

E-Learning Proposal Cover Sheet

Cover Sheet for Proposals (All sections must be completed)	JISC Capital Programme
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Name of Capital Programme: e-Learning

Bid for Call:

(Please tick ONE BOX ONLY, as appropriate)

Supporting lifelong learning

<input type="checkbox"/> Call I – HE in FE		
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Technical developments to support learning and teaching

<p>Call II – Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a) Item Authoring Tool</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b) Item Bank Software</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c) Assessment Delivery Tool</p>	<p>Call IV – Admissions demonstrators</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a) structured personal profiles, course entry profiles and pre-assessment;</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b) improving applicant feedback;</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c) accreditation of prior experiential learning; <input type="checkbox"/> d) e-portfolio based admissions.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Call VI – Course validation</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Call III – Technology supported learning environments</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Call V – Course description and discovery</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Call VII – Domain maps</p>

Name of Lead Institution: University of Bolton

Name of Proposed Project: Bolton XCRI Project - BoXCRIIP

Name(s) of Project Partner(s):

Full Contact Details for Primary Contact:

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Length of Project: 6 months

Project Start Date: 1 March 2007	Project End Date: 31 st August 2007
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Total Funding Requested from JISC: £10,000

Funding Broken Down over Financial Years (April – March):

Apr06 – Mar07	Apr07 – Mar08	Apr08 – Mar09
£1,667	£8,333	

Total Institutional Contributions:	£20,309 (For BoXCRIP only)	
Percentage Contributions over the Life of the Project:	JISC 49%	PARTNERS
Outline Project Description		
<p>The objective of BoXCRIP is to implement and test the XCRI schema against the full University course catalogue containing undergraduate, postgraduate, FE, CPD and short courses and their sub-components. The course catalogue will be driven from the SITS student record system and will be created as a XML course repository which can be freely accessed using web services, through web mash-ups and aggregators. To this end it is proposed to develop the use of web services to access and retrieve information from the course repository.</p> <p>This project piggy-backs on a current University project to develop a new course catalogue containing richer course information to support the University's widening participation and CPD agendas. The emphasis is on enabling people (particularly those from traditionally under-represented groups) to gather rich course information privately, via the internet, without fear of embarrassment that some experience about making a direct course enquiry, in person. The potential to feed course information aggregators external to the University greatly enhances this objective.</p> <p>As BoXCRIP represents a generic solution for XCRI operating with SITS, a significant output from the project will be the dissemination of the project outcomes and solutions within the SITS and UCISA communities.</p>		
I have looked at the example FOI form at Appendix A and included an FOI form in the attached bid (Tick Box)	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
I have read the Circular and associated Terms and Conditions of Grant at Appendix B (Tick Box)	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO

1. Project Description

1.1 Introduction

The University of Bolton is undertaking strategic repositioning, building on its curriculum and research strengths to develop into a new model called the Professional University. As well as refining undergraduate and postgraduate programmes around the new and “para” professions, the University is expanding its provision of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities to strengthen its contribution to the regional and national skills agenda.

To support the new strategy, the University is redeveloping its website using a content management system, and seeking to open up easy access to a new range of learning opportunities via a new course catalogue. The current web accessible course catalogue, is based on *flat html files* which are disconnected from the University’s course management information systems, and is limited in the range of information and programmes, timeliness, accuracy and consistency of information it provides.

Internally, the University has a number of disconnected databases which contain information about course programmes: course and module validation database, SITS student record system, short course database, prospectus files, web course catalogue, course handbooks, module timetable. As these have been created and are maintained by different business functions to support their own activities, our current processes involve the passing of course information from one area to another by document. Information is re-keyed, is not adequately linked and cross verified. A common course reference system is not in place.

