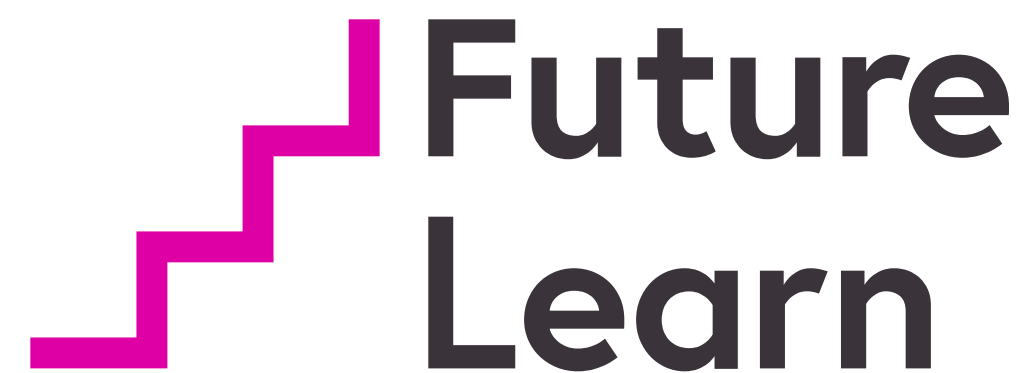


Quality Assurance at FutureLearn

David Avery
Senior Partnership Manager



 3 mins

What is FutureLearn?

What would you like to learn?

[Browse free online courses](#)



WHAT IS FUTURELEARN?

We've grown quickly

Founded by the OU

Over **15 million** course enrolments

Over **3,000** course runs since FL started

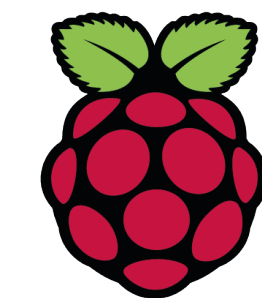
Made up of over **1,000** unique courses

We have courses in all areas

In particular Business, Healthcare, Digital
and Teaching

7 million
people learning together
at FutureLearn

WHAT IS FUTURELEARN?



Raspberry Pi



Why do we quality assure every course?

What makes a FutureLearn course different?

Audience

Pedagogy

Platform

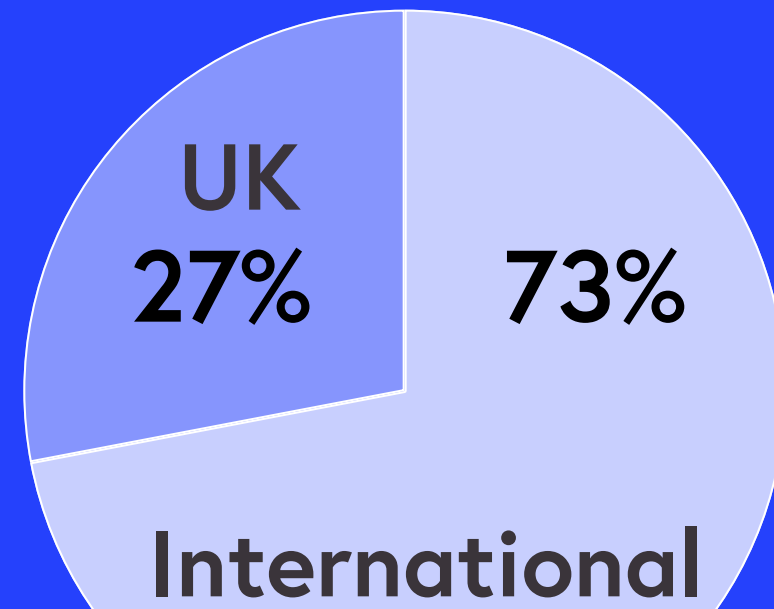
What makes a FutureLearn course different?

Our audiences

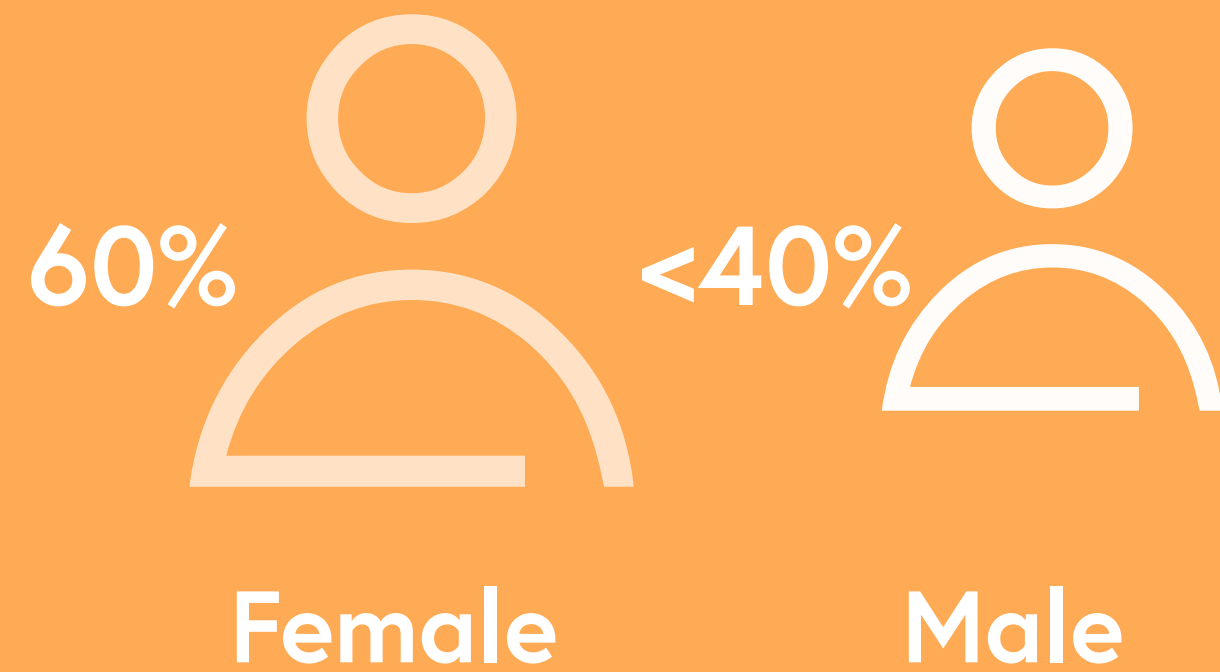
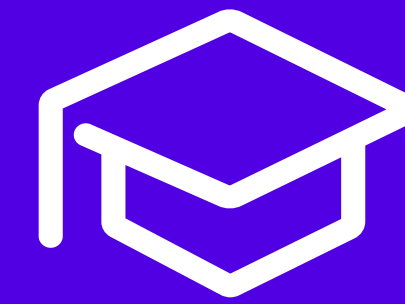
QA ensures we are user focused

