

# JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE

## INVITATION TO TENDER

### Regional distributed eLearning desk study

#### Summary

1. The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) wishes to commission a study into the extent to which opportunities for distributed eLearning are available in each of the English regions. The study will include recommendations on how such opportunities can be measured in the future. This study is to support the Distributed eLearning strand of the eLearning Programme, which has been funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to facilitate lifelong learning and wider participation in higher education by providing learners with:
  - a more seamless learning experience
  - better learning tools
  - easier access to personal learning information such as portfolios
  - access to greater quantities of quality-assured learning materialsTeachers will also benefit from guidance on how to use eLearning resources within appropriate systems.
2. The purpose of the proposed study is to identify existing initiatives, arrangements and partnerships in each region which facilitate progression into and through HE and contribute to widening participation; to report on the current provision for and take-up of distributed eLearning within the nine English regions and to develop ways of measuring the provision for and take-up of distributed eLearning with a region.
3. This study will assist in the establishment of baselines for the evaluation of the impact of the Distributed eLearning Regional Pilots, which will run from early 2005 until March 2006.
4. Up to £30,000 (including VAT and expenses) is available for this study over a three month period (October 2004 – January 2005). Tenders should be submitted no later than noon on Monday 20 September 2004.

#### Background

5. The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) supports further and higher education by providing strategic guidance, advice and opportunities to use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support teaching, learning, research and administration. JISC is funded by all the UK post-16 and higher education funding councils.
6. JISC's eLearning Programme aims to identify how eLearning might facilitate learning and to advise on its implementation. It focuses on four areas: eLearning and pedagogy; technical frameworks for e-learning; innovation; and distributed eLearning.
7. The distributed eLearning strand of the eLearning Programme has emerged through a desire to move eLearning into the mainstream of Learning and Teaching practice, and to reflect a growing regional aspect to higher education. Regional co-operation between schools, colleges, universities and the business sector is seen as key in encouraging increased participation in higher education by a wider group of students, for example through regional Aim Higher plans, Foundation Degree programmes, or by partnerships between schools and universities.

8. The aims of the distributed eLearning strand are:
- To develop models to show how local, regional and national systems will work together to provide coherent access to e-learning resources.
  - To establish regional pilots to evaluate the integrated use of eLearning systems, tools, repositories, and content to support widening participation and lifelong learning.
  - To extend the generic eLearning technical framework for use at regional level, and develop national services to support region use, e.g. repositories and question banks.
  - To develop tools for teachers and learners to support lifelong learning, and content to populate the repositories and question banks.
  - To develop practical guidelines for implementing e-systems and sharing eLearning content to support widening participation and regional partnerships.
9. The outputs of this study will be of particular relevance to the regional pilots. These pilots will take the form of collaborations of higher education institutions, further education colleges, and other educational organisations across a region to pilot distributed eLearning tools and services. The pilots will start between January and March 2005, and will run until March 2006 and the study will be used to provide a better understanding of the context in which the regional pilots are operating, and will provide indicators an evaluation of the impact of the pilots.

### **Aims and Objectives**

10. The aim of this study is to map the current provision for distributed eLearning and learner progression at a regional level, and to provide a baseline against which the impact of the distributed eLearning regional pilots can be measured in 2006.
11. The objectives of the study are to:
- Identify the systems, business processes, partnerships, collaborative arrangements and initiatives to support distributed eLearning and learner progression which are currently in place in each of the nine English regions.
  - Develop a series of criteria which may be applied to a region to assess to what extent distributed eLearning is facilitated within that region.
  - Apply these measures or indicators to each of the nine English regions to provide a baseline for a future impact study.

### **Terms of reference**

12. The study should indicate how each of the following contributes to distributed eLearning and learner progression at a regional level:
- Relevant government initiatives such as AimHigher Partnerships.
  - Arrangements for delivery of HE in FE, including Foundation Degrees.
  - Partnerships between HEIs and FE colleges or schools to help learners progress from these routes into higher education
  - Arrangements for delivery of work-based education by a FE college or HEI.

The study should also include relevant information from the HEFCE regional plans and statistics.

13. Given the remit of JISC and of the distributed eLearning programme, it is particularly important that the study focuses on any situations in which 'joined up' technology is used to facilitate cross-institutional links and learner progression. Particular examples of this may include:

- Common admissions systems between institutions which jointly teach courses
- Common eLearning environments between institutions which jointly teach courses or which anticipate learners progressing from one to another
- Systems for sharing learning content between institutions
- Automatic transfer of learner records between schools, further education and university
- Use of electronic personal development planning systems or ePortfolios, especially cross-institution

Examples of such work may be found as outputs from development projects funded by JISC or other bodies, but may also be institutionally initiated.

14. Key stakeholders we expect to be consulted during the study include:

- A selection of higher education institutions and further education colleges within each region
- Higher education regional associations
- HEFCE Regional Consultants
- JISC Regional Support Centres
- Other regional stakeholders, such as:
  - Regional Development Agencies and Sector Skills Development Agencies
  - Association of Colleges Regional Leads
  - Regional Learning and Skills Councils
  - Regional Broadband Consortia

The successful bidder will be responsible for identifying and consulting additional stakeholders where necessary.

