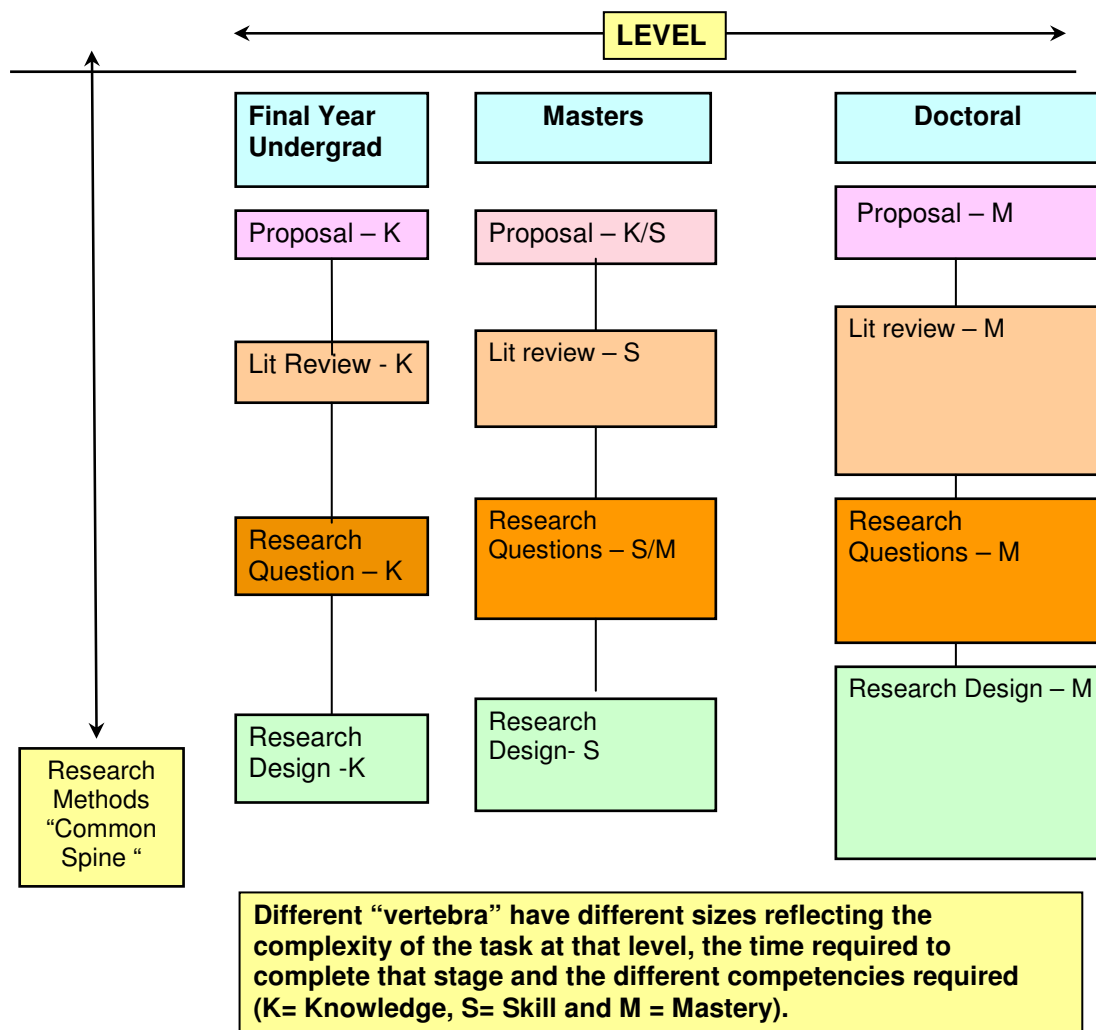


<b>Cover Sheet for Proposals</b> <i>(All sections must be completed)</i>		<b>JISC Capital Programme</b>	
<b>Name of Initiative:</b>		<b>Reuse of Learning Content</b>	
<b>Name of Lead Institution:</b>		Coventry University	
<b>Name of Proposed Project:</b>		Development of a "Common Spine" post graduate Research Methods course from reused and enhanced content to assist universities addressing large cohort numbers and EFL issues.	
<b>Name(s) of Project Partner(s):</b>			
<b>Full Contact Details for Primary Contact:</b>			
Name: Dr Carmel de Nahlik			
Position: Teaching Development Fellow, Faculty of Business, Environment and Society			
Email: C.denahlik@coventry.ac.uk			
Address: Dr C. F. de Nahlik			
Faculty of Business , Environment and Society, William Morris Building,			
Coventry University, Priory Street , Coventry, CV1 5FB			
Tel: 024768883449 Fax:			
<b>Length of Project:</b>		12 months	
<b>Project Start Date:</b>		February 2008	<b>Project End Date:</b> September 2009
<b>Total Funding Requested from JISC:</b>			
<b>Funding Broken Down over Financial Years (Aug-July):</b>			
<b>Aug07 – July08</b>		<b>Aug08 – July09</b>	
£12 500		£ 12 500	
<b>Total Institutional Contributions:</b>			
		£12 141	
<b>Outline Project Description</b>			
This blended learning project explores and develops four themes:			
1. It is possible to develop a generic post graduate 10 CATS points Research Methods module incorporating examples of research methods best practice from other disciplines for reuse;			
2. This module can be customised a the point of delivery to include appropriate disciplinary content, so features a "Common Spine" module with a subject "wrapper"			
3. This module addresses the specific needs of International students with prior diverse learning cultures and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), addressing institutional pressures;			
4. It supports the teaching of large cohort groups of diverse learners.			
