DXC TECHNOLOGY

Building South Australia's digital workforce of the future

CUSTOMER
TAFE SA

LOCATION
Adelaide, Australia

INDUSTRY
Public Sector / Education

Challenge

- Significant national skills shortages in ICT
- Low number of people entering the STEM space
- A limited emerging ICT talent pipeline in South Australia

Solution

- Collaboration between DXC and TAFE SA provides programs that combine study and real-world, hands-on work experience
- Certificate IV in IT (Systems Administration Support) Industry Placement Program
- Digital Traineeship Program (Diploma of Software Development)

Results

- Workforce-ready, highly employable ICT graduates with formal qualifications and practical industry experience
- Over 90% of students gain full-time employment within three months of completion
- Increased course completion rates for TAFE SA (80% vs 50% industry average)
- A pipeline of local talent for enhanced service delivery and support for DXC customers

Building South Australia's digital workforce of the future

TAFE SA is the largest vocational education and training provider in South Australia. Its vision is to provide quality education to South Australians via job-focused training across various industries, from entry-level certificates to bachelor's degrees. TAFE SA focuses on practical, hands-on skills and experience to ensure students graduate with a competitive edge and the skills employers value.

With South Australia facing significant skills shortages in areas such as defence, space, cyber and high-tech, TAFE SA and DXC recognised the need to educate and train highly skilled and adaptive talent to support these industries, whilst simultaneously creating jobs that will stimulate the economy of South Australia.

With 1200+ employees in South Australia, DXC Technology has worked alongside state and federal government and local businesses for many years, creating new and innovative technology solutions that benefit South Australia and the broader Australian community.

Innovative collaboration

The partnership between TAFE SA and DXC was initially established in response to the South Australian Government's Skilling South Australia initiative. With South Australia facing significant skills shortages in areas such as defence, space, cyber and high-tech, TAFE SA and DXC recognised the need to educate and train highly skilled and adaptive talent to support these industries, whilst simultaneously creating jobs that will stimulate the economy of South Australia.

Skilling South Australia is an initiative of the South Australian Government in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. Since 2018, Skilling South Australia has helped more than 2,600 participants obtain skills and vocational qualifications to build career pathways through apprenticeships and traineeships, and to meet the workforce needs of industry.

A first for South Australia

The dual objectives of early discussions between TAFE SA and DXC focused on the development of a student placement program enabling participants to obtain qualifications relevant to current industry needs, together with appropriate hands-on experience to ensure workforce readiness at the completion of their studies – and to build a high-quality workforce pipeline for DXC's national, Adelaide-based Delivery Hub.

"The programs allow students to understand what's happening in the real world. They come into the office, work with customers, gain hands-on experience and see their theoretical knowledge applied practically to real-life IT scenarios."

— Luke Stephenson
Learning and Development Trainer, DXC Technology

Similar to an apprenticeship program, where students undertake trade qualifications through vocational studies along with on-the-job training, the aim of the TAFE SA/DXC collaboration was to bring vocational learning and training to the corporate world.

The discussions led to the introduction in 2019, of two co-designed training programs with a curriculum best suited to current industry needs and requirements: the TAFE SA Certificate IV in IT (Systems Administration Support) Industry Work Placement Program; and the Diploma of Software Development Digital Traineeship Program, which offers the opportunity for students to progress their studies with advanced classroom learning applied in a real-world environment.

These innovative co-designed training programs are a first in the South Australian corporate sphere, and the model is unique to the ICT industry where typically the main focus is on engaging university graduates. The collaboration is also distinct in that students undertaking the Diploma of Software Development Digital Traineeship Program are paid during their work placement period.

The partnership between TAFE SA and DXC builds upon DXC's commitment to enhance ICT capabilities within South Australia, assist in retaining homegrown talent, and to nurture the skills required for a digital future to support the state's vision to be a world innovation leader.

Implementation

Shortly after the introduction of the program, DXC became aware of gaps in participant knowledge during work placement. Together, DXC and TAFE SA reviewed the training and restructured the program to ensure students consolidated their theoretical and technical knowledge prior to commencing their hands-on work placement.

Since amending the period of classroom training, the program has been adapted and refined over time. Continuous improvement, based on feedback from students and input from DXC teams and TAFE SA subject matter experts, has been integrated into the program. Technical skills development and competency is continually supplemented by learnings at TAFE SA.

Having addressed knowledge gaps in previous curriculum delivery, the co-designed programs now provide the competencies, experience and workplace knowledge to equip students with the in-demand skills required to support the emerging needs of customers in the constantly evolving technology landscape.

Course content, as well as the hands-on experience at DXC, gives students the opportunity to be workforce ready when they graduate, providing a variety of new and enhanced career pathways.

