



Online assessments add a new dimension to CIM course testing

Background

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) is one of the most prestigious marketing association in the world and is the official body for setting standards for sales and marketing nationwide.

With 26,000 students participating in courses each year, the CIM identified a real demand for some of its courses to go online. To this end, CIM examined the options for online assessment, which would make the courses more accessible to a wider audience. It was three years ago that the CIM was introduced to Perception, the assessment software system from Questionmark. They concluded that it offered all the features and qualities that they had been searching for.

Project

CIM identified three areas where online assessment would be appropriate. The first was for the Introductory Certificate where mock exams and certificate tests are available to test students' knowledge and understanding of the marketing discipline. This course leads logically into a range of other complementary courses. The online test supplements course assignments that are carried out throughout the duration of the course and accounts for approximately 40% of the final mark.

Another key use for Perception is in the relatively new area of e-marketing. Once again, Perception provides a quick and easy means by which to test knowledge and understanding within the subject.

The area of questionnaires is one in which the CIM is likely to increase use of Perception in order to receive quick feedback from students on courses run and to give input into potential future courses.

Solutions

Julie Delahoy, Assessment and Quality Manager at the CIM, comments, "We piloted the online tests with four or five colleges. Now we have around 30 that offer them. This means we now have approximately 1000 students taking the online assessments each year. Using Perception allows us to deliver results to students instantly which we know they like."

June Davies, Education Information Services Manager for the CIM, added, "We have extended our license already to cater for demand for the online courses."

Results

Continued Davies: "The scale of the course registrations has not caused any technical problems. We can quickly and easily set up the server to schedule tests for our colleges. All they have to do is book the course and supply a list of names and passwords. We do the rest. We schedule the tests and set the time limits on their behalf. So far, it has worked extremely efficiently."

The CIM has employed the skills of contract examiners to write questions. These are tested internally to ensure that each one is not open to the incorrect interpretation. They are also analysed to certify that they are not too easy for the level of course. The questions are then delivered randomly to the students in an invigilated exam to make sure that the risk of copying is minimised.

Conclusion

June Davies concludes, "In order for online assessment to work for us it has to give us greater flexibility and efficiencies than a standard written exam. We believe that the Perception tests meet this requirement and there are, no doubt, many other applications of the software that will become apparent to us as we look further into this exciting area."

More information

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