15. The successful bidder will be expected to develop an appropriate research methodology to meet the given objectives.

### **Deliverables**

16. The outputs from this study are expected to be:

- A revised and detailed work plan two weeks after the start of the contract.
- A report, written in clear, plain English, intended for the JISC Executive which includes:
  - Criteria for measuring the provision of distributed eLearning at a regional level
  - A methodology for applying these criteria
  - Reports on the provision of distributed eLearning against the identified criteria for each of the nine English regions
  - List of individuals and organisations who provided comments and information for each region

- The report should provide a baseline against which the impact of the distributed eLearning regional pilots can be measured.
- The report should include an Executive Summary.

17. Other expectations are:

- The contractor will be expected to work closely with the Distributed eLearning Programme team within the JISC Executive to ensure there is a shared understanding of the work and its progress.
- The study's prime function is to act as a source of information for the JISC Executive and Distributed eLearning Programme Advisory Board. However the outputs should be produced so they can be shared more widely with the further and higher education community.
- Prior to final acceptance of the outputs a draft should be submitted to the JISC Executive for comment.
- The final report will be made available on the web.
- At the conclusion of the study the contractor may be invited to present the results at a meeting of the relevant JISC committee or committees.

18. It is anticipated that the study will take approximately 60 days' work.

19. The information provided in the reports of the study, and the rights to all other outputs, shall become the property of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on behalf of the JISC and the other funding councils.

### **Timescale**

20. The timescale is as follows:

- Bids should be submitted by 12 noon on Monday 20 September 2004.
- It is expected that bidders will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation process by 1 October.
- The contractor will be expected to commence work by 11 October and to meet with JISC programme managers and to have agreed the project plan by 25 October.
- A draft final report to include all outputs will be expected by 14 January 2005.
- The final report should be submitted by 28 January 2005.

### **Evaluation**

21. An evaluation panel comprising of experts from the educational community and the JISC Executive will be responsible for evaluating submitted proposals on the basis of the following criteria:

- Compliance with and understanding of the requirements.
- Quality of work plan and suitability of methodology in meeting the requirements.
- Relevance of previous experience of the tendering organisation(s) and of the particular consultants and/or researchers to the study.
- Analysis and management of risks to successful completion of the study.
- Value for money.

## **Funding**

22. Up to £30,000 inclusive of VAT and related travel and subsistence is available for this study.

## **Proposals**

23. Proposals should clearly and fully demonstrate the following:
- Knowledge and understanding of current e-learning initiatives and practice in both further and higher education sectors, with particular reference to the work of JISC.
  - A clear understanding of the concept of distributed eLearning and the systems which can contribute to this.
  - Understanding of the relationship between the higher and further education landscape and the opportunities for widening participation and lifelong learning across the English regions.
  - Experience in undertaking similar types of work.
  - Methodology to be adopted.
  - A work plan with milestones and deliverables.
  - Details of personnel to work on the study, including CVs. (CVs should be included in an appendix and are not counted within the six page maximum bid length.)
  - Overall budget and detailed breakdown of main areas of work, including the relevant daily rates/pro-rata salary against each member of the team to work on the study.

## **Management**

24. The contract will be overseen by Sarah Davies, Programme Manager, JISC Executive, and will report to the Distributed eLearning Programme Advisory Board. The contractor will report at regular intervals as agreed at the time of commissioning. In agreeing the work plan with the successful contractor, the JISC will wish to discuss the list of bodies and people who should be consulted in the course of the study (see also paragraph 14).

## **Submission**

25. Proposals of no more than six pages of A4, typeset in Arial or a similar font at 10 point size, should be submitted both as a single sided, unbound hard copy, and as an electronic copy via email. Both copies **MUST** arrive by the deadline. Proposals **MUST** also include the completed cover sheet at Appendix A to this invitation to tender, in addition to the six page maximum bid.
26. Proposals must be received no later than 12 noon on Monday 20 September 2004. Faxed or late proposals **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**. Both email and hard copy proposals should be sent to:

Faye Gardiner, JISC Executive, Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, BRISTOL, BS16 1QD, tel: 0117 931 7427; email: f.gardiner@jisc.ac.uk.

27. The JISC reserves the right not to accept the lowest (or any) tender received.

### **Further information**

28. Any queries regarding this invitation to tender should be sent to Sarah Davies, JISC Programme Manager at JISC Bristol Office, tel: 0117 954 5076, email: [sarah.davies@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.davies@bristol.ac.uk).

Appendix A

Cover sheet for proposals

JISC Invitation to Tender: Regional distributed eLearning desk study

*(NB: All sections must be completed)*

<b>Name of lead institution/organisation</b>
<b>List consultants/partners, if any</b>
<b>Full contact details for primary contact</b>  Name: Position: Email: Address:  Tel: Fax:
<b>Total cost to the JISC:</b>
<b>Outline proposal description</b>