



E-Learning Development/Support - Project Proposal Form
 Please use this form to apply for e-learning funding or requests for e-learning consultancy/support

Please expand the table formatting to an appropriate length to fit your text by typing in the table cells.

1	Name of College: Worcester College of Technology
2	Project Title: A Web conferencing solution to meet the needs of work base learners
3	Name, e-mail and phone number of project contact: Louise Davies ldavies@wortech.ac.uk 01905 743441
4	Date Proposal Submitted: 20.09.09
5	Are you applying for consultancy/support or funding: Funding
6	Project Overview and Rationale: <p>The college runs a Foundation Degree in Payroll Management which is delivered to a large number of students (expanding to circa 900 in 2009/10) mainly online through the Moodle VLE.</p> <p>Students on this programme are work-based learners located throughout the country. They currently access all of their study materials online and regularly participate in asynchronous discussions via discussion forums and other activities. In addition, students attend a face-to-face tutorial and subject review day for each module. Due to the geographical spread and time commitments of the learners (most of which work full time) it is sometimes difficult, or impossible for them to attend these face-to-face teaching events.</p> <p>The use of 'web conferencing' technology may enable us to offer an alternative for these students by providing the opportunity to attend live meetings via the internet. This project will research the use of web conferencing technology by other colleges and institutions and also directly evaluate specific tools. Some web conferencing tools are freely available while others are subscription based, with cost implications, but offer free trials for a limited period of time, or for a limited number of users.</p> <p>The project will aim to identify a web conferencing product or solution that is easy to</p>

	<p>access, intuitive to use and meets the specific needs of both students and tutors in terms of method of delivery and collaboration. Students and tutors use their home or work computers, are not technical and need a product that works without the need to download and/or configure software As students are familiar with using the Moodle interface, easy integration with Moodle would be a consideration.</p> <p>A pilot study using a small group of students (10-15 students) and 2 or 3 course tutors will be conducted in which a tutorial and presentation will be delivered via the Internet. This study will be evaluated with a view to delivering some presentations and other forms of visual collaboration across the entire programme.</p> <p>This experience will then feed back to the wider college environment and act as a working model of practice that can then be adopted elsewhere where there is a similar need or opportunity for alternative online delivery of learning.</p>
7	<p>Key Objectives and Project Deliverables – what will the funding achieve</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Greater awareness and understanding of web conferencing products and their application 2) Flexible, easy to access learning tailored to Foundation degree distance learning students 3) Selection of most appropriate web conferencing product to meet the specific needs of mature work based learners 4) Implementation of a pilot study by small selection of students and tutors (10-15 users) 5) Evaluation of use of the use of this pilot study through collating feedback from students and tutors 6) Production of a report and which will serve to share the experience with LLN partners
8	<p>Expected timescale for completion of project:</p> <p>April 2010</p>
9	<p>Team Members, roles and responsibilities –</p> <p>Project Manager – Louise Davies – research, project support, tutor training.</p> <p>Course Managers – Steve Poole (WCT)/ Mike Aldous (Institute of Payroll Professionals) – implementation</p>
10	<p>Budget. How much are you bidding for and how will the money be spent? Please be as comprehensive as possible –</p> <p>Project Manager 30 days at £100 per day £3 000 (this does not cover full cost of this role but the college will part fund this aspect of the project)</p> <p>Course Managers 10 days at £100 per day £1000</p> <p>Equipment: Webcams/microphones for 20 participants: £20 x £20 = £400</p> <p>Technical support 6 days at £100 per day £600</p>

	Total Costs	£5,000
11	Which students/courses are involved – Foundation Degree in Payroll Management	
12	Are other colleges in the network involved in the project in any way – Findings and best practice would be disseminated through a report covering implementation, best practice, what problems were found and how these were dealt with. If there was interest from LLN partners a training event would be held at WCT or online using web conferencing technology.	
13	Explain how the outcomes of the project will meet the LLN guidelines - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Improved access:</i> possible new method of delivery for traditional face-to-face teaching will impact future curriculum design 2. <i>Encourage Effective Learning:</i> Learners will be given opportunities to attend learning events online; time commitments and geographical location will be less of a barrier to visual learning and collaboration 3. <i>Raise awareness of e-learning innovation:</i> web conferencing delivered over the Internet (using live presentations whiteboards web pages, voice and video) is an innovative technology, the benefits of which can be demonstrated to the wider community by providing a case study of good practice 4. <i>Encourage sharing of good practice:</i> There is little in the way of case studies and working models of practice in the delivery of live collaborative learning, specifically to work based users. It is hoped that the lessons learnt in this pilot project can be disseminated to LLN partners. 5. <i>Partnerships and reciprocal arrangements:</i> Close collaboration will take place with the Institute of Payroll Professionals (IPP) 6. <i>Sharing of Content:</i> Research findings will be shared across the wider LLN community 	
14	What are the main risk factors and how will you plan for these: The main risk factors are likely to be due to the fact that this will be a new technology and way of interacting for the majority of participants. We will offer guidance and support and plan introductory activities to build up familiarity with this new method of delivery. There may also be problems in getting the web conferencing technology to work on students home and work computers. This will be tackled by offering personal support and by providing clear and detailed guidance information to students and tutors. As far as possible, web conferencing products will be tested so that we will know how they work with various browsers and operating systems. WCT technical staff will offer specific technical support if required.	
15	How will you disseminate the findings: Through a report and possible training event (to be delivered face-to-face or online), conference presentations.	

16 General comments and any further information you think might support your bid.

Students on this programme are mature and non-traditional in that the vast majority work full time in often challenging roles. They have many demands placed upon them and while attending face-to-face teaching events and presentations is educationally valuable and offers them a rare chance to interact with their fellow students and tutors, attending these events can sometimes be difficult. Events tend to be held in London, Birmingham and Manchester which puts students who are located in the far reaches of Wales or Scotland at a significant disadvantage in terms of finding the time and money to travel.

Replicating this face to face contact online, as closely as we can, so they do not miss out on the chance to visually collaborate with their tutors and fellow students will be of enormous value.

The focus of the project will be on selecting a product that not only fits its intended purpose but requires minimum technical set up from the students and tutor perspective and is, above all, easy and intuitive to use. Students do not have the technical skills or the time to spend configuring or downloading software, for example.

In addition the project will serve as a case study in the implementation of web conferencing as a method of delivering learning to work based students, which will be of value to the college as a whole as well as the wider LLN community.