



Digital Badge Accreditation

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Summary of Teaching & Learning Context

This active learning strategy was introduced to all undergraduate programmes within the department: BBus (Hons) in Business Studies (Enterprise & Innovation), BBs (Hons) in Marketing and Management, and BBs (Hons) in Digital Marketing. First year students are introduced to enterprise level e-commerce software, Shopify, as part of the Selling Techniques module. Shopify offer three digital badges, which can be built into a variety of programmes. The Shopify Basics badge is used in this module. This badge is awarded for pre-launch setup of an online Shopify store, giving students experience in building a store catalogue, creating customer incentives, and customising their website. Practical skills are gained, relevant for today's employers, with the inclusion of a digital badge accreditation.

Employers are becoming increasingly aware of digital badges as credible evidence of workplace-relevant skills. These alternatives to formal credentials offer students an additional way to gain recognition of achievements. Digital badges represent a new stage in supporting Ireland's skills agenda, allowing for a validated representation of a skill or knowledge gained and verified online. This is the first digital badge accreditation offered to our undergraduates in the department.

Implementing the Strategy

A successful pilot programme of Shopify digital badges ran in AY19/20. The lecturer sets the students' assignments, project requirements and deadlines. There are two elements to the assessment: the development of the store itself, done in pairs and an Individual Reflection, which includes an experience summary. The lecturer performs the academic assessment and Shopify moderate the digital badge accreditation. This maintains the credibility of Shopify badges with prospective employers. To qualify for a badge, students must meet or exceed the standard as defined in the grading rubric given to students at the start of the module. Students who are successful at completing the badge can then embed the badge or link it to their social media accounts or CV. Secure badge metadata describes the award criteria, and anyone viewing the badge online is able to see evidence of the achievement. Students receive their badge via CanCred. In cases where students do not qualify for a Shopify badge, they are still awarded a grade by the lecturer, as part of their overall course assessment.

Your Observations/Reflections

Students engage positively with this strategy each year. Receiving a 'reward' or digital badge has increased the enthusiasm of students in this module. Information contained in the individual reflections shows students enjoy the practical, real-world element this strategy provides. While students find elements of the process challenging, they are impressed at how early they were introduced to relevant technologies and hands-on tasks. Problem-solving, teamworking and communication skills are developed, along with an opportunity to implement specialist knowledge from sales and marketing modules. The set-up of this approach requires extra admin time initially. This is mostly done behind the scenes with Shopify, but also ensuring students are using the correct open learning platform. Shopify have a useful Help Centre and we have a dedicated admin support member in Shopify to contact. There are a wide range of videos, blogs, and other resources available, enabling students to find relevant information to complete the badge requirements. These can be incorporated into lab work.