

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

In the medical industry, every second counts. Rapid delivery of information is essential in making quick, well-informed decisions that could ultimately save lives. At the Hull York Medical School (HYMS), students are learning that for themselves. That's why the concept of a mobile app sounded so promising. But as a learning environment grounded in science and facts, HYMS needed to put Blackboard Mobile Learn to the test to see how well the claims would hold up in real practice.



Running the Tests

The Hull York Medical School runs a 5-year undergraduate medical programme from various geographical locations, as well as supporting postgraduate research, taught courses, and intercalating students. The primary university campuses are Hull and York where students are based for the first two years. In years 3–5, students rotate around 8-week clinical placements in primary and community care settings across a large geographical area.

There are approximately 200 core staff and more than 800 clinical tutors involved. They rely heavily on a branded view of the Blackboard virtual learning environment (VLE) to provide learning resources and communication channels to all staff and students in a comprehensive, consistent, and coherent manner. While the Blackboard platform is very useful for this purpose, it is a large web-based site and access can be challenging in locations with minimal computer access, such as in general practice surgeries or hospital wards.

Diagnosis

HYMS needed a reliable mobile solution that would make academic content accessible to students wherever they were, whenever they needed it.

If they could make program resources on the VLE (including communication tools) and campus services immediately accessible to students who are often off campus whilst undertaking placements at various clinics and hospitals, it would help bridge the gap between theory and practice.

blackboardmobile.com

Recommended Rx

HYMS launched a one-year Blackboard Mobile Learn pilot program to evaluate the usability and effectiveness of Blackboard Mobile Learn with both campus and placement based students and staff.

Available on a wide variety of platforms, the Blackboard Mobile Learn app gave everyone immediate access to key elements of Blackboard content including announcements, grades, blogs and journals, media, discussion boards and assessments-directly on their smartphone, anywhere, anytime.

After the pilot program was completed, an evaluation was undertaken using data collected from extensive staff and student surveys along with usage data taken directly from Blackboard Mobile Analytics.

Students and staff were enthusiastic

WHAT'S NEXT

- · Establishment of an institutional license
- · Active rollout to raise awareness
- Training and hands-on sessions
- Explore innovative uses
- Mobile resource development.

Results

The survey showed a much higher than expected use of mobile devices with students and staff:

- 82% smartphone ownership
- 41% using smartphones to access learning resources

Results demonstrated that students felt more connected and engaged with their studies and learning environment:

- 40% of all HYMS undergraduate students downloaded and used the Blackboard Mobile Learn app
- 55% of users rated their satisfaction with the app above average

They also discovered that the group with the highest number of students using the app was campus-based first year students—which showed that students entering the university are already expecting to have mobile access to university resources.

Long-term prognosis:

Based on their evaluation data, there was sufficient demand to support an institutional Blackboard Mobile Learn license. HYMS had proof this would be a valuable product to support interactive learning and teaching and significantly enhance the student experience. Blackboard Mobile Learn will also keep HYMS in line with other top universities in the UK—such as Bristol, Cardiff, Manchester, Liverpool, Nottingham, and Dundee who are also using Blackboard Mobile Learn. So the proof is in, Blackboard Mobile Learn is taking off, and long-term prognosis is very promising.