Seven million learners from 230+ countries

A global and diverse audience with one thing in common



83% have a degree



23% Under 26

45% 26-45 years

22% 46-65 years

8% Over 65

Our learners have very busy lives

51%

In employment or full time education

68%

Are prime working age (26-64)

47%

take our courses for continued professional development

Source: [New research suggests FutureLearn courses are helping people up-skill in the workplace](#)





Advancers

Advancers are ambitious and self-motivated individuals, who want to do better in life, progress professionally or academically, and not stagnate. They're our key primary audience.

Age: 26-45

Location: Asia and Europe

Employment: Full-time employment

Interests: Languages & Cultures, Business & Management, Health & Psychology, Tech & Coding



What makes a FutureLearn course different?

Our pedagogy

QA ensures that courses are aligned to our social learning pedagogy

Our courses work best when they are built on the principles of storytelling, social learning and visible learning.

Storytelling

Provoking conversation

Celebrating progress

FutureLearn's pedagogy

Narratives help us to think, remember and communicate. Storytelling helps to **structure learning**.

Conversational learning is at the core of how people come together and learn.

Education is most effective when the teaching is visible to the student and the **learning is visible** to the student.

Social learning pedagogy



MASSIVE OPEN SOCIAL LEARNING

Direct learning from others

E.g. Learner posts questions and gets answers

Conversational learning

Learner engages in sustained dialogue with others

Knowledge sharing

Learners pass on ideas and information to others

Orchestrated collaboration

Mentor guides a group towards exploration of difference or shared understanding

Vicarious learning

Learner is aware of learning activity of others (e.g. notes)

Shared knowledge building

Learner develops knowledge with others through dialogue and interaction

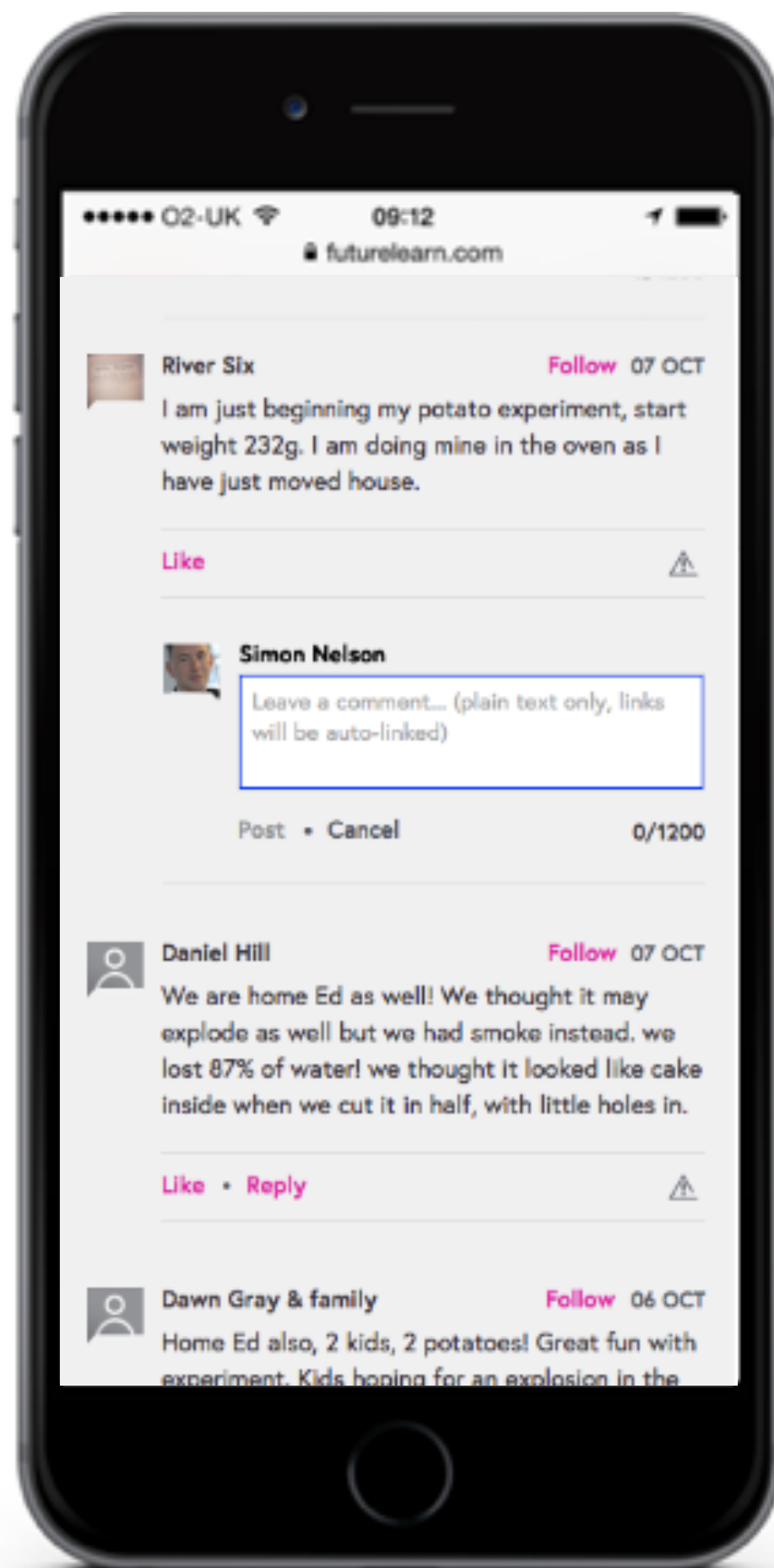
Implicit learning

Learner engages with others to develop shared representations.