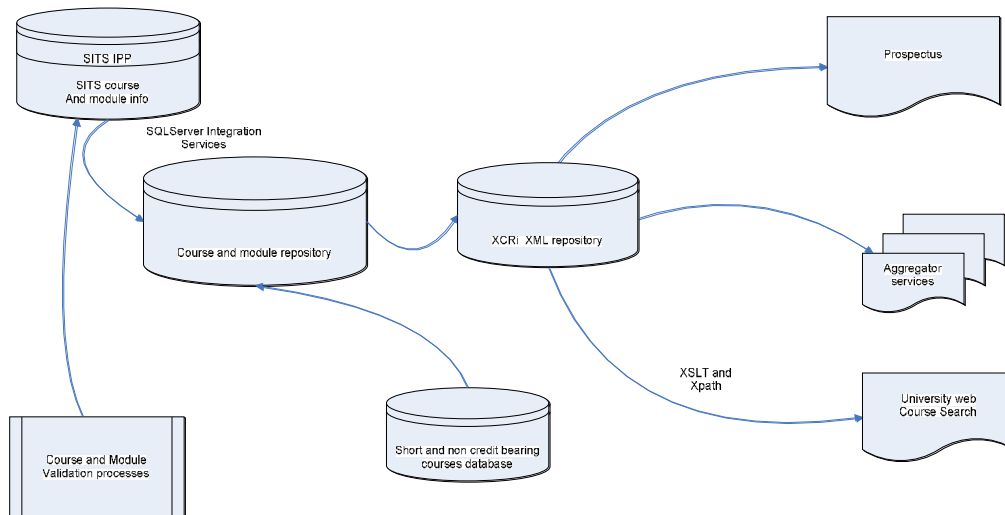
The University management recognises that this situation acts as a barrier to providing high quality information to assist students to make good choices. A project is already in motion to consolidate information for advertising both validated and proposed courses, using the Intuition Published Programmes module of SITS. Normally this course information would be accessed using the SITS e:Vision portal. BoXCRIP will consider whether IPP can support the rich information in an XCRI compliant form or whether this is best done as a separate repository.

BoXCRIP will contribute to the e-learning programme by providing a realistic test of the course advertising aspects of the XCRI specification by using it to express the whole range of course and sub course elements operated by the University. Bolton has similar issues to all Universities in the complexity of course development, advertising and operation and how, where and when these are managed within the information systems. BoXCRIP has two advantages for the e-learning programme: the University is already engaged in tackling the processes and systems side of course management; the University has a well developed and established student record system, SITS, which is currently the market leader in UK HEIs and is in a good position to share experience of XCRI with the significant SITS community in HE.

1.2. Project Proposal

BoXCRIP is proposed to extend the course catalogue further by creating an XML repository of course information, using the XCRI specification. This will give the potential to include richer course related information than is available within SITS IPP, including: the potential to provide drill-down into module information by also bringing modules into the repository; the potential to add additional information for other sources including the timetable. A web based course search will be then be created using web services and including XSLT and Xpath searches to bring back different levels of detail. The repository will be accessible via the www.Bolton.ac.uk URL

The diagram illustrates the proposed solution for an XCRI implementation for the University.



2 Project Approach

This proposal is divided into two work packages:

2.1 Work Package 1

Work package 1 consists of the creation of a prototype unified course and module repository with a common referencing scheme and including UCAS reference information. This will be achieved by harvesting a range of course descriptions from the existing web course catalogue, module information from SITS, and the short course database; combining this with SITS based course information or the Course validation information for yet-to-be-validated courses. We will evaluate the potential of SITS IPP to hold this rich course information or create a new SQL repository using the MS SQL Server Integration Services. From this we will expose courses as XCRI compliant XML documents and test with simple course searching web services.

WP1 Outcomes

- a prototype unified course and module repository with a common referencing scheme
- An assessment of the suitability of SITS IPP to act as a complex course and module repository
- Proof of concept of applying XCRI to the full range of course types
- Identification of any gaps in the XCRI specification
- Test web services for course searching

2.2 Work Package 2

Work package 2 concerns itself with applying the XCRI schema to the course and module repository and adapting, reusing or creating a number of web services to search and retrieve targeted information from the repository, including creating the means of drilling down from course to module information.

On successful proof of concept, full migration of data will be completed. Business processes around producing, classifying and validating course advertising information will be reviewed, improved and documented.

WP2 Outcomes

- A searchable and accessible XML course repository based on XCRI
- Creation of a simple demonstrator for course retrieval in conjunction with the XCRI support project
- A collection of web services to search and retrieve information
- Documented business processes and standards for the University associated with course advertising
- An evaluation report on applying XCRI and final recommendations

3. **Sustainability of the Project**

The course catalogue project is driven by a genuine business need of the University to improve the information that informs student choice. BoXCRIP will assist the University to promote CPD programmes and it is hoped encourage more people in the region into a lifelong learning relationship with the University. For this reason the course catalogue project will be sustained. The BoXCRIP enhances the existing course catalogue project, but also contributes to national agenda of providing easier access and richer information to inform student choice. Once completed it is not anticipated that the maintenance of the systems created will be any more onerous than the existing situation.

