

oneAdvanced

CASE STUDY

ePortfolio and Apprenticeship Management Case Study with NCG

Powering the World of Education





About NCG

NCG is one of the UK's largest college groups, operating seven campuses across Newcastle, Carlisle, West Lancashire, Kidderminster, and London, and serving over 30,000 learners. As a leading provider of apprenticeship training, NCG offers programmes through a variety of delivery models, including day release, block release, and synchronous learning.

Ross Radford, who we interviewed for this case study, is the Apprenticeship Quality Manager with responsibility for apprenticeship delivery across all NCG colleges. As part of his role, he oversees the ownership, usage, and ongoing management of ePortfolio across the group.

NCG has been using ePortfolio for over five years and has recently adopted the Apprenticeship Management system, making them early adopters of the modernised integrated platform. The organisation integrates ePortfolio with its MIS system.

With extensive experience using the platform, Ross shares NCG's perspective and insights on ePortfolio and Apprenticeship Management in this case study.





The Challenge

Before adopting ePortfolio, NCG faced several operational challenges in managing its apprenticeship provision:

- **Fragmented systems:** Although the group had an e-portfolio system in place, it was not used consistently across all colleges. This led to fragmented processes and made it difficult to maintain consistent tracking and compliance.
- **Multiple delivery models:** With colleges running different delivery methodologies (day release, block release, block models), NCG needed a system that could accommodate separate instances with different configurations for local needs.
- **Limited visibility of progress and OTJ hours:** Tracking and evidencing Progress Reviews and Off-the-Job (OTJ) training hours was complex and time-consuming. Without a consolidated system, NCG lacked clear oversight across its geographically dispersed colleges.
- **High levels of manual data entry:** Staff spent significant time manually entering learner data, assessor details, and attendance records across multiple systems, increasing administrative burden and the risk of error.

As Ross Radford explains:

"Before we had ePortfolio, it was literally a minefield in terms of trying to centrally track learner progress reviews and OTJ progress reviews. We only had one e-portfolio and people weren't using it regularly at all."

The Solution: ePortfolio

NCG selected ePortfolio after evaluating several competing systems. The decision was driven by ePortfolio's unique ability to meet NCG's specific requirements while offering market-leading functionality.





Key Capabilities That Made the Difference

1. SYSTEM FLEXIBILITY FOR DIFFERENT DELIVERY MODELS

A critical factor that set ePortfolio apart from other solutions was its ability to support each college's individual delivery models, assessment processes, and local requirements, without impacting other colleges across the NCG Group. This flexibility allows each college to configure ePortfolio to suit its own approach, while maintaining consistency at a group level.

As Ross Radford explains:

"We needed a flexible system because of the different requirements of individual colleges within the NCG Group. If someone changes something at one college and it impacts other colleges, it simply wouldn't work for us. When we looked at other products, they couldn't provide this essential level of flexibility."

2. COMPREHENSIVE PROGRESS TRACKING

- **Digital progress reviews:** All progress reviews are conducted directly on the platform, so there is a single source of truth at individual College and NCG Group level.
- **Real-time monitoring:** The learner progress report provides instant visibility into outstanding reviews and OTJ hours across all colleges.
- **Effective learner progress tracking:** The ePortfolio home screen enables quick identification of learners requiring attention.
- **Central oversight:** Management can view any apprentice's data across the entire organisation from a single system.

3. EFFECTIVE OTJ HOUR MANAGEMENT

- **Manual workplace entries:** Assessors can enter workplace-based teaching, coaching, and mentoring activities easily within the ePortfolio system.
- **Level-based filtering:** Time logs can be filtered by qualification level (2, 3, 4, 5) for accurate reporting.
- **Compliance reporting:** The learner progress report enables monthly scrutiny of who is ahead or behind on required OTJ hours.

4. NEW APPRENTICESHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

NCG has launched the new Apprenticeship Management ePortfolio learner experience across the group, which serves over 30,000 learners. The group is also gradually introducing the new assessor dashboard. Both initiatives are part of OneAdvanced Education's broader Apprenticeship Management offering.

- **Mobile accessibility:** Learners can now log in on their phones and upload evidence (photos, videos) directly from workplace or construction sites.
- **Intuitive interface:** New cohorts of teachers at the NCG College in Lewisham are using the new Apprenticeship Management ePortfolio dashboard without training and "seem to be flying" with minimal guidance.
- **Positive learner feedback:** Learners who have experienced both versions "really prefer" the new Apprenticeship Management ePortfolio learner experience for its ease of use.

