



Ashford University

PRIVATE SECTOR SOLUTIONS

Pearson has years of experience in higher education, particularly with for-profit institutions. They understood immediately what I wanted and knew how to organize the resources to deliver the product.

Founded in 1918, Ashford University is a private, liberal arts college in Clinton, Iowa, with a focus on affordable education. In 2005, it created a College of External Studies offering online programs to supplement its existing on-campus curriculum.

Assessments are enormously important in education, especially to the faculty of Ashford University and to their Provost, Dr. Elizabeth Tice. They are passionate about having well-written curriculum materials. The standard test materials available for their new online curriculum were exactly what they didn't want. They decided to completely recreate the test items corresponding to a variety of courses across programs and in all subject areas.

"I wanted an instructional designer to write questions at a higher cognitive level that would force students to really think about content of the course," says Tice.

There was also a second issue that they hoped to address: accrediting bodies were beginning to look more closely at schools' assessment materials. Tice wanted the assessments for Ashford's new online courses to be of the highest quality.

For this challenging project, Tice selected Pearson Learning Solutions—and she did so for some very solid reasons. Only Pearson has instructional designers with the appropriate technology skills and subject-matter experience to review the textbooks and assessment materials, create new assessments, and deliver the project within Tice's desired deadline.

Carrie Spagnola-Doyle, director of curriculum and instruction at Pearson Learning Solutions, confirmed

Tice's assessment needs and expedited the Pearson plan into action. "We brought in a dedicated instructional designer who understood exactly what Ashford needed for their assessments," says Spagnola-Dole. "She wrote custom assessments for each course that they required, at the higher cognitive level that they were looking for, and in exactly the format the university needed to make the process of uploading them to its learning management system most efficient."

Tice was impressed. "The quality of the questions were thoughtful and required students to know the material well," she says. "Students are complaining about the questions being 'tough.' That's a good indicator that we have achieved what we set out to do."

Looking back on her Pearson experience, Tice says, "Pearson Learning Solutions was responsive to what I needed and willing to work with us to make it happen. They produced a quality product."

Tice was so pleased, in fact, that she asked Pearson Learning Solutions to work on additional projects, including the development and revision of all the courses for an entire masters program in Learning Technology to fit a dual audience of teachers and corporate trainers.