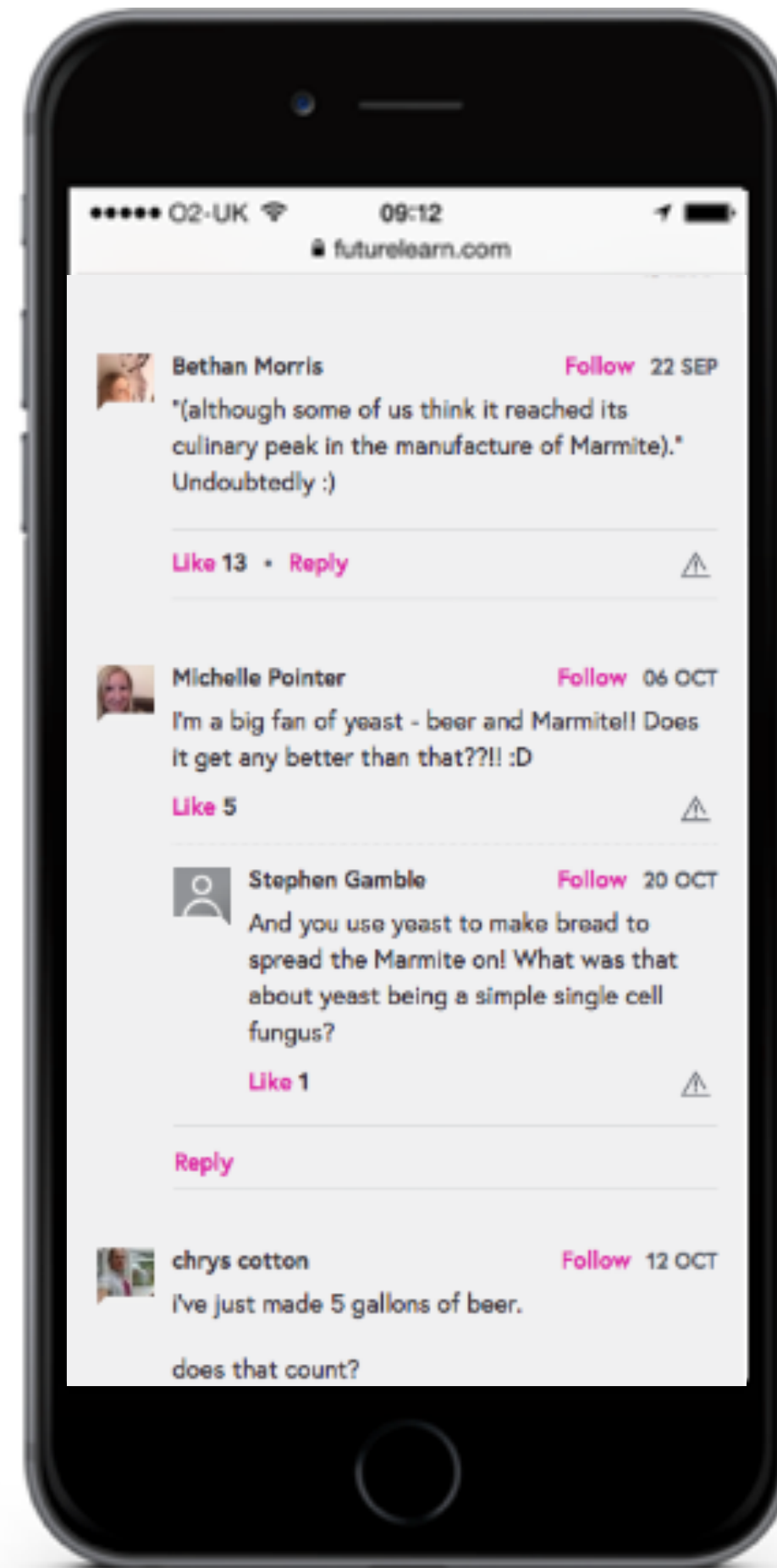
Zone of proximal development

Learner learns through interaction and conversation with more knowledgeable other