Ross notes:

"The learners love the fact that they can log in on their phones. It's just literally logging some OTJ activity on the phone, quick picture about what they've done or a video around the construction site."



The Results

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- **Zero manual data entry:** Automated imports from NCG's MIS into ePortfolio eliminated the need for manual entry of learner information, assessor details, and attendance registers.
- **Centralised visibility:** Management can now instantly view any apprentice's data across all seven colleges from one system.
- **Improved audit compliance:** The platform supports audit, compliance monitoring, and progress review tracking comprehensively.
- **Enhanced reporting:** Monthly leadership meetings use learner progress reports to scrutinise OTJ hours and outstanding reviews across the group.

STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY

- **Accommodates diverse delivery models:** Each college can configure ePortfolio to match their specific delivery methodology and local needs.
- **Scalable across locations:** Effectively supports one of the UK's largest college groups, with seven campuses and over 30,000 learners nationwide.
- **Strong integration within the NCG College group:** The group operates under the principle "if it's not on ePortfolio, it doesn't exist". All colleges are heavily involved in the process.

EFFICIENCY GAINS

- **Single point of entry:** Staff only mark one system for attendance, with data automatically flowing into ePortfolio.
- **Reduced administrative burden:** Elimination of duplicate data entry frees staff to focus on learner support and outcomes, and compliance checking.
- **Mobile-first evidence gathering:** Learners can capture and upload evidence instantly from their phones without needing laptops, within the new Apprenticeship Management ePortfolio learner experience.



Customer Perspective

ON THE SYSTEM'S CRITICAL IMPORTANCE:

"It's integral in our business. If we didn't have ePortfolio, then our apprenticeship provision wouldn't work in terms of audit, compliance monitoring of OTJ and monitoring of progress reviews. I can go in and look at anything to do with any apprentice across our organisation, which we never had at that point in time when I first joined. If we didn't have the ePortfolio product, then we wouldn't be able to have the functionality and run what we need to run."

ON WHY NCG CHOSE ePORTFOLIO:

"We needed a flexible system because of the different requirements of individual colleges within the NCG Group... The key components were the ability to import registers, to run reporting out of it, to have everybody have oversight of the platform, and the integration with our MIS system. Your product was a market leading product when we purchased it, and the development that's gone into it keeps that going (the new Apprenticeship Management ePortfolio learner experience)."

ON THE NEW USER EXPERIENCE:

"In terms of usability, the learners that we are speaking to really prefer it - who've experienced both the older version of ePortfolio and the new Apprenticeship Management ePortfolio learner experience. We've got a new cohort of teachers down in Lewisham who haven't experienced the old version, we've just enabled it, so they are using the new dashboard, and they seem to be flying. They've had no training, I've gone through it once and the majority of people are finding it really easy to upload and access their stuff."

ON THE PARTNERSHIP EXPERIENCE:

"You've been really responsive to our needs in terms of what we've asked for and needed. Our experience with the OneAdvanced Education team is really positive."

Why ePortfolio Stands Out

VERSUS COMPETITORS:

- During the selection process, NCG evaluated a range of alternative systems but found that many fell short of their complex, multi-college requirements.
- Some solutions lacked the ability to support separate requirements for individual colleges, which is a critical requirement for NCG. Others required adoption of a specific MIS, which was not an option for NCG. In some cases, usability was also a concern, with platforms proving difficult to navigate, even for experienced users.
- ePortfolio stood out because it met all NCG's core requirements. It enabled the import of registers and learner data, supported the tracking of progress reviews, supported individual requirements for each college, and integrated with their MIS system.

LONG-TERM VALUE:

- **Continued development:** ePortfolio continues to evolve with new features like the modernised new Apprenticeship Management ePortfolio learner and assessor experience.
- **Responsive product team:** NCG works closely with the product team, providing feedback on new features.
- **Committed partnership:** As Ross explains *"ePortfolio is integrated now into our daily working life, it's very important for us."*

Moving Forward

NCG continues to expand their use of ePortfolio's capabilities:

- **Full new Apprenticeship Management system rollout:** Gradually rolling out the new assessor dashboard features across all colleges as functionality becomes available.
- **Co-creation and ongoing optimisation:** Ross continues to collaborate closely with the product team to "push the system to its maximum potential," demonstrating a partnership-driven approach to product development. This ongoing collaboration ensures continuous optimisation and evolution of ePortfolio, reflecting the shared insights and needs of education providers and OneAdvanced Education.





Powering the World of Education

Ready to see how ePortfolio and Apprenticeship Management can provide the flexibility, automation, and central oversight your organisation needs?

Get in touch



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