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TAFE SA and DXC's co-designed programs aim to help South Australians from a diverse range of backgrounds build meaningful careers in technology.

The programs also enable students to gain external vendor certifications (such as Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services, ITIL) – something students can't usually access during tertiary and vocational studies.

Building a skilled workforce

The Certificate IV in IT (Systems Administration Support) Industry Work Placement Program gives students an understanding of IT through real-world experience whilst working at DXC. The 12-month program involves full-time study at TAFE SA for the first six months, then three days of study at TAFE SA and two days a week in work placement at DXC for the final six months.

During work placement, students integrate into DXC's Delivery Hub. The Hub is designed to serve private sector and secure federal and state government customers. The 700-seat facility includes IT professionals trained to manage on-premise, hosted and public cloud infrastructure environments. It provides high-demand, specialised experts across architecture, solution design, application support, Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) service management, cybersecurity, project management, service desk, and account management. The Hub runs 24x7x365 on shift to deliver high priority incident management, Infosec Registered Assessors Program (IRAP) certified public cloud management, first response and infrastructure support, service desk, as well as critical response and return to service for DXC supported systems.

DXC's significant regional presence exposes students to various customer delivery scenarios across different industries and organisations throughout Australia and New Zealand, and in some cases, globally. Whilst employed in the Delivery Hub, students work side-by-side with IT professionals who share subject matter expertise to further their learning and development. Working first-hand with end user customers across a variety of industries, students are able to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-life IT scenarios, and have the opportunity to gain experience with emerging technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, software development, analytics, data science and cybersecurity.

In addition, as a global organisation with a large regional presence, DXC provides students with the chance to work with a geographically dispersed workforce, including the opportunity to absorb soft skills such as time, people and process management, as well as exposure to accompanying corporate functions such as policies, procedures and governance.

The programs also enable students to gain external vendor certifications (such as Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services, ITIL) – something students can't usually access during tertiary and vocational studies. These 'value add' certifications supplement their studies and complement the skills required in the IT world.

High-performing students who successfully complete the Certificate IV in IT (Systems Administration Support) Industry Work Placement Program are offered a full-time role at DXC, or if they wish to pursue further studies, a position in the Diploma of Software Development Digital Traineeship Program. This is unique in that DXC is the only organisation that offers the Diploma as a traineeship.

To ensure the program's success, TAFE SA and DXC have assigned dedicated resources to manage the programs and individual participants. A 'buddying' system is included in which students are partnered with DXC specialists, such as service desk and desktop support operators, who act as on-the-job mentors. This focuses on participants progressing their learning in specific areas under the guidance of experienced subject matter experts. Managers and lecturers also share their expertise with students to further their learning, development and experience.

During regular catch-up meetings, student progress is monitored, issues are discussed, and a constructive medium is provided to formalise additional support needs. For example, as a direct output of these meetings, DXC introduced aspects to the program relating to business operations such as 'process compliance'. This teaches students about regulations, industry standards, and how non-compliance can tangibly impact a customer's business via key performance indicators (KPIs) and service level agreements (SLAs).

TAFE SA and DXC complete six-monthly evaluations to ensure the curriculum and student experience continues to meet industry needs and qualifications, and the skills requirements for South Australia. The quality of students participating is analysed, and ideas are developed to broaden intake, attract more students, and increase diversity.

As an end-to-end IT services organisation with a global presence, it's vital that DXC has skilled employees with well-rounded, hands-on capabilities to meet its customers' emerging technology demands. Adding students to complement DXC's full-time employee base provides a highly agile and manoeuvrable workforce able to rapidly respond to changing customer and technology needs.

Course content, as well as the hands-on experience at DXC, gives students the opportunity to be workforce ready when they graduate, providing a variety of new and enhanced career pathways.

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> **— Brendan Clothier**
> Digital Services Engineer, DXC Technology, and former TAFE SA student

Diversity and inclusion

TAFE SA and DXC's co-designed programs aim to help South Australians from a diverse range of backgrounds build meaningful careers in technology. A large proportion of participants come from an English as Second Language (ESL) or migrant background, with many of these students seeking re-skilling. The programs foster diversity and inclusion with pathways in place to attract females, First Nations people, ESL participants, and at-home or late-career changers.

Together with TAFE SA, DXC is also developing a bespoke program for First Nations people in partnership with Aboriginal communities. DXC's Social Impact Practice First Nations Program provides frameworks to support vocational programs to encourage more First Nation students to engage in the IT workforce. The new program will provide technical training while bringing together key cultural aspects such as engagement between DXC, TAFE SA, First Nations community groups, and the trainees themselves.

