Leiden University Works with TestReach to Transform Assessment for Professional Online Students

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Having carried out comprehensive research, the Centre for Innovation at Leiden University selected TestReach as the supplier to work with them in transforming assessment at the University. This process began with the provision of remotely invigilated online exams for Futurelab, part of the Leiden University Medical Centre.

"We chose TestReach for Leiden University because they could meet all our online assessment requirements. The team are a pleasure to work with, their solution is advanced and intuitive to use, and they deliver on everything they promise."

Background

Leiden University is the oldest university in the Netherlands, established in 1575. With seven faculties, 50 departments and 30,000 students, it has always been ranked as one of the top universities in the world.

The Centre for Innovation at Leiden University explores and creates enterprising projects at the juncture of education, technology and society. Their mission is to prepare Leiden University for the digital future by identifying and exploring technological trends in education and research, and to explore technology driven solutions to complex challenges. They set out to investigate the use of remote invigilation at the University, and to find a supplier that would meet their needs for this pilot project. The Centre of Innovation initially offered the remote invigilation project to the SPOCs at the university, known as Special Private Online Courses. The first department to get involved was Paul Janssen Futurelab, part of the Leiden University Medical Centre.

Futurelab are keenly focused on implementing new methods in education, using a variety of engaging content styles for their online clinical development course, including a Netflix-style educational drama series. The international course is targeted at post-graduate professionals already working in academia and industry, including physician-investigators and biomedical researchers. For busy professionals studying an interactive online course, a flexible online assessment solution was the ideal way to run the exam. Participants had to pass the online exam in order to move to the on-campus part of the course, thus creating an extra incentive to study.

Solution

The Centre for Innovation undertook a comprehensive review of various remote invigilation (online proctoring) providers in the EU and the US, before deciding that TestReach was their supplier of choice. There were a number of reasons why TestReach was a good fit.

It was important that TestReach could immediately be used as a stand-alone solution for a pilot, as well as having the capabilities to be

fully integrated with the University's LMS in the future. It was also essential that the supplier would have extensive security protocol and data protection in place, with all data stored in the EU, to comply with the strict data security regulations required by the Dutch government.

The Centre for Innovation reviewed a variety of remote invigilation methods and applications, and concluded that the live invigilation service provided by TestReach was friendlier and more engaged than other models they looked at (such as completely automated and record & review for example).

With TestReach, the remote invigilation delivery method was an integral part of the application, rather than a bolt-on solution attached to a third-party assessment platform. This meant that invigilators were knowledgeable about the underlying assessment functionality and could help and assist when required, providing a more professional experience for candidates.

TestReach could easily cope with groups of differing sizes and also had short turn-around times, so exams could be quickly and easily rolled out. This degree of flexibility was very useful.

Another important factor was that TestReach could be used by candidates within corporate firewalls, as it did not incorporate any deprecated technologies. This was vital for professional students who might be taking their exam within a work environment or using a work computer to take their assessment.

Results

The initial roll out of online assessment and remote invigilation was run as a pilot. Without informing TestReach, a set of "dummy students" (a mix of teachers and students) sat the exam and were instructed to cheat. TestReach identified the cheaters and recorded a number of infringements when students did things they were not supposed to (e.g. looking at a phone). After the first pilot, there was a second exam with real students. When that proceeded successfully, TestReach was incorporated as the standard course-assessment mechanism on an on-going basis.

The professional participants on the course welcomed being able to sit their exam at a time and place of their choosing. A quiet room with internet connectivity was all they needed. Even though 40% of the candidates were professional people working in pharmaceutical companies with firewalls and tight internet security, they were still able to complete their exams.

As remote invigilation is a new concept for Leiden University, candidates were provided with information and resources in advance of the exam, so that they could familiarise themselves with everything. At all stages TestReach staff were available to answer any questions that arose.

TestReach was quick to provide sophisticated technical solutions to meet Futurelab's specific requirements. Candidates taking the exam needed access to Futurelab's application to perform biomedical calculations. TestReach enabled candidates to access this resource, whilst maintaining secure computer lockdown so that candidates could not navigate away from the test environment or access any other data sources.

"We are now able to offer our exams in a way that fits with the innovative nature of our online course," said Marcel Kenter, Director at Futurelab. "When offering an international interactive online course to busy professionals, it is a logical next step to let them take their exam online too, at a time and place of their choosing, and participants really appreciate the convenience of using this advanced platform."

"We chose TestReach for Leiden University because they could meet all our online assessment requirements" said Anton Jongeneelen, Innovator at the Online Learning Lab at the Centre of Innovation, adding that "The team are a pleasure to work with, their solution is advanced and intuitive to use, and they deliver on everything they promise. We now look forward to rolling out the system to more of our Special Private Online Courses."

About TestReach

TestReach is an advanced online assessment solution. It covers exam authoring, marking and reporting requirements, as well as any combination of exam delivery methods, including the option of integral remote invigilation.

To learn more visit www.testreach.com, or contact info@testreach.com