

TOTARA: ONBOARDING WITH THE MET OFFICE

*This is a transcript of a video
on the Totara Academy*



INTRODUCTION.

Okay. I'm Brendan Kilshaw, from the UK Met Office. I'm a Learning Technologist in our people directorate. So I look after our virtual learning environment, which includes our Totara. So The Met Office is the national meteorological service for the UK. So we're, aligned to UK Government, most people know as from the weather forecast you see on TV, but actually we do a lot more than that.

So, obviously we do do the operational meteorology, that feeds into that, and we've got a lot of science that goes behind that, a lot of technology that goes behind that. So we've got big professions in those areas in the office and obviously a quite big contingent of our sciences around climate science as well. And then we have all the other great professions that support that work, around the office.

So we're about 2000 employees based down in the Southwest, but we've got, offices and stations all over the UK and around the world actually.

How many people do you onboard at your organisation every month?

It ebbs and flows, it's difficult to put a figure on it. But we tend to have a cohort at least, a cohort a week coming into the office. So you'd be looking at sort of maybe 10 up to 20 at any time, joining in the office in all the different professions that we have, and then we'll have an influx of operational meteorologists, essentially twice a year.

So we take in trainees, usually university graduates and they would go on a training program to become operational meteorologists.

How do you get new starters into your system?

Couple of ways, I suppose. We have a link into our HR information system, our HR system, and we use the Totara HR Import to bring data across. So anyone who's working for us that has or already has an account in our system, even before they get through the door, so to speak whether that's virtually or not these days. So they exist in our system and then when they join and they log on, for the first time, they'll find a welcome email in their inbox and a number of prompts to let them know which pieces of mandatory training, the core training that they have to do as, part of their employment here will nudge them on that. Kind of brings them into our Totara, from day one, really.

What does the first interaction with the system look like to the user?

We use Totara dashboards. Our new users get slightly different view from other people, mainly around the training that they are assigned to. So they'd get an email in their inbox, follow the link, log into the learning portal, which we've got kind of linked into our active directory.

Um, so it's dead easy for them to get in. And then our dashboard just rolls up all of the things they're already enrolled in. So we have a welcome to Met Office course, a Totara course that we put together. It's really great. It's kind of a checklist of activities for our new starters to go through so that they'll see that straight front and center when they log in.

They can work through that in their own time. And then there's also mandatory elements of that, right? So there's some training that our new employees need to do in order to continue working in the Met Office. It's classic stuff like health and safety and DSC and stuff around information security. So they get prompted around that.





We can see that our test new starter in here is slightly behind on some of their training. They've got one due, are up to date on their display screen equipment. And we have a custom, red Amber Green status, report showing on the dashboard for that, which is really great for people as well. So as well as that we've rolled out competencies, which is part of Totara Perform.

That's going to be really really useful for our new starters. We're quite early days in using it, but it's a really great way of funnelling our new starters down a learning pathway that's directly associated with their job, right? So it's tailored to their role. We can see that our new starter here is a project manager and they're brand new. So they're still evidencing similar competencies that have been assigned to them. But they're assigned competencies from a framework associated with that profession. You can see all of them. You can see that they've done one, but they still got some work to do evidencing all of the others. If you dive into each of these, we really liked the way that you can describe the competency.

And then also, you can have like, associated learning with that. So it's a really great way of us kind of targeting, learning at people individually rather than you know, them having to discover it themselves. Um, so we just roll up some related learning underneath each of those competencies.

Do you provide any social learning in your onboarding experience?

Yeah. Again, um, just recently we started using Totara Engage. Um, so we have that switched on in our system. It's really great. It's early days yet, but we have, um, a number of different communities of practice and groups, um, that we, um, set workspaces for. So you can see here, we've got like a new starters workspace. With a library where we've rolled out some useful resources. Um, this is going to grow over time. We imagine this being added to, um, overtime, but it's a really great way of getting that stuff that our current employees, right, are already familiar with corporate systems. How do I book my leave? And how do I do this? How do I do that? It's a really great way of hitting people without having to drag them into a course or getting them to read reams and reams of stuff on our intranet or anything like that. So it's a really great engaged way of doing that. We just have an audience of new starters in the system. So we use our, uh, data that we take from our HR information system about when people started their employment, create an audience of new starters based on that data, they immediately get signed to the, um, to the workspace and they can go in there and do that.



How do you report on your employees onboarding experience?

So, in terms of reporting, we report upon, um, activity across the whole site. Um, obviously around our mandatory training because we have KPIs associated with that. Um, but we also monitor engagement in all our courses and one of the most obvious courses to do that in is the . the welcome to the Met Office course that we have for our new starters. So if people are dropping off, we can see that, um, in our reports, um, and it gives us the opportunity to touch base as well, especially in current times with hybrid working, things like that.

For the past two years, we've had new starters who've never been into the HQ, uh, never been into the office and stuff like that. So we want to make sure that they're still engaged, that they're still, um, finding the information they need and also finding the people that they need. Um, Engage is going to help with that. But we have built into our welcome to the Memphis course, a number of face-to-face events as well, using the seminar management in Totara. You know, that they're fairly informal. It's like, let's have a random coffee with your director. Let's meet some of your colleagues and things like that. But in the hybrid world, that's been super important for the obvious reasons. You just don't get that interaction. So we report against that a little bit, I guess, in kind of the classic, way that a university would.. In terms of their engagement with their students, but, you know, without those connotations, it's more about just our people engaging with the content that they need to, are they getting in touch with the people that they need. So it's been really helpful for that.

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