I have looked at the example FOI form at Appendix A and included an FOI form in the attached bid (Tick Box)		YES ✓	
I have read the Circular and associated Terms and Conditions of Grant at Appendix B (Tick Box)		YES ✓	

## Coventry University BID to JISC for Reuse of E-Learning Content

### 1. Introduction

1. Many courses require a dissertation or extended research project as a final output in order to demonstrate critical thinking and research skills.
2. There are core activities to all the research skills or research methods modules, which could be developed to form a “Common Spine” for a generic reusable core for multiple versioning of these modules across faculties and across institutions.
3. Separately there is an issue around enhancement and reusability at different levels, e.g. Masters and Doctoral levels. We can conceptualise this in Figure 1:



**Figure 1: Partial Exemplar Mapping of “Common Spine” Research Methods Module components across Degree Achievement Levels.**

4. There are three added challenges facing many universities today:
  - That of many international students for whom English is a second, third or even fourth language and who come from a broad range of learning cultures and styles;
  - The massification of Higher Education issue leading to large module cohorts and resourcing challenges;
  - The need to engage with a demand by remote student groups for distance learning.

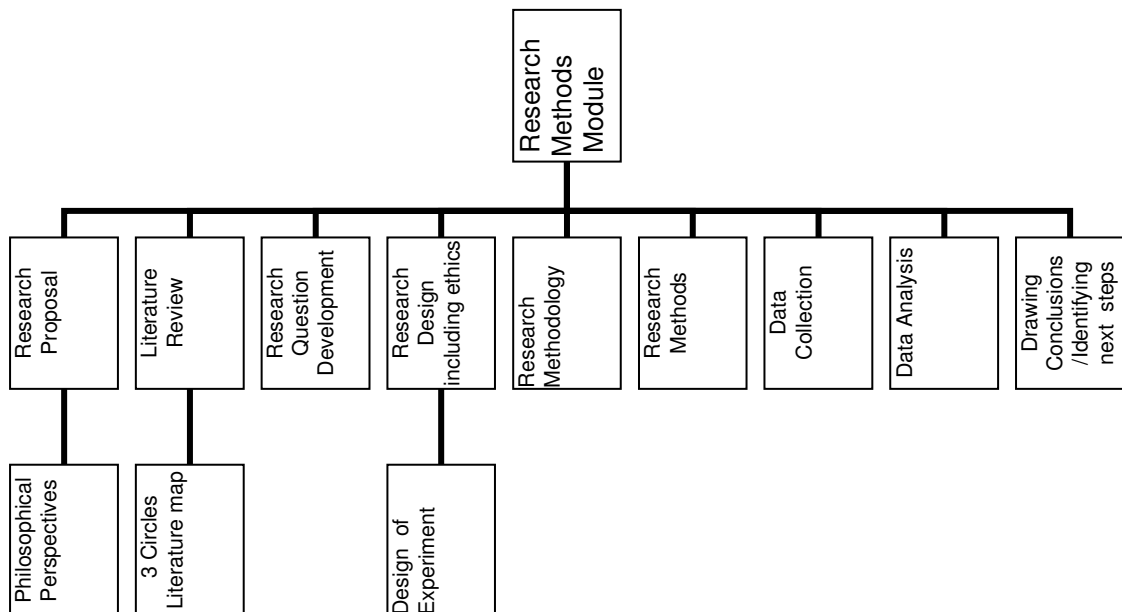
5. This JISC application seeks funding to test the premise that it is possible to re-purpose and enhance existing content for a generic research methods “Common Spine” module, capable of being used across faculties and ultimately across universities, and our accompanying letters show that this vision is shared by colleagues across Coventry University. Ultimately we hope that this will become the pilot for a series of research projects addressing the different academic levels of achievement.

