learning for the delivery of internationally recognised IT certifications. Currently the College delivers approximately 150 **Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)** exams, 600 **Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA)** exams and 200 **Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP)** exams per annum. The College is a **Microsoft Imagine Academy** and uses the programme resources to support the delivery of the Microsoft certifications alongside their own laboratory exercises. Practice Tests from **GMetrix** (for MOS) and **MeasureUp** (for MTA & MCP) and learning content from **Wiley (MOAC, Sybex)** complete the learning solution for students.



Dr. Jonathan Heggarty (Centre - Director of Curriculum, Belfast Met) accepting the Outstanding Centre of Excellence Award from Andrew Flood (Right - CEO, Prodigy Learning)

According to **Dr. Jonathan Heggarty (Director of Curriculum)**: *“Belfast Met has enjoyed a very exciting partnership with Prodigy Learning for several years and we are delighted to be in receipt of this award recognising our Outstanding Excellence in relation to Professional IT Certifications.”*

“At Belfast Met we continue to ensure that our curriculum meets the learning needs of students at all stages of their academic career and with our close collaboration with Prodigy Learning, we are able to offer learners leading edge industry endorsed professional qualifications to support our dynamic and vibrant IT sector.”

Apprenticeships

For over 10 years Belfast Met have successfully embedded Microsoft and other internationally recognised IT vendor certifications in their Apprenticeship programmes. Their IT apprenticeship programme has grown year on year and the College currently offers apprenticeships from Level 2 to innovative new Higher Level

Apprenticeships in IT Infrastructure and Software Development. These apprenticeships combine a number of vendor certification units with traditional assignment/exam based assessment units. The vendor exams validate the apprentices' job-ready skills demanded by the College's industry (employer) partners.

Part-Time Programmes

Belfast Met also offers a number of part-time programmes using Microsoft certifications (MOS, MTA & MCP) aimed at those either in the industry (IT Workers, Software Developers, IT Engineers, etc.) wishing to gain accreditation or those looking to gain employment.

Rapid Upskilling

In recent years, the College has also led the way in delivering rapid upskilling programmes in association with industry and the Department for Employment & Learning Northern Ireland. In these programmes, the College has utilised additional certifications from Adobe, HP and others to validate the candidates' skills. The College has found that employers place a lot of value in these certifications and they have a significant impact on the candidates' employability

Full-Time Programmes

The College also delivers MOS, MTA and other certifications as additionality for their Full-Time Programmes such as Level 2 & Level 3 Diploma programmes and HND/Foundation Degrees. Students undertake these qualifications in addition to their full-time qualification to provide them with an additional qualification which will assist them in their future pathway.