EDGE Learning is the new tool for online training and professional development

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The learning management system employees use to get trained on everything from HIPAA regulations to how to safely drive University golf carts is being replaced with EDGE Learning, which will go live Nov. 16.

EDGE Learning – which stands for employee development, growth and engagement – is the result of more than two years of work by a team of representatives from several units. The result is a modern, mobile-friendly system designed to streamline the process of completing required trainings and, ultimately, provide professional development opportunities.

"The intent is for this to be a growth and development tool," says Ashley Kurtz, learning and development manager with Human Resources. "It can help meet the University's larger visions for career plans and go beyond compliance and regular department training. We want people to be able to self-explore."

EDGE Learning, which replaces UAccess Learning, has an online interface, will provide users with a smoother experience, said Greg Wessels, senior business analyst with UITS.

"My goal when I started on this project was to allow users to get into the system and take the training with as few confusing steps as possible," Wessels says. "The user interface is cloud-based and constantly being updated."

The platform was developed in partnership with learning system provider Saba.

Wessels says EDGE Learning also integrates with UAIR's online data, making it easier for University units to provide information to regulatory agencies that require certification verification.

Putting EDGE to the test

As part of the development process, 176 employees tested the system. One of them was Ginger Hunt, senior director of online learning and instruction design in the James E. Rogers College of Law, who gave EDGE Learning glowing reviews.

"The navigation of the learning system was very easy," Hunt said. "The user interface is much nicer than it was for the old UAccess Learning system, and it interacted with my phone and my Outlook calendar and everything. It was 100% seamless."

Hunt believes her testing experience – which consisted of searching for, scheduling and completing training courses, and managing her certificates – shows the team hit on the most important aspects of a successful online learning system.

"The first piece is whether it's easy for learners to go in and access everything, and the second piece is whether the trainings are engaging enough that people are going to want to come back and take more," Hunt said. "I think the answer is yes to both of those."

Benefits for managers

Kurtz says one of the biggest advantages of EDGE Learning is that it lets supervisors assign and recommend trainings and track the courses that employees are taking, allowing managers to take a more active role in professional development of their employees.

Starting in the spring, Kurtz expects EDGE Learning to begin offering professional development courses designed specifically for supervisors or others looking to strengthen their leadership skills.

"For example, we are thinking about a video series of management trainings," Kurtz says. "They would cover topics like, "How do you transition from being an employee to being a manager? What are the skill sets involved? What are the style choices in management? What practices can they put in place with their teams?"

While some professional development courses will be created in-house through the Office of Leadership and Organizational Development, Kurtz said, project team members are also researching outside online educational platforms that have expert-developed courses that could be offered.

Next steps

About a week before EDGE Learning goes live, there will be a blackout period so that all of the completion data from trainings that University employees have completed in UAccess Learning can be transferred. The deadline for employees
to complete any in-progress trainings in UAccess Learning is Nov. 6. Once the new system is live, users will be able to
access the URL through a button on the EDGE Learning website as well as an icon on UAccess. Employees can log in
using their NetID credentials. All trainings will be free.

During the first two weeks the system is online, Kurtz will hold live Zoom trainings on how to use the platform. For
managers, there will be trainings on how to use EDGE Learning to track their employees’ professional development. She
says implementation team members will be available to join staff meetings to work with managers and employees on how
best to use the tool. Those interested can email edge-learning@arizona.edu.

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