4. **IPR**

The University will not seek to protect IPR arising from this project, but will seek to disseminate good practice and any technologies developed with the JISC community including making any web services that are created available as open source.

5. **Overall Project Deliverables**

- A searchable and accessible XML repository of University of Bolton courses based on XCRI which is accessible for aggregators and mash-up services
- A report will be produced detailing the technical, institutional and other relevant issues to this implementation and project.
- We will publish the details of the technical solutions to applying XCRI in a SITS environment, the solution we derive, and recommendations for the standard.
- All software and web services developed will be tested and documented for release to the community through an open source licence.

6. **Overall Project Outcomes**

- The BoXCRI project will create a fully XCRI enabled and comprehensive University course catalogue integrated with the institutional MIS, including SITS.
- We will fully engage with disseminate our experience from applying XCRI within the community, including through UCISA, the SITS user groups and the JIS-CETIS SIGs Given the market position of SITS in UK HE, the implementation can act as a model for a significant number of other Universities.
- We intend to use the experience of working with course advertising part of XCRI, to contribute to the continued development of the course information domain in conjunction with the XCRI project and the JISC CETIS Enterprise SIG.

7. **Risks**

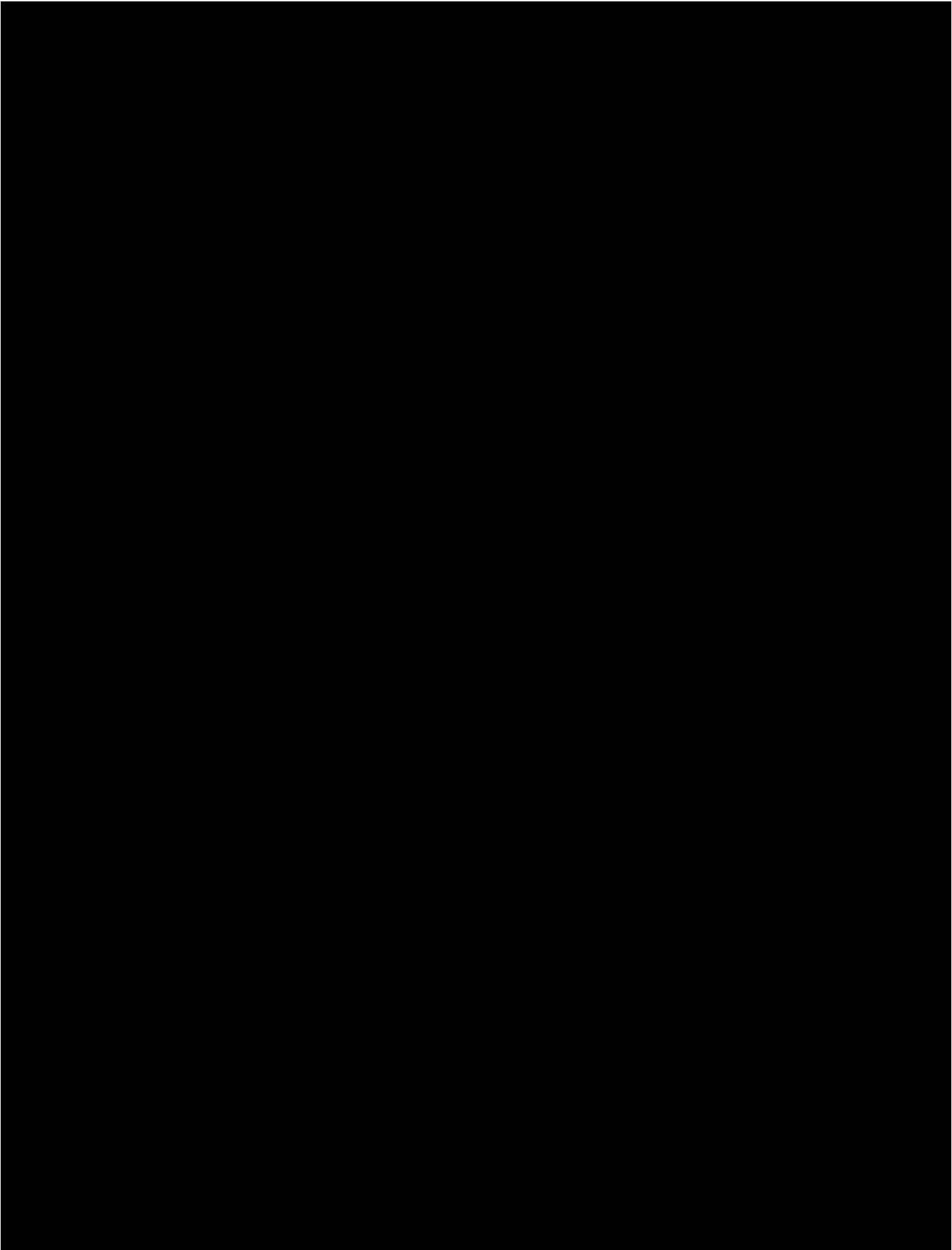
The implementation of the BoXCRIP, is dependent on the progress of the University course catalogue project which is currently underway. There is a strategic drive to put this in place and the project has a high priority. However, there are a number of University stakeholders and 3rd party suppliers to work with and it is possible that timescales may move for certain aspect of the wider project which may impact on BoXCRIP. It is also possible that we will be ready to begin BoXCRIP before the JISC funding timescale.