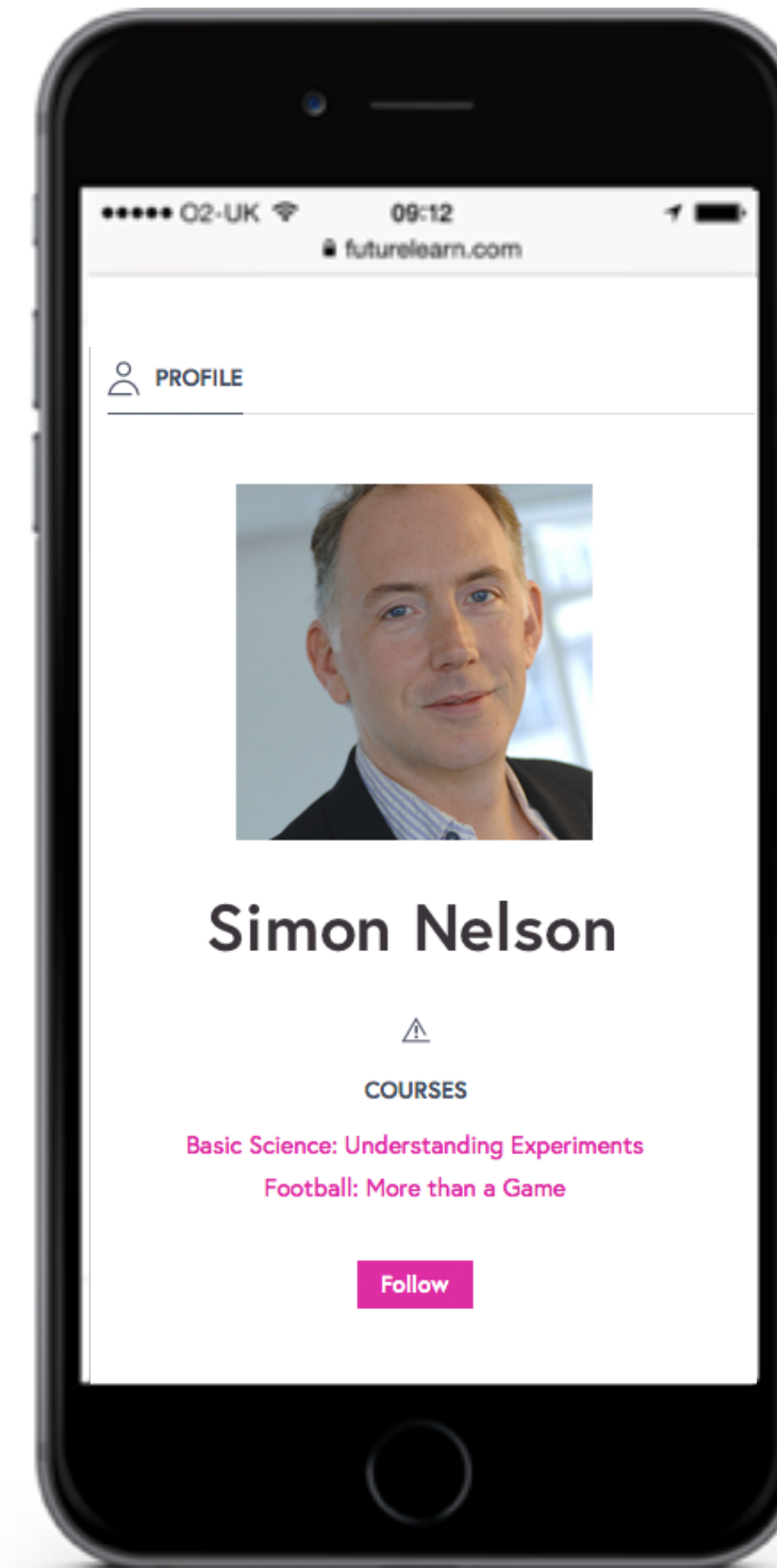
An innovative social learning approach



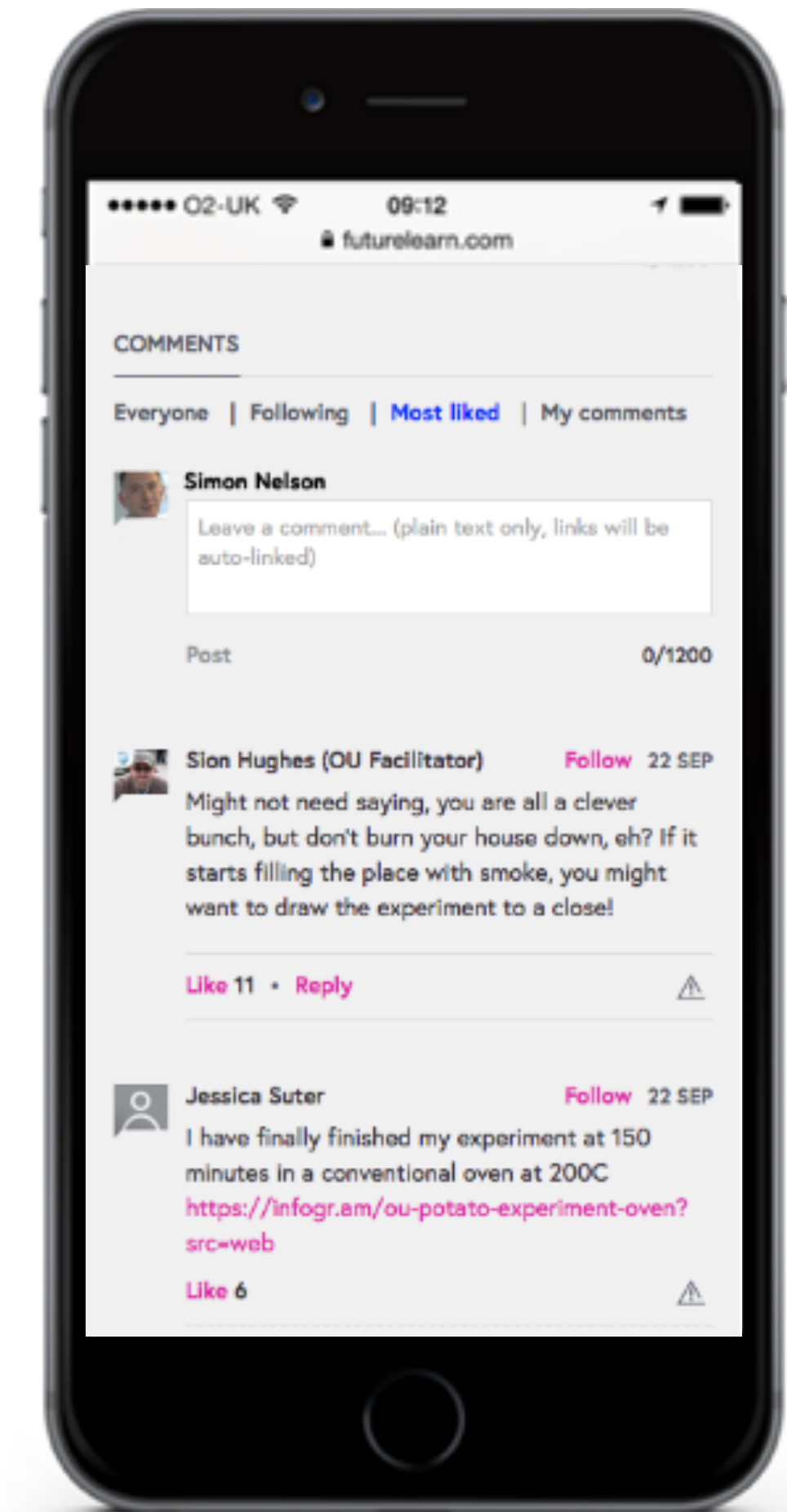
Replies



Likes



Following



Filtering

WHY DO WE QUALITY ASSURE?

"I read through the above article and thought "that's interesting" then I read the comments below, particularly the discussion of niches, and suddenly thought a whole lot more

... it's almost as if the basic course is in 2D but the postings lift it to 3D and really make it come alive."

Comment posted by Karen Carmichael Timson, learner on the Ecosystems course.



What makes a FutureLearn course different?

