

Digitalising academic learning for the British Army

CDS Defence & Security (DS) took the British Army's Higher Education Pathway from 'chalk & talk' to a state-of-the-art digital learning portal.

Facts:

- **20+ modules digitised**
- **50+ hours of learning content**
- **394 Videos**
- **37 hours of footage**

A call for more flexible learning

In 2017, the British Army partnered with Henley Business School and the University of Reading School of Politics, Economics and International Relations (SPEIR) to offer Bachelors and Masters level learning in leadership and strategic studies to selected officer cadets following completion of the Commissioning Course at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

It quickly became apparent however, that the traditional way of delivering the learning material, often on whiteboards or via projector slides, was not conducive to the learning needs of military personnel. The course needed to have a far greater degree of flexibility to enable students to complete their studies alongside busy, and often internationally based, 'day jobs'.

From 'talk and chalk to state-of-the-art

CDS DS conducted a study establishing that better learning outcomes would be achieved if course content was digitised. This would allow the Officers to undertake learning around their military duties, anywhere in the world.

As well as using brand new material created by Henley and SPEIR specifically for these degrees, we collated some existing content, ranging from PowerPoint and OHP slides to hand-written notes and handouts. This content was used as the basis for the new digital learning materials, made up of interactive games, assessments and linked resources to suit the delivery of a modular course. Alongside this, we captured face to face learning in 394 videos, interviewing tutors and senior military personnel, to achieve the right mix of academic and military leadership learning.

A web-based portal and Personal Leadership Portfolio (PLP) App was created to give students easy access to the new training materials. The PLP combines the needs of the student, academic staff and Army personnel to keep track of the Officers' progress via reflections, document uploads and reviews.

Learn anywhere, anytime

- Students can now access their learning materials anytime, anywhere
- The modular course allows students to adapt the content to specialise in subjects most relevant to their career and development needs
- Available on iOS or Android, the PLP doubles up as a record of achievements that can be used to support the annual performance appraisal process



Professor Claire Collins, Academic Lead, Henley Business School

“The work CDS DS has created for the Army Higher Education Pathway is ground-breaking. It has transformed the way that students can complete their studies, providing them with the flexible, online portal that they require. The fact that the content is engaging and multi-format helps to keep the students engaged throughout their studies.”