6. It also builds on the JISC funded repository development work (CURVE). Coventry University’s Equella based repository has been power-linked to the institutional Virtual Learning Environment thus allowing fast and easy search, browse and link functions to tutors from within their module webs. This will support reusability across disciplines once resources have been developed.

**2. Purpose**

7. The purpose of this bid is to seek funding for the transformation of some of the content of an existing postgraduate Masters level Research Methods course into a new blended learning “Common Spine” 10 CATS points postgraduate Research Methods module, designed to support a post graduate taught Masters dissertation and be reusable across the university faculties and elsewhere. This “Common Spine” would allow customisation at the point of delivery to allow course teams and universities to continue to express their competitive advantage and unique sources of expertise.

8. We suggest that one way these issues can be met is by producing a module with a “Common Core” or “Common Spine” with sub-areas of locally contextualised content that can slot in and out as appropriate as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Common Spine for Post-graduate Research Methods Module.**

9. So the Common Spine, as shown in Figure 2, would include areas of overlapping interest such as proposal formulation; the derivation of an appropriate high level research question; the process of completing a successful literature review; diagnosis of the area of research focus and the formation of hypotheses or propositions; research design including ethical considerations; research methodology; research methods; data collection; data analysis; forming conclusions and identifying next steps as shown below. The contextualised content might include philosophical perspectives, the 3 Circle literature map, or experiment design for psychologists, etc.

10. Many universities face the three acute manifestations of problems set out in Para 4 as students embark on the research methods skills acquisition module prior to undertaking individual research projects at all levels of study.

11. One route to leverage the scarcest resource – that of face to face provision - is to support each student using content enhancement that is accessible at the student's convenience. As a step-out development, with suitable adjustment designed to continue the perception of the intimacy of the student-teacher relationship, this can become a complete substitute for face to face when teaching remote student groups. However the underlying premise for this bid is that a core blended learning design will offer support to the "face to face" taught components and the fully remote version is not included as an output.

12. If our proposed approach can enhance dissertation quality and develop critical thinking skills by offering student centred learning, and appropriate pedagogies, it also engages with the UK and other foreign government employability agendas and thus offers student stakeholders perceptions of external valuation of their effort in the dissertation process and confidence as they (re-) enter employment.

13. In Coventry, we have had successful experience of all three of the challenges listed in Para. 4. So this allows us to claim some expertise that we can share via this project and to leverage our own content by introducing and integrating new approaches from other academic colleagues across disciplines within Coventry and beyond and to synthesise new materials from outside our university to enhance the student learning experience.

14. Ultimately each university strives towards the delivery of better transferable skills and endowing students with useful competences as they take their places in the job market – this project would enable effort and resources to go into local customisation around the project output of a central "Common Spine".

### **3. The module under redesign**

15. The module, M70CBS, which would be classified as X210 in the JACS coding scheme, currently addresses the development of research skills and is taught across a number of postgraduate degree courses within the Faculty of Business, Environment and Society with two annual presentations in September and February. It is core to most taught post graduate courses in the UK where there is a dissertation or thesis as an output. So the potential audience is large.