Our platform

QA ensures that our courses are competitive with the best of the web

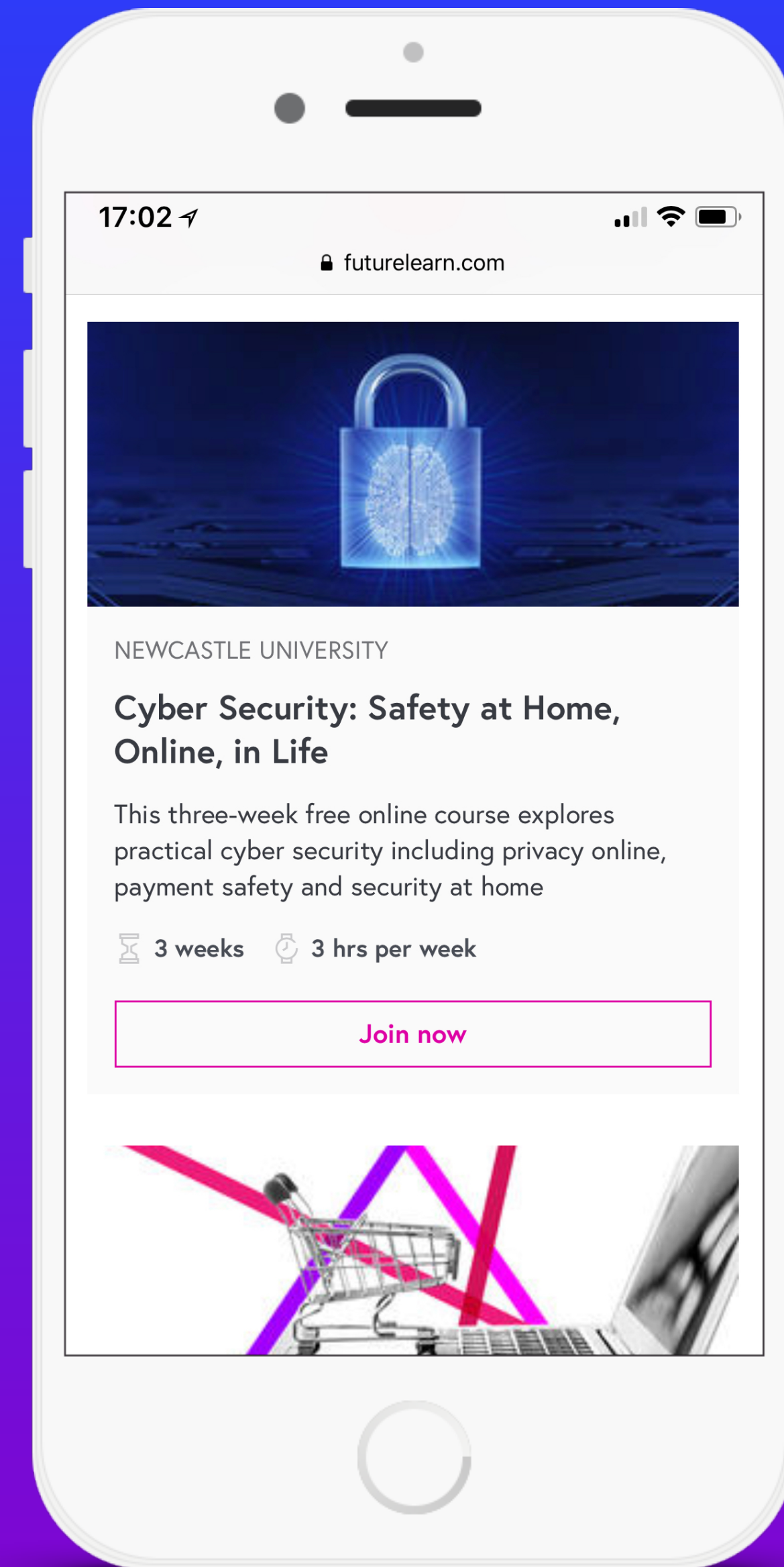
WHY DO WE QUALITY ASSURE?

