

Certification Success Story

College Success with CompTIA certifications

The Challenge:

The New Technology Centre's flagship course is the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE), which is the de facto industry standard certification for network administrators and designers. Despite the popularity of the MCSE course, many new IT students find it extremely challenging, particularly those with no prior knowledge of technology. What the college discovered was that the Centre was missing a foundation-level course that would provide its students with the necessary basic information and know-how of technology – the hardware/software knowledge, basic IT infrastructure and PC set-up, etc. – in order for students to have a solid foundation on which to begin further technology training and education.

The Solution:

Mark Waldron, the New Technology Centre manager, has been a professional in ICT for over 12 years and recognised the need for a vocational - orientated qualification to be introduced into the curriculum at a foundation level. While Mark found that many of the students were keen to sit for the MCSE course, he also found that they were equally unequipped to do so.

Mark believed the introduction of the CompTIA A+® would be an ideal stepping-stone from foundation-level to higher level qualifications or even as an exit point straight into industry.

By incorporating this professional vendor-neutral qualification, the college would be in a position to provide the type of training and examinations that employers would recognise. This in turn would lead to greater employability of the students, which remains the ultimate focus of the college.

“The ultimate aim of our college is to make our students more employable. While many of our students were keen to start their learning through a higher level qualification, we found they were ill equipped to do so, and really needed to start on an introductory foundation course. My time in ICT has made me aware of the benefits of the CompTIA portfolio of certifications. As such, I thought it best to introduce CompTIA A+ into the curriculum as the perfect foundation course”, said Mark Waldron, South East Essex College.

About CompTIA

CompTIA is a global trade association representing the business interests of the information technology industry. For more than 22 years CompTIA has provided research, networking and partnering opportunities to its more than 20,000 members in 102 countries. The association is involved in developing standards and best practices, and influencing the political, economic and educational arenas that impact IT worldwide.

College Overview:

South East Essex College was established at the turn of the 20th century and provides education and training to over 12,000 local and national students. This involves part time, full time and weekend courses, work based NVQs, higher education and PGCEs. A special focus of the college is its New Technology Centre. This was established in 2002 on the new college campus, and focuses solely on IT vendor certifications. The centre also aims to become a COVE (Centre of Vocational Excellence) for ICT solutions. At the technology centre, 60% of the students are made up of those looking for a career change or currently facing unemployment. The remaining 40% of students are those already working in IT and looking to further their careers through IT certification.

Implementation:

After implementing CompTIA A+ into the curriculum in September 2003, the New Technology Centre had an initial demand of 10 students wishing to enroll. Though not a technical requirement, four of the centres IT trainers were certified in CompTIA A+ in order to be able to teach their students more effectively and deliver the syllabus at the right level. The college offers a choice of study methods to the students, ranging from intensive teaching over the course of one term, to more flexible teaching methods taking place in the evenings and over weekends. From September 2004, the college will also offer one class of the CompTIA Network+™ and all students who study MCSE, will have to complete the CompTIA Security+™ course.

Results:

The introduction of the CompTIA A+ qualification has been extremely successful. During the 2003 -2004 academic year, 28 students registered for the CompTIA A+ course with 13 students passing in their first year. This continued success has seen a 100% increase in student numbers applying for the 2004-2005 course. The course is already oversubscribed with 60 new applicants and has resulted in the addition of a further CompTIA A+ teaching class.

Additionally, the college has seen 11 students from the CompTIA A+ course make a successful transition onto the next level of learning, namely the Microsoft programme. As a result of their phenomenal success, South East Essex College received the CompTIA award for outstanding contribution from a UK college for 2004.

Diane Burns, ex-South East Essex student:

“Being a mother of two children, I thought it would be very difficult to find the time to study towards a higher level qualification and gain the necessary certification to pursue my chosen career in IT. The flexible teaching on the CompTIA A+ course enabled me to gain work experience at South East Essex college doing technology support two days a week. This then led to me becoming employed as a technician at a local school which fits in perfectly around my own children’s schooling.”



CompTIA UK Ltd.

1 Cornhill

London

EC3V 3ND

Phone: +44(0)20 7743.6150

Fax: +44(0)20 7743.6151

www.comptia.org