Results and benefits

The co-designed programs have seen significant success, with a high portion of participants gaining full-time employment, and ongoing curriculum improvements ensuring industry relevance and higher course completion rates. The on-the-job experience students gain is invaluable.

Luke Stephenson, Learning and Development Trainer for DXC Technology said, "The programs allow students to understand what's happening in the real world. They come into the office, work with customers, gain hands-on experience and see their theoretical knowledge applied practically to real-life IT scenarios.

"Students benefit from obtaining formal qualifications and industry experience simultaneously when they graduate, making them workforce ready and ultimately more employable."

Stephenson continued, "Since the Certificate IV in IT (Systems Administration Support) Industry Work Placement Program was established in

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For DXC, TAFE SA and the South Australian community, these programs bring new people into the STEM space who may not have previously considered it a viable career. Having an increased pipeline of qualified students has enabled DXC to enhance its service delivery capacity to support the needs of more end-user customers across Australia and globally. The programs have also provided the state of South Australia with a highly skilled workforce realising further benefits through additional job creation and economic stimulation.

Brendan Clothier, DXC Technology Digital Services Engineer and former TAFE SA student said, "I decided to become involved in a STEM career after working for 12 years as a baker. My placement at DXC has certainly taught me how to work with customers, handle IT-related problems, and how to troubleshoot IT issues. It was one of the best training experiences I ever had as it was hands-on and very well supervised."

Clothier continued, "After I finished my placement, I was encouraged by one of the supervisors to provide my CV for an upcoming position at DXC. I consider myself incredibly lucky to be hired almost on the spot after I finished my IT studies. The TAFE SA and DXC program really gave me a foot in the door for my new IT career."

In addition, TAFE SA has experienced increased course completion rates with the initial DXC Certificate IV cohort realising an 80% completion rate compared to the industry average of 50%.

Students undertaking these courses are eager to learn and take on new challenges, often offering a different perspective and new ways of thinking to solve problems. John Crampton, ANZ IT Outsourcing and Cloud Services Lead for DXC Technology commented, "The training brings several benefits to DXC's Delivery Hub. Importantly to me is the sense of enthusiasm and a desire to make a difference by contributing to everything going on in the organisation. This provides more innovative solutions for customers and better overall outcomes."

Greg Lynch, Principal Lecturer, Information Technology, Business and Arts at TAFE SA said, "This is an excellent program to be involved in. Students study for a Certificate IV qualification and then apply those skills within the workplace at DXC. The support we've received from DXC right from the beginning has been amazing. The lengths they have gone to ensure this program is successful, I can't rate highly enough."

Also vital to the programs' success is executive-level support and help from DXC's business line managers, who are happy investing time in students' development. Seelan Nayagam, DXC Technology's Asia Pacific President, said, "DXC has been running education programs across South Australia for

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several years now, and while these assist to supply skills in high-demand industries, they are also contributing to the broadening of South Australia's STEM-skills base. We saw a gap in skills in our workforce and realised we had to start at the grassroots by providing students with educational and vocational pathways into technology careers. By raising awareness of these pathways for technology careers, we aim to provide the next generation workforce for the South Australian economy, and create a new talent pool that prepares us for a digital future."

The future

The success of these programs in South Australia has been the foundation for DXC to roll out similar models to support skills pathways and talent pipelines. The Digital Traineeship Program structure has been replicated in Tasmania as an evolution of the TasTAFE Certificate IV Program for students undertaking Diploma-level studies. A similar model will shortly commence with Western Sydney University. The Bachelor of Information

and Communications Technology (ICT), known as the 'Aerotropolis Academy', has been designed to give students access to state-of-the-art technology and excellence in airport innovation to support the development and operations of Western Sydney Airport, where DXC has been selected as the master systems integrator.

Chris Bertram, DXC Technology's South Australian State Leader, said, "DXC looks after many global organisations' mission-critical IT systems. We enjoy the benefits of traineeships – the energy, vibrancy and new ways of thinking these students bring. We talk a lot about being workforce ready. These programs go a long way to ensuring students are workforce ready. There is a big push from the state government in several high-tech industries like defence, space and healthcare. We can play a part in bringing a pipeline of new energy to address specific skills shortages in these areas while building a pipeline of talent for DXC's Delivery Hub, and simultaneously creating jobs to stimulate the economy of South Australia."

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About DXC Technology

DXC Technology (NYSE: DXC) helps global companies run their mission-critical systems and operations while modernizing IT, optimizing data architectures, and ensuring security and scalability across public, private and hybrid clouds. The world's largest companies and public sector organizations trust DXC to deploy services to drive new levels of performance, competitiveness, and customer experience across their IT estates. Learn more about how we deliver excellence for our customers and colleagues at DXC.com.