A simple, delightful user experience

Mobile first platform - take a degree from your phone

50% of our usage is from mobile devices

Usability is as much about the content as the platform



Accessibility

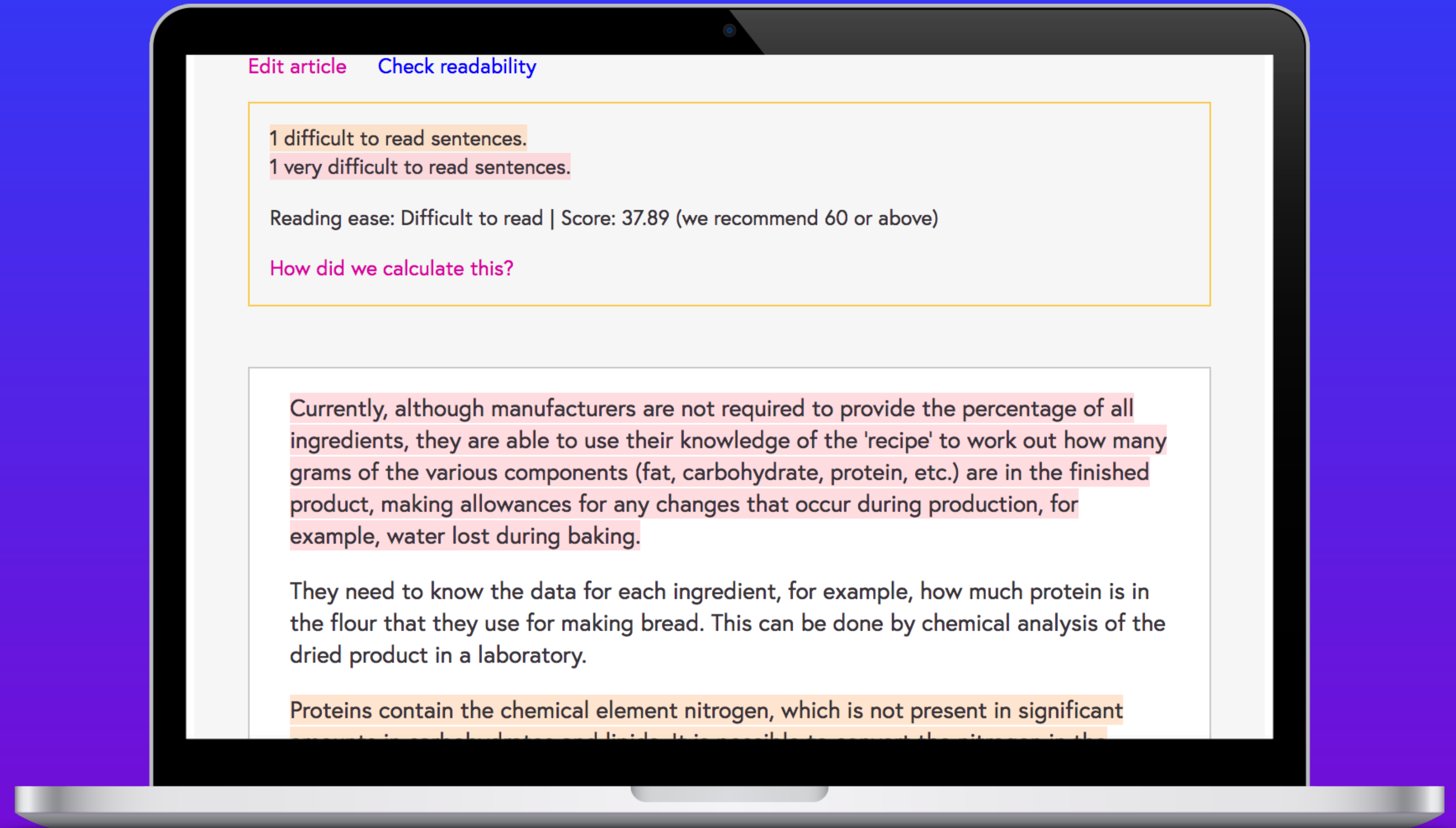
AA accessibility standard

All videos have subtitles

All images alt text

All interactive content has accessible fallbacks

We help partners ensure their content is accessible



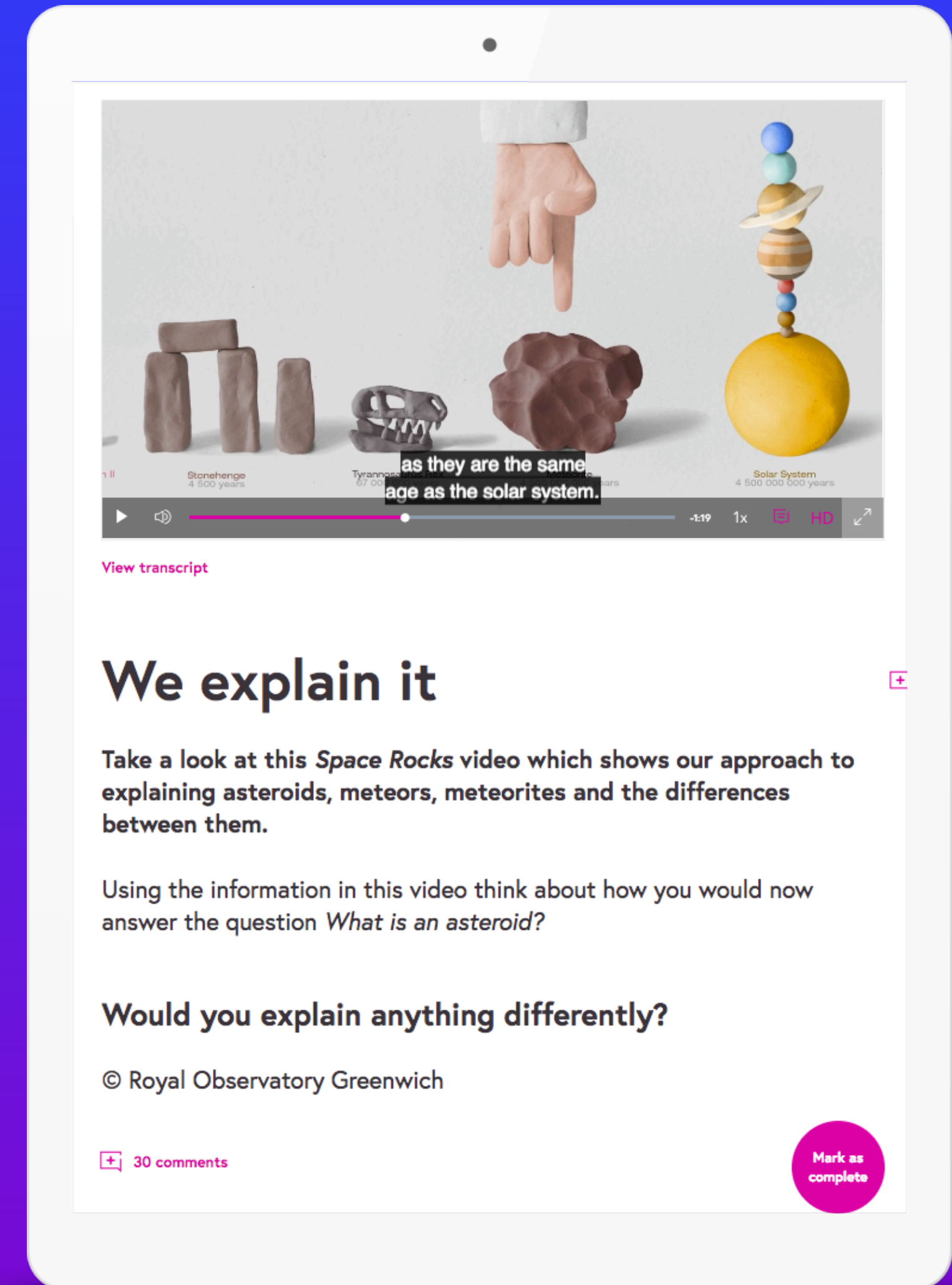
High quality content

We quality assure to ensure content is engaging

Our courses compete with the rest of the web

Learners are self-motivated. They need a reason to keep coming back

Video retention can drop by 20% between 5 and 10 minutes



as they are the same age as the solar system.

View transcript

We explain it

Take a look at this *Space Rocks* video which shows our approach to explaining asteroids, meteors, meteorites and the differences between them.

Using the information in this video think about how you would now answer the question *What is an asteroid?*

Would you explain anything differently?

