

London South Bank University to Invest More Than £14.8 Million to Transform Student Experience Through Personalised Education

Thursday 1 May, 2014

IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced that London South Bank University (LSBU) will invest more than £14.8 million in IBM's Exceptional Student Experience, which uses a mix of analytics, mobile, social and security solutions built on cloud infrastructure to monitor academic progress of individual students.

Ensuring each student who enrolls on a higher education course has the support they need to graduate and secure employment is fundamental to every university's mission, and therefore LSBU has invested in the five year platform which will augment students' learning experience and help the institution achieve its digital transformation goals.

Exceptional Student Experience from IBM aims to transform universities and colleges to be truly student centric. This can be achieved by delivering a personalised engagement from the application process, throughout their student life, to graduation and beyond.

"The key benefit of this change programme is that it will enable LSBU to identify students who require support to complete their studies, and underpin our platform to enable repeatable, predictable, reliable and scalable technology-enabled learning for our students at best value-for-money," said Phil Cardew, Pro Vice Chancellor at LSBU.

Since the introduction of tuition fees, students expect value from their investment and learning that takes advantage, of the most up-to-date technologies. LSBU's investment in IBM's Exceptional Student Experience will lead to up-to-date collaboration, a greater diversity of provision and more variety in modes of learning including mobile access to applications, social communities for knowledge sharing, online profiling, and dynamic learning environments. Combined, this can improve teaching, assessment, feedback and student preparation for the world of work.

To support the introduction of the programme, LSBU's entire IT environment will move to SoftLayer, an IBM company cloud computing platform. Adopting a cloud strategy will greatly increase the university's agility, enabling educators and administrators to offer new services to students at busy times at a much faster rate. LSBU will now have the ability to manage the ever-changing performance demands of today's digitally connected students throughout the academic year. In addition, by moving the infrastructure online the space taken by the original data centres will now be transformed into additional teaching space.

IBM will deliver the Exceptional Student Experience solution via the Softlayer platform, which will align with predictive analytics for student retention and social collaboration for richer curriculum delivery, all accessed through a personalised portal offering any-where, any-time, any-device access to on-demand learning. The IBM solution will allow LSBU to be interconnected and intelligent when monitoring its students' academic progress, creating a holistic overview for every single student's personalised learning experience.

Through predictive analytics, Exceptional Student Experience will enable LSBU to identify students who may require additional support with their studies, and will enable them to intervene with those students to offer any help that may be needed.

"The use of big data, deep content analytics and social technologies delivered via SoftLayer's cloud holds the promise of enabling a truly personalised and exceptional educational experience, which has the potential to transform the entire education industry," said Michael D. King, Vice President, Global Education Industry at IBM. "Education, to be effective, must become more personal, engaging, and efficient in education institutions of all shapes and sizes alike; we are excited to help LSBU embark on this journey of transformation."

The ultimate objective of the change program is an augmentation of LSBU's student experience and an increase in retention through predicting and proactively identifying students who will benefit most from support. The overall agreement also included additional value around enterprise skills, mentoring and job placements to improve student employability.

Working with IBM will give LSBU students a real advantage. Through this partnership they will be able to

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further extend and enrich their learning through access to the IBM Academic Initiative portal - a no-charge program providing educators with the training materials, curriculum guides, software and hardware needed to teach in-demand business and technology skills.

The IBM Academic Initiative is currently used by three million students, 25,000 faculty staff from 5,000 institutions globally. This means LSBU students will have access to 'cutting-edge' thinking and practices from the world of business and technology, giving them a real world knowledge coupled with an enterprising mind-set which prepares them well for the future.

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