

Borders College

“Smart Apprentices helped us save over £60,000 a year in travel costs alone - and ensured that we signed up 100% of apprentices throughout the pandemic.”



Key Results

- ✔ Paper and travel free management of apprenticeships – everything's now done online
- ✔ Configurable to the way we work across all types of learners
- ✔ Seamless integration with MIS and funding systems - for a more efficient way of working
- ✔ Everyone likes Smart Apprentices – it's really easy to use & delivers fantastic dashboard reports

Staying ahead during difficult times

Borders College partnered with Smart Apprentices as part of its investment in technology to provide a more robust, transparent digital learning experience. In addition, reducing completely the reliance on spreadsheets and paper across the college and enabling remote delivery of apprenticeships.

As a result, in 2020, whilst other colleges in Scotland struggled because of travel restrictions during the pandemic, Borders was able to sign up 100% of apprenticeships online. With a reliance on Government funding, it was critical Borders could still enrol its 2020-21 cohort and implementing Smart Apprentices prior to the pandemic made this still possible.

An online solution is a positive to our green credentials

The college previously used multiple systems with lots of duplication, with no easy way to manage the tracking and reporting of trainees and zero transparency for the learner. Borders College identified not just the opportunity to improve this and create cost-savings but also boost its green credentials by reimagining the way it administers apprenticeship programmes.

"Historically, the college would meet in person with apprentices for enrolment – a process which included 15 forms, completed and processed manually, resulting in hundreds of thousands of miles racked up by enrolling students, as well as significant printing and labour"

"Having delivered fully remote enrolment in 2020, we predict a travel saving of over £60,000 per year from being able to sign up and enrol apprentices in groups online within the VC capability within Smart Apprentices."

We signed up 100% of apprentices throughout the pandemic

Borders was keen to find a platform that would enable it to reduce paperwork, track learner progress and provide some reporting both for internal and external purposes.

"Fortunately, the impact of the health crisis didn't affect our college business. Having implemented Smart Apprentices ahead of the pandemic gave us an end-to-end online learning management capability that replaced the need for face-to-face engagements and paper-based processes. We were able to sign-up 100% of apprentices throughout 2020 and can now fulfil the complete apprenticeship remotely whilst remaining compliant by easily providing all-important reports both for audit and funding purposes."

A platform that works how we work

Having investigated several software providers, the college selected Smart Apprentices as the partner that was able to fully match its business needs. Post-sale support was a key differentiator for Smart Apprentices, with Borders College focussed on finding a supplier who had a strategic partnership type approach.

"What's really made us realise that we've made the best decision with Smart Apprentices is that we feel safe in their hands. Smart Apprentices protects our data, our reputation, and works with us closely as a strategic partner to continually provide a bespoke

service and one of the important points for me is that they're happy to acknowledge when something has gone wrong – but crucially you will know exactly what they're doing about it.

"The Smart Assessor platform has been extremely tailorable to meet our business needs, the team at Smart Apprentices recognise a 'one size fits all' model doesn't work for apprenticeships and they've developed their solution on the back of this."

Gives us a bright future

One of the biggest impacts for Borders College is having complete visibility of the learner's progress. The ability to set and review targets with learners is a huge step forward. The transition from their old ways of working to using Smart Apprentices was seamless with both staff and learners really taking to the solution immediately.

"What stands out quite clearly when working with Smart Apprentices is that they're happy to work with us, nothing is ever a challenge and they're always very enthusiastic to listen to our views and change/enhance the platform even further. Our account manager is extremely knowledgeable in the sector, has regular conversations with us so we're never left too long to our own devices. They're very proactive and is always happy to go the extra mile. We genuinely feel our account manager cares for us and our success."

Looking ahead, Borders College sees Smart Apprentices as its vehicle to track and deliver all training throughout the college. Borders has already begun this journey and is being supported along the way by Smart Apprentices.

"We've definitely made the correct decision in investing in Smart Apprentices. They help the college adapt its learning delivery models and embrace technology as the future of learning."

About the author

Name: Katharine Mathison

Position: Director of Enterprise and Business Innovation

Organisation: Borders College

Katharine has considerable experience in the public and private sectors, encompassing recruitment, training and management. Katharine is responsible for developing learners and employees towards personal goals, whilst incorporating organisational and educational objectives such as the implantation of new, innovative technologies to support the delivery of a more robust, transparent digital learning journey.



Smart Apprentices. We promote personalised life-long learning through an integrated smart digital platform that's transforming the delivery of apprenticeships & traineeships for education & training providers across the UK



Smart Assessor: an e-portfolio that manages the full apprenticeship life-cycle



Smart VLE: enhances functional skills learning with customisable online assessments



Smart Applicants: enables apprentices & trainees showcase themselves to employers



Smart EPA: online management of end point assessments



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