© Royal Observatory Greenwich

30 comments

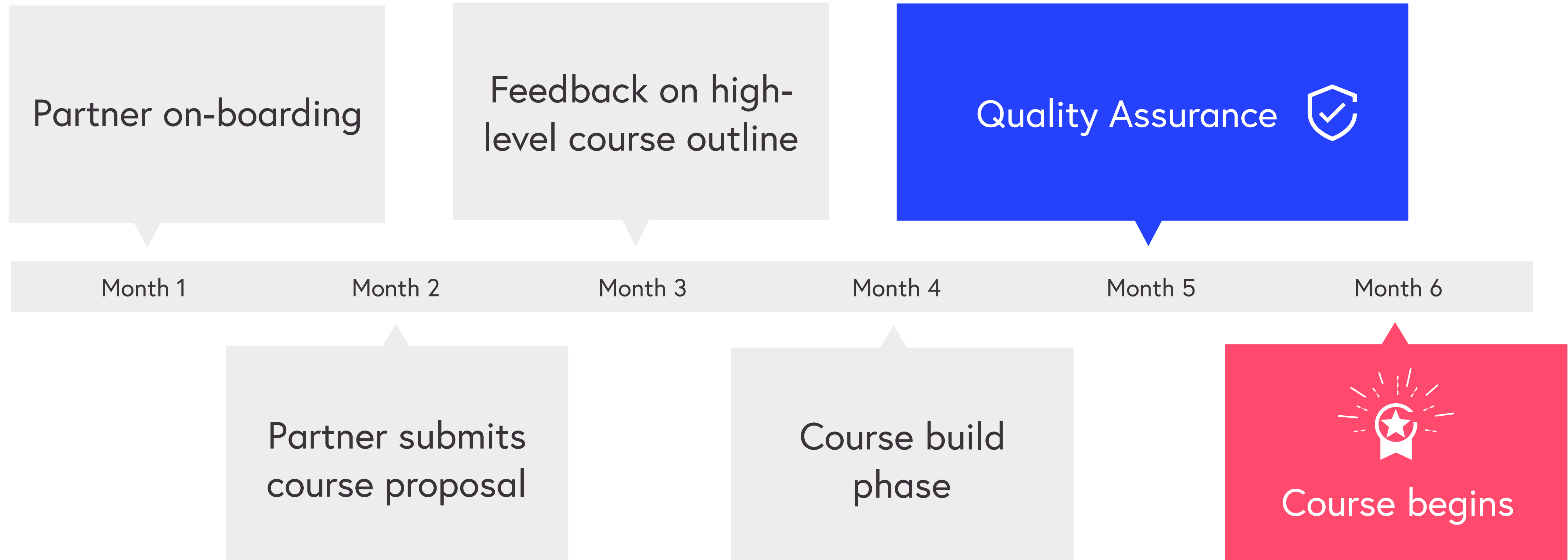
Mark as complete

 5 mins

**How do we carry out our
quality assurance?**

Outline of the QA process at FutureLearn

We work with our partners long before the QA stage to achieve better courses.



Course Criteria

Formalises and **standardises** QA expectations

QA process is **open** and **transparent**

69 quality assurance check points

For every point, there's a green, amber and red level

If a course gets too many reds we postpone it until it can be fixed

Partners are **contractually obliged** to adhere

Pedagogy



Technical



Business



HOW DO WE QA?

Pedagogy

Learning outcomes

First activity

Educator visibility

Provoking conversation

Celebrating progress

Step variety

Narrative and storytelling techniques

A balance of formative and summative
assessment



Technical

All images have appropriate alt text

All videos have accurate subtitles

External tools are reviewed for accessibility, usability, necessity, security, mobile optimisation

Video duration

Article length, tone and clarity



Business

Lead Generation

Course products

Appropriate use of the brand

Programs



 5 mins

**How does this help our
partners digitally transform?**

Quality Assurance satisfies our learners

91% said their course met or exceeded their expectations

Overall 26% of learners who start a course, complete it

Nearly 70% complete our top 50 courses

43% of people who start a course make at least one comment

10% of respondents to a recent survey had a salary increase within 12 months of taking a FutureLearn course*

