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Queen Mary
University of London

Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry
Case Study

About Barts Medical School

Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, commonly known as Barts, is one of the oldest medical and dental schools based in England. In 2017, the school was ranked 2nd in the United Kingdom by The Guardian, and 9th globally by the QS World University Rankings. In 2018, it was ranked the 3rd best medical school behind Oxford and Cambridge by The Guardian.

Accepting nearly 300 medical students per year, Barts (part of Queen Mary University of London) is one of the largest medical schools in the UK and is based on two main sites across London close to their respective hospitals, St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal London Hospital. They also have an additional site at Queen Mary's main campus, Mile End and a campus in Malta.

Setting the Scene

As part of a five-year strategy, Queen Mary University of London developed the QMUL Model as an innovative teaching and learning initiative designed to broaden opportunities for undergraduates within and beyond higher education. As part of this wider initiative, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry developed a six-part strategy with a core component to innovate within teaching, learning and assessment, maintain their student satisfaction rating of 92% and ensure students obtain valuable, transferable skills upon graduating.

For Barts' medical programmes, this core component was encompassed by the MEDPRO module, an innovative professionalism component of the wider MBBS curriculum designed to maximise their personal and professional development. MEDPRO includes a formalised academic supervision to provide an integrated yet individualised approach to support and assess professionalism in clinical practice. With both the new strategy in place and with the impending launch of the MEDPRO module as part of the wider MBBS curriculum, it became clear that assessment and feedback for students on clinical practice was an area requiring innovation.

Prior to working with MyKnowledgeMap, Barts were using a paper-based system as well as the NHS e-portfolio for the assessment of undergraduate medical students in clinical practice. As one of the largest medical schools in the UK, Barts have to support hundreds of students on clinical placement from year one to the later years where clinical placements form a larger part of the medical programme. With many students to support throughout all four years of the programme, using a combination of paper-based assessment and the NHS e-portfolio led to several key challenges:

- As assessments were stored in multiple places and were mostly paper-based it was difficult to visualise and track student progress and competency whilst they were on clinical placement.

- Barts wanted a simple and easy to use platform, where students have the ability to build a portfolio of evidence all in one place, giving them the opportunity to demonstrate achievements creatively, in their own way.

- Lacking insight on student progress, supervisors were unable to identify how students were performing, provide timely feedback or provide the right level of support for each student.

- Barts sought to improve feedback for students whilst on clinical placement, supporting supervisors and providing them with simpler and more efficient methods of providing quality feedback— something that was not supported with a paper-based approach or their existing online solution.

Due to these challenges, the assessment of students in clinical practice and consequent feedback became a critical area to address under the new strategy and demands of the new MEDPRO module. As such, Barts sought to complement their first-class medical programme with a leading-edge assessment and portfolio technology to improve the student learning and teaching experience.

Choosing the right solution

As a leading medical school both globally and in the UK, Barts is continually focused on maintaining student satisfaction ratings specifically around 'Assessment and Feedback'. With the introduction of the QMUL model and MEDPRO module, these developments provided an opportunity to re-evaluate how students are assessed in clinical practice, overcome the aforementioned challenges and innovate within this critical area.

After running a pilot in 2017, Barts chose Myshowcase.me, MyKnowledgeMap's e-portfolio platform to support the MEDPRO module, enabling students to easily map evidence against the MEDPRO framework, produce a personalised professional portfolio, visualise their progress and quickly obtain feedback from their MEDPRO supervisors through the platform. Barts branded to Myshowcase.me as 'Barts Portfolio' to enhance and complete the student experience throughout their programme.

"One of the main reasons we chose Myshowcase.me is that it allows the student to create a portfolio and gives them the ability to demonstrate their achievements and progress in their own way. It was important for us that the platform was user-friendly for both the students and staff, and Myshowcase.me gives us just that", says Dr Malgo Miranowicz, Learning Technologist at Barts.

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Beyond using Myshowcase.me to support the MEDPRO module, Barts also adopted Myprogress, MyKnowledgeMap's mobile assessment tool for assessing student clinical skills and competencies whilst in practice. As a leading tool for mobile assessment, Myprogress was chosen by Barts as it was simple to use and easy for the student to gain valuable feedback and for the observer to complete the feedback, in the moment. Key to this was the ability for the Myprogress app to work offline, so the assessment process would be uninterrupted by lack of WiFi or network coverage – a common occurrence in clinical settings.

Connected with Myshowcase.me through a seamless integration, all student assessments carried out within Myprogress and signed off in practice, are automatically locked down and placed into their personal Barts Portfolio (Myshowcase.me). Once assessments appear within the portfolio, they are automatically mapped against the MEDPRO and wider MBBS framework alongside other evidence, where students and supervisors can interact with it. Supervisors can provide feedback directly against the framework, competencies or individual assessments, and the student has a space where they can also reflect on their practice.

"The great thing about Myprogress is that it is easy for the student to demonstrate learning outcomes and manage their own learning. As for the supervisors, they feel fully supported - they have complete insight and understanding of their students' performance and progress and can provide real-time feedback" comments Malgo.

To provide additional structure to the assessment and feedback process, Barts use 'Tasks' – a function within Myshowcase.me - which allows tasks to be issued tasks directly to students. Using this function, Barts issue students with a task to create a 'snapshot' of their portfolio and reflect on their progress in preparation for quarterly and annual review meetings as well as for formal grading using the grading systems built into Myshowcase.me.

"Enabling the students to submit multiple forms of evidence against the framework, and not just practice-based assessments was something we were keen to support. In this way supervisors have complete insight into their students' progress, improving the feedback and discussion within their quarterly reviews and final annual review" says Malgo.

Enabling outstanding student experiences

Rolling out a new assessment and portfolio technology across one of the UK's largest medical schools calls for a well-planned and staged implementation plan. To support the complete adoption of Myprogress and Myshowcase.me, Barts have first implemented Myshowcase.me, renaming the platform 'Barts Portfolio', and are now using this across their London and Malta campuses. In 2019, they plan to roll out Myprogress, renaming the platform 'Barts Logbook' and enabling students to use the Myprogress app on their own device.

Since implementing Myshowcase.me and the Barts Portfolio in 2017, Barts has experienced a number of benefits from its long-term investment, including:

- Students and supervisors now have a single, easy to use online portfolio where learning evidence and assessments are uploaded against the learning framework, progress can be seen and tracked and feedback can be provided in real-time.

- Barts have a complete online portfolio to support students review meetings and final end of year review meeting, this includes building the quarterly and annual report, supporting reflections on practice, receiving feedback and being graded.

- Supervisors have real-time insight into student performance against the MEDPRO module and wider MBBS curriculum whilst they are on clinical placement, allowing them to provide the student with full support, identifying opportunities for improvement and potential failure early.

- Students are empowered to manage their own learning and demonstrate their learning and achievements in their own way – something which is synonymous with the culture and learning ethos at Barts.

Want to find out more about Myshowcase.me?

Get in touch with the team to arrange a free demonstration.

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