



## **'iChamps' at the University of Southampton**

This exemplar is relevant to Digital Student challenge:

***Engage in dialogue with students about their digital experience and empower students to effect change in their digital environment***

The original student 'iChamps' or digital champions project at Southampton was initiated by the Chair of the Digital Literacies Special Interest Group (DLSIG) as a way of embedding digital literacies across the curriculum. Funding was originally from a special Student Centredness project but is now mainstream via the Institute for Learning Innovation and Development (ILiAD).

The 16 iChamps work alongside staff partners in academic units and faculties across the University. Specific activities depend on the needs of the academic teams and the interests of the students, but in general they support other students and develop digital literacy events/materials for education and research. There are plans for iChamps to work with Careers on placement initiatives and in support of students' employability.

The initiative is now in its third year and processes of recruiting, recognising and supporting iChamps have matured. iChamps are not recruited solely on digital capability. They undertake a simple competences test, but this is to identify their support needs and to ensure they develop the digital practices required by their role. From this year, iChamps can collect a set of specially designed badges to recognise their work, based on the [Mozilla Open Badges](#) Interface and evidenced through an ePortfolio system. They are supported by regular meetings with their academic partners and with Fiona Harvey who coordinates the iChamps network.

Feedback from staff working with the iChamps has been very positive. The iChamps model has now been adopted in support of another initiative, the Southampton Opportunity project, and the two networks of student champions have been brought together under umbrella title of 'Engagement Champions'.

### **How does this meet the challenge?**

- Students are involved in identifying and taking forward digital initiatives.
- Students are supported and rewarded in their roles as digital champions.
- Student-led workshops have excellent uptake and are highly relevant to other students' digital needs.
- iChamps have proved able to link digital developments with other student-led initiatives e.g. placements, employability, student engagement.

### **Find out more**

- [Southampton Digital Literacies web site](#)

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