



Application to the Big Projects Fund

Project Name: FD in Payroll Management e-learning conversion

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Document Distribution:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
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1 Background

In December 2007 the Foundation Degree in Payroll Management was validated by the University of Worcester. This course had been jointly designed by Worcester College of Technology (WCT) and the Institute of Payroll Professionals (IPP). The course represents a landmark in collaboration between an HEI, a GFE and a professional institute and has been warmly received by HEFCE as an exemplar of good practice in terms of employer responsiveness. The course has a national market and it is anticipated that circa 700 learners will join in October 2008. A pilot cohort of 41 students commenced in January 2008. The course has been designed to utilise a blended learning approach whereby monthly teaching workshops are supported by course materials in printed form and tutorial sessions.

2 Objectives of the Project

The principle objective of this project is to construct a learning site within WCT's VLE dedicated to the needs of the students and staff engaged in the FD in Payroll Management. To this end funding is sought for the employment of a Content Developer to work within a small team tasked with operationalising this objective. The intended outcomes from the project are listed in 4A below.

3 Project Approach

The learning materials currently in use for the FD in Payroll Management are commissioned by the IPP and are centrally sourced. These materials are available for each of the three years of the FD. The project approach, therefore, is one of conversion of these materials into learning material appropriate for dissemination through a VLE. The approach is not one of material origination.

4 Scope:

A Key Products from the project

- To supply students with learning materials via WCT's VLE.

- To increase and enrich the range of learning opportunities available to students through the use of a VLE.
- To improve student progress tracking and therefore retention through the use of a VLE.
- To improve student's networking opportunities through the use of a VLE.
- To improve staff/student communication through the use of a VLE.
- To train IPP tutors in the use of a VLE.

Other products not course related:

- Experience gained of a 'whole course' approach to e-learning as opposed to the more usual 'tutor led' modular approach.
- Dissemination of experience gained to other LLN members.

B Out of Scope

- Sharing of learning materials with LLN members, under the terms of the validation of the programme IPP maintain intellectual copyright. However, to compensate for this, seminars would be run for other network members to share the experience of this 'whole course' e-learning approach.

5 Constraints

The partners involved, WCT and IPP, are committed to this development and there are, therefore, no constraints other than financial (see below).

6 Initial Project Case

The project case is one whereby LLN funding is sought to co-finance the employment of an experienced Content Developer for a period of one year. This individual will be employed as part of a small team to deliver the key products identified in 4A above.

7 Benefits of the Project

Other than the benefits to students and staff listed in 4A above the key benefit for LLN members will be access to the experience gained in the development of a virtual learning environment to be accessed by a significant number of, geographically dispersed, students. Within this project the opportunity exists to compare a centrally devised and managed project, distributed nationally, with the more traditional, tutor devised, modular approach.

8 Key Assumptions

Two key assumptions are made:

1. That an experienced Content Developer can be sourced within the required timescale.
2. That co-funding will be available to enable the project to proceed.

9 Costs

WCT and IPP have already agreed to commit two personnel to the project and seek to add a third in the form of a Content Developer. The cost of this post is circa £30,000 per annum including employer costs. WCT and IPP have agreed to jointly co-fund 50% of this cost and this application seeks funding for the remaining 50% or £15,000.

10 Project Timescale

The project will deploy a phased approach and it is anticipated that the total duration will be approximately 12 months commencing in May 2008.

Phase One

- Enable access to current printed material on-line in preparation for the October intake of new students – May to July 2008.
- Introduce VLE communication package in readiness for October intake – August 2008.
- To train IPP tutors in the rudimentaries of VLE deployment – July and August 2008.

Phase Two

- To convert the current workbooks into on-line activities – September 2008 to February 2009.
- To train IPP tutors in the progress tracking mechanisms within the VLE – February 2009.

Phase Three

- Complete package operating - March 2009
- Evaluation, problem solving and improvement – March to May 2009

11 How will the project be evaluated?

Evaluation of the project will take two forms. In the first instance evaluation will be against the 'hard' targets of the project milestones. This will measure project progress and, at its conclusion, the delivery of the planned outcomes. In measuring these outcomes it will be vitally important to include the 'soft' targets which will be centred upon student satisfaction. The project is fortunate in that it will have available for evaluation purposes a cohort of students who completed their first year without access to the VLE but who will have access for their second year thus enabling realistic comparison of experience.

12 How will the project be sustained?

As will be appreciated projects of this nature are resource consumptive when setting up but resource effective when running. This application addresses the former need and recognises that at the conclusion of the set up stage on-going maintenance of the site will fall to the current resources available within WCT and IPP.

13 Which aims, outcomes and/or targets will the project achieve for the HWLLN? Please also state which funding criteria this project meets and how.

This application contributes to the achievement of the following aims, outcomes and/or targets of the LLN:

- Aim – To increase the number of part time students entering higher education whilst continuing employment. This is the target market for this programme which has been validated in part time mode only. Creating a more flexible delivery structure through e-learning will further increase participants.
- Outcome – Courses which are needed and delivered flexibly in terms of timing, place and delivery. This application will lead to an increased level of e learning development and provision across the region
- Outputs – E-learning materials
Staff development sessions
Existing courses with revised flexible delivery
Courses with sessions in holiday times and weekends
Case studies of e-learning

This application fully meets items 1 to 4 of the funding criteria and in addition, within item 5 meets the sub criteria relevant to increasing accessibility for students in employment through the introduction of substantial e-learning.

14 Initial Risk Log

The following table summarises the risks that have been identified that may prevent the project being completed to the required quality, budget and timescale. The probability and impact of each risk has been graded as low, medium or high to indicate the relative importance attached to each element of risk.

Risks	Probability	Impact	Containment Plan
Inability to recruit required staff	Low	High	WCT has a content developer whose contract ends in July 08

15 Project Team

Steve Poole (WCT) – Project Leader
Mike Aldous (IPP)
Content Developer – To be advised