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apprentice

**Aptem at Work —
Ada, the National
College for Digital Skills**

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Case study — Ada, the National College for Digital Skills: How Aptem helped with their Ofsted inspection

Founded in 2014 by Mark Smith and Tom Fogden, the College – which opened to students in 2016 – is based in Broad Lane, Tottenham.

Ada provides free advanced digital skills training. It has a mission to work with industry to empower its students, especially those from low income backgrounds and young women. Applicants do not need to have any prior qualifications – they are tested by interview and an aptitude test. Ada has high-profile founding partners – Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Deloitte, IBM, Gamesys, King and the Aldridge Foundation – and it is funded by private donations as well as £31 million from central government and the Greater London Authority. Ada was featured in the Guardian in 2016.



The College was set up because the founders observed a lack of digital skills training in London and the UK. They noted that over 130,000 tech jobs are created each year, yet students were leaving their education without the skills they needed to jump into those jobs.

Ada has a particular interest in encouraging social mobility, whether for people from low-income backgrounds or to promote women in technology. In its recent Ofsted report, Ada was noted as playing a critical role in *“raising participation rates among women and those from deprived backgrounds in digital skills training.”*

The College offers both digital training courses and apprenticeship training for some prestigious companies including Google, Facebook, Deloitte, EY, British Land, Asos, Siemens and more. They plan to expand across the UK in the coming years.

This case study is about how Aptem helped with the College’s first Ofsted inspection.

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Before Aptem

Ada had about 90 apprentices before they rolled out Aptem, and they managed them through a Google form. With so many apprentices, it wasn't an efficient way of organising them, and they weren't able to track progress or show how the student's learning points were being mapped onto the Standards.

So they started talking to the MWS team about Aptem and bought into the system. But it just so happened that as Ada were implementing Aptem in the College, Ofsted arrived to do an inspection, says Hazel Colbé, Head of Apprenticeship Programmes at Ada:

"This was our first inspection. We were in the middle of rolling out Aptem when Ofsted unexpectedly came in."



How Aptem helped with Ada's Ofsted inspection

If Aptem was not yet fully implemented when Ofsted turned up, how did it help with the inspection?

Ada demonstrated Aptem to Ofsted to show them what it could do.

"Aptem," says Hazel, "helped Ada to show Ofsted that we recognised we were still learning, that we were implementing measures to improve, that we had students in the system and that we'd got it right."

"It was showing the Inspector that we were doing something about the areas that we know we weren't 100% on top of and that we were making improvements."

"And Ofsted were impressed by the features Aptem had to offer."

"They liked the percentage barriers," Hazel said, "where you map it against the Standard, and it shows student progress. It goes green at 65% or 70%, and you can open it up and see that that's the hours they've spent doing the learning or if there's evidence submitted within that criterion."

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Hazel Colbé,

Head of Apprenticeship Programmes at
Ada National College for Digital Skills

What Aptem means for Ada

Hazel specified that, with Aptem, all the data, from documents, emails and everything that is needed, is all in one place.

Aptem allows Ada to map progress onto the Standards clearly: *“how what we are teaching is leading to the Standards but also submitting the evidence from what they are doing at work.”*

It allows them to quickly show employers what is happening with their apprentices: *“that we are keeping the employers on the journey and keeping them informed about their apprentices.”*

And Aptem is an important part of data management: *“In terms of day to day, verifying the hours and having one central place for students to upload evidence is proving very key to delivery.”*

Importantly, Aptem helps them to meet one of their key goals, which is to encourage social mobility, says Hazel:

“From our end, Aptem enables us to track and monitor students and the indices of social mobility more. We can use it to find out about student experiences, and it can help us target action in that area.”

Ada now has over 150 apprentices on their books – and they are expanding.

What the Ofsted report means for Ada

For a College just starting out and with an ambitious plan for growth, an Ofsted report of Good with Outstanding Features is highly significant. As Hazel says:

“We hope – because we’re not just the apprenticeship team, we have a sixth form as well – we hope that it will show the good work we are doing and that we’ve been recognised. This is your official stamp. A lot of parents look at it. A lot of organisations check for it.

“Having the rating has allowed us to shout about ourselves even more than we currently do.

Ada’s positive Ofsted report is down to the hard work of the staff – having the energy, ambition and commitment to achieve something that will make a real difference to Londoners; and hopefully, in the years to come, the rest of the UK.

It’s great to know that the team at MWS Technology, with their innovative apprenticeship platform Aptem, helped Ada to show Ofsted they were learning, growing and succeeding.”

“Aptem helped Ada to show Ofsted that we were implementing measures to support our students, that we had students in the system and helped us demonstrate our successes.”

Hazel Colbé,

Head of Apprenticeship Programmes at
Ada National College for Digital Skills



Find out how Aptem can help you with all aspects of AEB, traineeship and apprenticeship delivery.

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