A second risk is the complexity of the business processes and systems involved in managing a course lifecycle, and the capacity/timing to effect changes to these within the project timescales in order to produce a comprehensive catalogue.

8. **Project Plan**

Work package	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1												
2												

9. **Budget**
The budget proposal is included in Appendix B
10. **Project Controls**
The project will be structured and managed in accordance with the University of Bolton's standard project management methodology and JISC's best practice guidelines.
- A project board will be established consisting of a senior University manager as project sponsor and other stakeholders.
 - A project team will be established consisting of members drawn from the Departments of C&IT, and the Admissions and Marketing units
 - A project manager will be appointed from the University's central IT service, C&IT.
 - The project will be administered with conventional project management quality control tools and documentation including regularly minuted project meetings, an updated project plan, risk and issues registers.
11. **Project Team Expertise**
The project team has a wide range of relevant experience and skills. It will be made up of development staff from the central IS department, and the Admissions and Marketing Unit. A brief resume of the project team is attached in Appendix A.



Appendix B

Directly Incurred Staff	March 07	April 07– March 08	TOTAL £
Total Directly Incurred Staff (A)	£2377	£11884	£14261
Non-Staff			
	March 07	April 07– March 08	TOTAL £
Travel and expenses	£	£400	£200
Hardware/software	£1000	£	£1000
Dissemination	£	£	£200
Evaluation	£	£	£
Other	£	£500	£500
Total Directly Incurred Non-Staff (B)	£1000	£900	£1900
Directly Incurred Total (A+B=C) (C)	£3377	£12784	£16161
Directly Allocated			
	March 07	April 07– March 08	TOTAL £
Estates	£	£	£
Other	£	£	£
Directly Allocated Total (D)	£2358	£11790	£14148
Indirect Costs (E)	£	£	£
Total Project Cost (C+D+E)	£5735	£24574	£30309
Amount Requested from JISC	£1667	£8333	£10000
Institutional Contributions	£4068	£16241	£20309
Percentage Contributions over the life of the project		JISC 49%	Total 100%

1 Appendix C

1.1 FOI Withheld Information Form

We would like JISC to consider withholding the following sections or paragraphs from disclosure should the contents of this proposal be requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

We acknowledge that the FOI Withheld Information Form is of indicative value only and that JISC may nevertheless be obliged to disclose this information in accordance with the requirements of the Act. We acknowledge that the final decision on disclosure rests with JISC.

Section / Paragraph No.	Relevant exemption from disclosure under FOI	Justification
Non	Non	N/A

Please see <http://www.ico.gov.uk> for further information on the Freedom of Information Act and the exemptions to disclosure it contains.

Example:

Section / Paragraph No.	Relevant exemption from disclosure under FOI	Justification
2.4	s.43 Commercial Interests	Contains detailed description of our proposed system design which would damage our commercial interests if disclosed by making this information available to competitors

