



## CASE STUDY:

# Powering Success with EnGen English Upskilling at the University of Maryland

Higher education is facing a pivotal moment: Enrollments have been declining for years, and COVID drove further enrollment dips, budget shortfalls, and staff layoffs. Now, as administrators attempt to rebuild workforces in a tight labor market, they must adopt more innovative and inclusive approaches to hiring and retaining talent.

At the same time, student demographics are changing: International student admissions are on the rise. Students from immigrant backgrounds, as well as Latino/x students, are pursuing degrees in record numbers. Higher education workforces should reflect these changes with a focus on multilingual, culturally savvy staff.

In response to both trends, the University of Maryland (UMD) partners with EnGen to offer English upskilling to employees and students in various departments across its College Park campus, including Dining Services, Residential Facilities, and Facilities Management, along with numerous degree programs. **Over the last year, 450 UMD learners have accessed EnGen courses. They are among the 26,000-plus adult learners who used EnGen nationwide last year, with promising results:**



**95%** of EnGen learners improved their confidence in using English.



**89%** will likely stay with their employer because EnGen is an employee benefit.



**93%** said their job skills have improved as a result of using EnGen.



**87%** achieved a career goal, like a pay raise or promotion.



**92%** improved their English proficiency.

“Dining Services offers many positions to multilingual individuals and being able to provide EnGen as an on-the-job learning resource is so helpful. **Our employees also love that they can learn from EnGen in their free time outside of work,** and even talk about how they have told their family and friends about EnGen. As a training manager I am appreciative of the assistance I receive from the EnGen team as well, I can always reach out for help with an employee account.”

– Jasmine Owens, *Training and Development Manager, University of Maryland*

# STEPS TO SUCCESS

UMD began piloting EnGen to its Residential Facilities staff in 2019. The department previously encouraged staff to enroll in on-campus, in-person English classes, but participation was limited and impact was unclear. Classes required staff to miss work for two-plus hours. The few staff that did participate showed no tangible gains in their English proficiency.

UMD was optimistic that EnGen's on-demand, personalized platform would address many of these challenges. The pilot program paid off: Today, UMD offers EnGen across campus, and their successful implementation is a model for other higher education institutions:



**1. Promote on-demand, easy employee access to instruction.** Instead of the unmanageable blocks of time required with face-to-face English instruction, EnGen allows learners to focus study in 30-minute slots, as assigned by their supervisors. EnGen is integrated into employees' workdays; learners are compensated for time spent studying. Courses are bite-sized, able to be completed in 10 minutes, allowing learners to make significant progress towards learning goals during short study times.



**2. Leverage learner data to demonstrate ROI.** EnGen's built-in platform data helped administrators make the case for pilot impact and for expanding EnGen to other campus departments and classrooms. Supervisors and instructors are able to observe employee and student platform usage and progress.



**3. Calibrate learning to support real-world goals.** EnGen offers UMD learners a catalog of 130-plus career-aligned pathways that equip learners with language and skills that are immediately applicable to their career and education goals, allowing them to make faster progress toward English proficiency. Employees have parlayed their English skills into pathways to new careers, including enrolling in degree-seeking programs at UMD.

**“[EnGen] is really good for me because I can do it anytime and it's easily accessed. You don't feel like you're taking a language course. **You feel like you're studying some field, some profession.** [The content] is always very current. I always listen to NPR or some news. And then I can see they bring that current issue with my topic.”**

– Hana Tadese, *EnGen learner with UMD's Residential Facilities Department*

## SCALING IMPACT

**EnGen is built with technology that has served over 4 million language learners worldwide.**



**LEARN HOW ENGEN  
CAN WORK AT YOUR  
ORGANIZATION.**