



ALPS Wins Handheld Learning Award for Innovation 2009

Assessment & Learning in Practice Settings (ALPS) has received a prestigious award from the mobile learning industry's most famous conference.

The Handheld Learning Awards for Innovation were held in London on 5th October during the Handheld Learning Conference. Attended by more than 1,500 international delegates, the Conference is the world's leading event about learning assisted by mobile technologies. ALPS walked away with the 'Best Innovation' Award in the Tertiary, Further Education and Higher Education category.

ALPS is an ambitious, collaborative programme involving five universities, 16 health and social care professions, the NHS, the Strategic Health Authority and commercial partners (ecommet, MyKnowledgeMap and T-Mobile). Its mission is to improve the competence and confidence of graduating health and social care students by improving the standard and delivery of work based learning and assessment.

ALPS has provided over 900 students and staff with secure access to IT systems and network coverage via a mobile device. Students are able to create and securely store work whilst they are out on clinical placements, and keep in touch with their academic tutors and peers. ALPS has created a complete assessment cycle which begins when tutors set and send out assessments to their students mobile devices via the ALPS Assessment Suite. When students have completed the assessments, they automatically synchronise with their own ALPS e-portfolio, where students can review and reflect on how they have done, and receive timely feedback and support from their tutor.

Additional support for students and staff using mobile devices is available through a shared helpdesk service based at the University of Bradford. The helpdesk is there to resolve any problems users may have with the devices, and is also a useful source of tips and advice for students and staff across all five partner universities.

The Handheld Learning Awards recognised the versatility of the ALPS programme, and the judging panel who shortlisted ALPS identified various benefits to student learning. Mobilised learning material such as instructional videos, PowerPoint presentations, and guides and quizzes are readily available for students. They can also access email, the internet, and create videos, photos and audio recordings using the devices.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, host Jason Bradbury from TV's The Gadget Show said that he had been impressed at the high standard of projects he had learned about at Handheld Learning. The winners were ultimately decided by the general public, who were invited to vote for the person/programme they felt were the most innovative in each category.

Prof Trudie Roberts, Director of ALPS said, 'I am delighted that ALPS' achievements have been recognised by the Handheld Learning Awards. Learning and teaching are at the centre of ALPS work and our aim is to improve the experience of students, helping them to become competent and confident professionals. Going mobile allows us to support students on placement where there is often no access to PCs or the internet, allowing them to feel connected in what can be a lonely and challenging environment. This award is a testament to the innovative work being undertaken by ALPS, and the contribution of all the people involved in the programme across five universities and 16 health and social care professions.'

For more information about ALPS visit: www.alps-cetl.ac.uk