



Hallmark College of Technology

PRIVATE SECTOR SOLUTIONS

“Changing lives one at a time is our goal and our commitment. Our customized MyFoundationsLab helps us do that.”

—Kristen Smith
General Education Chair

Hallmark College of Technology in San Antonio, Texas, offers accredited degree programs that provide the kind of targeted training that both traditional-age and nontraditional-age learners need to quickly move into high-paying careers. Committed to excellence, Hallmark continually expands and develops its online and on-site programs to meet the current and future demands of business and industry. Programs are offered for technical, business, and health-care positions and are supported by modern laboratories, up-to-the-minute computer equipment, and student-specific work areas.

The typical Hallmark student juggles a full load: family, work, and ongoing educational goals. The vast majority of students also require remediation in math, English, or both. Supporting these students on their path to college-level learning means more than just providing content: these students demand an accessible, flexible learning system capable of addressing core foundational skills, as well as time constraints and issues involving fear and insecurity.

By 2008, Hallmark administration knew that confronting the college’s high remediation rates would be the most effective way to ensure overall student success—and would help students save money and valuable time. At the time, Hallmark faculty were completely satisfied with the Pearson textbooks they were using in their curricula, and some were already using MyLab products. “We’ve always had a good experience with Pearson,” says Kristen Smith, Hallmark’s general education chair. Turning to Pearson, a trusted source, to expand the college’s offerings was a natural next step. Hallmark’s Pearson representative understood the situation and had a solution in-house and at hand: MyFoundationsLab and the custom technology capabilities of the Pearson Learning Solutions group.

“First and foremost, we sought a learning program that would smoothly integrate into our present class structure,” says Pearl Reyes-Dominguez, dean of academic affairs. “The Pearson Learning Solutions team showed us how MyFoundationsLab on an eCollege platform could work within our courses as part of the credit hours requirement. From there, they showed us how much more the program had to offer.”

MyFoundationsLab enables faculty to assess and optimally address each student’s learning needs at the level that is most appropriate for that student. Via an integrated set of online assessments in developmental reading, writing, and math, each student is presented with a personalized study plan designed to help improve study skills and develop the specific reading, writing, and math skills the student lacks. Based on the proven success of MyMathLab, MyReadingLab, and MyWritingLab, MyFoundationsLab engages and motivates remedial learners of all learning styles and strengths through a host of interactive features, including videos, guided exercises, games, and step-by-step tutorials. “The program offers Hallmark students a richer, more robust learning experience,” says Pearson Learning Solutions consultant Dan Gizzi. “They’re more engaged in their learning and motivated to do homework.”

Hallmark students are required to use MyFoundationsLab during class time for homework, practice quizzes, and assessment tests. To further personalize and support the learning experience, each student meets weekly with an instructor to assess progress, discuss concerns, and tailor next steps.

For extra help, students may access the program at any time that’s convenient for them—and either from home or in any other place with an Internet connection. No matter what time students choose to work, the program’s immediate feedback, Show Me and Ask the Instructor features, and pointers to online resources ensure that help is never more than a click away.

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In addition to curriculum-based content, students are provided with a library of activities on topics designed to help them establish better study skills, including time management, effective note taking, and how to prepare for exams.

Today, Hallmark's faculty and administration unanimously agree: the new online solution works. By taking advantage of the myriad resources offered by MyFoundationsLab, students who were once psychologically and financially drained by repeatedly failing core courses, are experiencing success—not only in passing their courses but also by earning As and Bs. "Initially low-scoring students are progressing faster than ever before," says Denise Jeffreys, Hallmark's student services coordinator and MyFoundationsLab administrator. "Our new solution helps us identify exactly what motivates a specific student, thereby enabling us to tailor our program and services to best help each one."

Faculty appreciate certain behind-the-scenes benefits as well. Thanks to the program's built-in reporting, instructors across departments can be in clear communication about shared students. "Because everyone is on the same page, we are better equipped to provide wrap-around support for each student," says Reyes-Dominguez. "This kind of individual and highly personalized support is a major facet of our teaching culture and helps set us apart from other career schools."

News of the program's success has spread among faculty and the student population. "Students recognize that the program can help them and are

recommending it to each other," says Jeffreys. "Even those who didn't qualify for the remedial program are requesting it as a way to prepare for college algebra. Faculty outside the course have taken to it, too. Many assign MyFoundationsLab tutorials to college-level students who need to brush up in targeted areas."

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From an institutional standpoint as well, Hallmark's customized MyFoundationsLab is a winner. "The program helps us serve more students," says Smith. "Students know that if they went to another school, they'd need to take more than one course in remediation, but with us they need only one."

From retention rates to student testimonials, all of the feedback is positive. Most important, the program helps Hallmark fulfill its mission of excellence in education. "Changing lives one at a time is our goal and our commitment," says Smith. "Our customized MyFoundationsLab helps us do that."