**Source: New research suggests FutureLearn courses are helping people up-skill in the workplace*



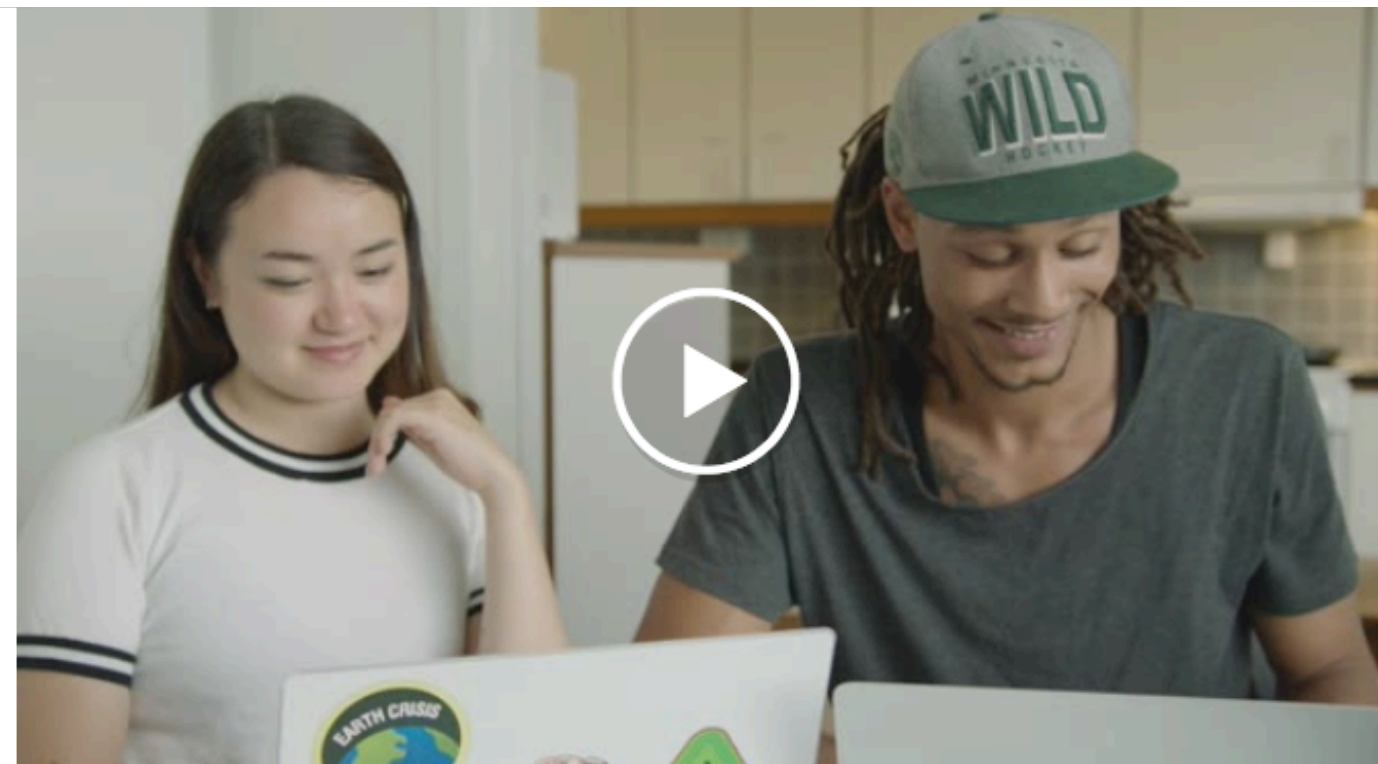
Teaching experience

Being an educator on a FutureLearn course is a rewarding and often transformative experience.



UCL, Many Faces of Dementia

Tim Shakespeare from UCL won 'Rising Star in Dementia Research' from the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Research Leaders awards



Oslo, Introduction to Norwegian

Educators won the prize for Teaching Excellence at University of Oslo, raising their profile and unlocking funds to do more



Strathclyde, Caring for Vulnerable Children

Courseware & Curriculum In-House Production Award at the BUFVC awards

HOW DOES QA HELP OUR PARTNERS?

Pedagogy and processes

Partners develop best practice for teaching at scale

They build the teams and processes required to scale up production

They get revenue to invest in more digital projects

FutureLearn helps build the case for digital transformation

Live feedback on their courses

Student recruitment and degrees

Partners recruit students to their degrees - both online and on campus

As part of our QA process we help partners optimise their courses for recruitment

FutureLearn is a destination for degrees



Why?

To stay user focused

To ensure courses are aligned to our pedagogy

To stay competitive with the best of the web

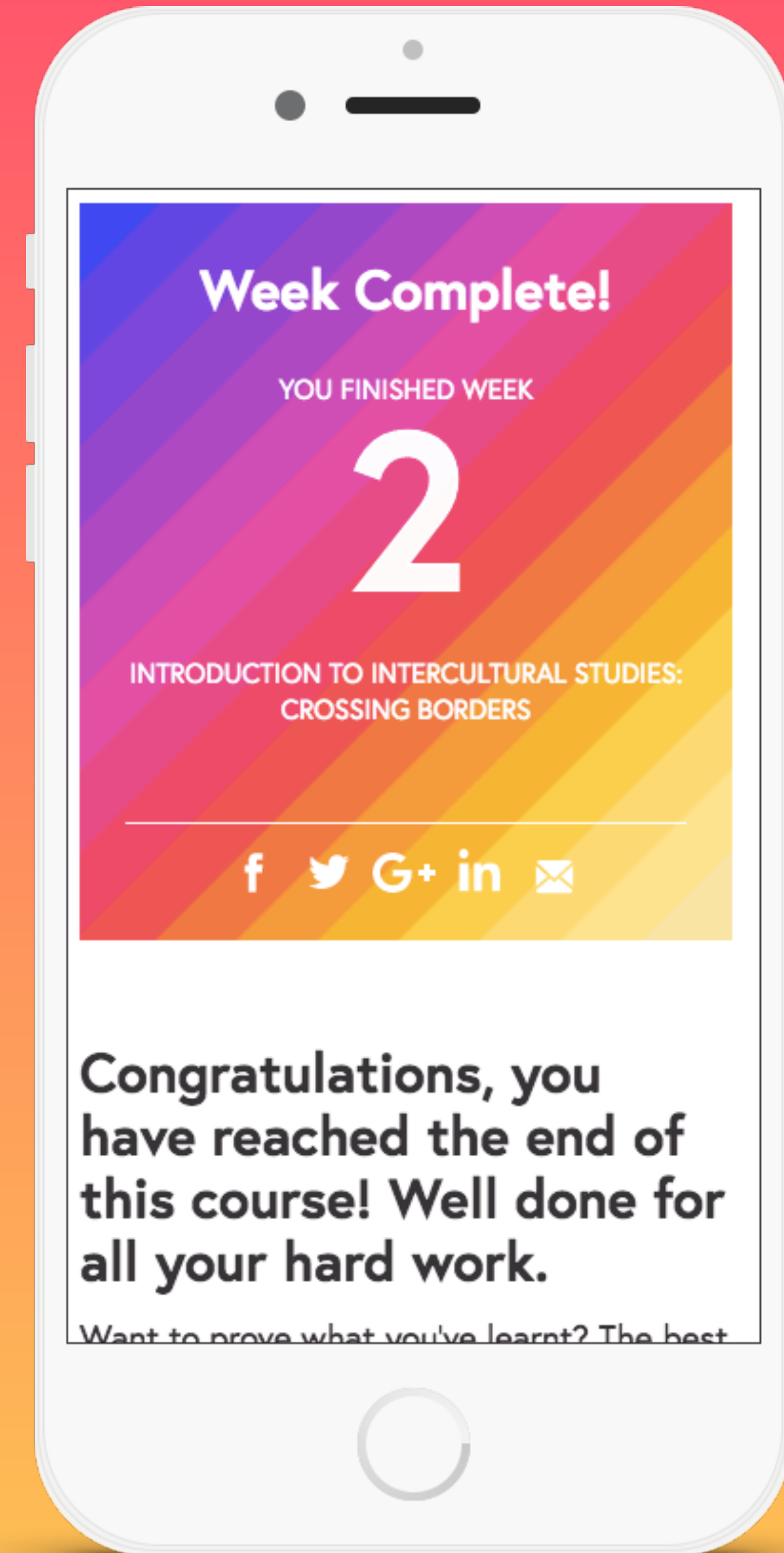
How?

Through our Course Criteria

Through a process that starts long before production

The results?

Satisfied learners, better retention, transformative experiences for partners





Future Learn