16. Convenience sample interviews suggest that the concept of a Research Methods "Common Spine" approach has instinctive appeal for internal and external stakeholders in this area but has failed in the past because it has not been adequately resourced. It remains attractive to potential users.

17. We consider that if we can develop a low-risk pilot offering via this bid, then we can re-bid to increase the programme under a larger funding call, having demonstrated our track record. We have reason to believe that other universities will join us at this point.

18. The funding application is specifically for financing the repurposing and dissemination of the module resources under a work-plan set out in Para 44.

19. At present the module carries 12 CATS points and uses a mixture of 16 hours of face to face delivery with an additional 6 hours of drop in clinic and 90 hours of self directed study. The key learning outcomes are;

- Understand the key concepts involved in a research project and how they interrelate in a complementary way to form a coherent research proposal.
- Undertake a critical review of the literature in the chosen subject area prior to framing the research question.
- Formulate a set of research objectives.

- Critically compare alternative research techniques and evaluate their uses and limitations.
- Prepare a research proposal which reflects utility and which demonstrates an understanding of validity.
- The summative assessment is a research proposal with an emphasis upon the critical literature review and appropriate research methods (3000 words), assessed as Pass/Fail. These are all assessed by the module leader, with sample second marking and no involvement with a potential supervisor occurs at this stage.

20. Formative assessment opportunities are available on-line using peer and tutor reviewed tasks, but the take-up is limited, as this is not assessed. So many students will prioritise based on work considered mandatory and “satisfice” on the Research Methods module, moving on to the task of completing a 12-15000 word dissertation having had limited engagement with the research process. Thus they may not do well. Additional pressures may result in the temptation to plagiarise or use the material of others, with resultant problems.

21. Informal research suggests that poor performance measured against expectations around these outcomes occurs because of:

- Inability to self manage the transition from previous learning cultures with heavy emphasis on memorisation/reproduction of material;
- ESL issues;
- Misunderstandings about the role of collaboration and the importance of originality of content within UK universities;
- Misunderstandings around the need to self manage and complete the self directed learning element; and
- Lack of engagement with online materials- possibly a learning styles issue, possibly a learning culture or even a social culture issue.

22. Thus at the dissertation development stage, or later, acute problems surface, requiring resource intensive intervention. We need to promote better student engagement with this module.

23. The deliverables will be a series of learning objects forming a 10 CATS point Masters level Research Methods module located in the internal CURVE repository linked to JORUM externally as a Federated Search Agent for the appropriate community and a series of external reports on the development experience, lessons learned and pedagogic insights for dissemination.

#### **4. A profile of our typical learner**

24. Our typical learner is aged 24-34 and is a graduate with up to five years of work experience, but may indeed have none. He or she is social and enjoys group work, will use email extensively, as well as text. He or she may not have a personal laptop or printer, or a home broadband connection.

25. Despite this, he or she is likely to be at home in the Internet in areas such as Google, MySpace, etc but is not a native of the physical or e-library nor indeed likely to engage voluntarily with much other than texts on shelves, so literature searches are often cursory and confined to Google references with little attempt to challenge validity. There may be limited engagement with Web 2.0.

26. It is possible that English language fluency may be differentiated between written and spoken standards. Numeracy skills, including knowledge of statistics, may also be low and at best limited to simple descriptive statistics.

27. His or her life may also be complicated by a need to work to support his or herself and or dependants, either local or located elsewhere, and thus time that is not perceived to be core to study is fungible to work and income generation.

28. Purchasing text books is viewed differentially especially now that each set text can be around £35.00 or more for certain core modules, often an unexpected additional expense.

29. Despite this limiting picture, the successful completion of a British Masters degree is valued and our students may be very bright, but in need of guidance and assimilation into the UK learning culture to allow them to demonstrate their talents.

## **5. The re-purposing project**

30. Coventry University has some existing pre-developed elements of the Common Spine currently used as learning objects within the faculty such as those in our VLE Module Web for another Research Methods module produced using an early version of Course Genie. These were designed and produced by an internal team several years ago. The intention was that this suite of online learning objects would form part of a move towards a research methods course to be delivered largely online, a strategy that ultimately encountered mixed success.

31. Based on these findings we will use a “blended” approach that still includes significant face to face teaching, with the online content as enhancement providing space for formative experimentation, etc. Previous experience of running a large research methods course suggests that students have difficulty in “deeper learning” and engagement with more abstract concepts so we need to consider a safe “problem centred” learning approach” and a “student directed” and “student centred” learning approach to complement “face to face” teaching.

32. Many academics, educators and practitioners across faculties at Coventry and elsewhere have invested significantly over the years in the creation of materials for teaching Research Methods. Funding councils such as ESRC have also prioritised this at various points. The challenge for users is to find and integrate this material into an appropriate framework to exploit it as an educational resource. There is a danger that departments conform to groupthink in their assumptions and practice around the teaching of research methods, neglecting novel approaches and focusing on traditional areas. Whilst there is a clear element of core skills that need to be transferred, we would hope that by bringing a mixed team to this, with a wide range of experience and pedagogies, we can leverage that content to meet the needs we outlined.

33. The new module will have a mandatory entry point before access to the Common Spine. This area will consist of a series of student interviews talking about how they were taught and how they felt they had learned in a number of core cultural contexts. This will take note of issues around preferred learning style; mother tongue and hence how it differs from English; stereotypical strengths and weaknesses with respect to the four key language skills - aural comprehension; written comprehension; oral expression; and written expression; background academic culture. The section will close with an interview with a senior teacher from the University talking about how the UK model works and areas that require student heedfulness, followed by an exercise which is submitted for review.

34. The rationale for this for all module participants is that in order to function efficiently in action learning sets, group contexts or even data collection, it is important to understand the prior experience of colleagues. The key theme is to integrate the learners with an absence of judgement about their previous experiences.

35. Whilst we recognise that there are many cultures that need to be integrated, we will pilot this, using Chinese students as exemplars as this group is significant in UK HE.

36. The Common Spine will consist of groups of learning object clustered around the segments identified in Figure 2, each of which will entail a blend of support for face to face materials (which will also be available on line) some reading and some video including “Voice over power point”, some mini research exercises, some Action Learning set activities that will be moderated partly by the module leader and also by supervised moderating by doctoral students as a part of their own development of transferable teaching skills. There will also be

some video content and some simulation to structure the self study element of the module rather more than at present. We shall be using Web 2.0 tools such as blogs and wikis to reflect and share learning. We will look at using video conferencing using ePop. The emphasis will be on enabling students to cross the bridge from directed learning to self-directed learning safely and with confidence.

37. The inclusion of good practice from other disciplines will enliven the content and offer different contexts and milieus to explore research methods and develop engagement with the module as it is seen to have a wider relevance.

38. The module assessment will need to be negotiated as part of the redesign and is expected to include evidence of contributions towards a reflective diary; the research proposal in a similar form to that presently used and also a summative statistics assessment. A peer assessment element will be included. Progression along the Common Spine with a series of formative steps that build towards the research proposal mirrors a design that has been used successfully elsewhere.

39. The first run of the new module will be in September 2008. The module web will also serve as support resource for students as they continue with their dissertations.

## **6. Meeting the bid requirements and sourcing content**

40. The specified content for the bid is shown as follows:

- 35% institutional content – this exists already within different faculties if not within this module at present.
- 15% new material – we see this as largely concentrated around the areas of EFL, statistics and the new front end focusing on the assimilation of students into our learning culture. So this area will include support from the Centre for Academic Writing and our Learning Design Team;
- 50 % external content – we see this coming in from open source materials such as that associated with existing texts - such as the Bryman and Bell text on Research Methods (discussion already taken place with publisher OUP). It will draw in material from repositories such as JORUM and MERLOT. It will integrate earlier EPSRC/ESRC TEL1 funded projects. It links into several CETL projects such as SIGMA, CIPeL and CDoTL and may include integration with findings from ESRC projects such as National Centre for Research Methods. Finally it will include materials for areas such as the Research Methods track of the (American) Academy of Management.

41. We also will be involving a specialist internal team in the creation of learning objects to meet appropriate standards such as rendition into the appropriate standards platform, development of appropriate metadata schema, addressing diversity and accessibility issues and location in our repository, CURVE.

## **7. How the project will work in practice**

42. This module is already scheduled for redesign with a September 2008 start date. Our plan is to use the Phoebe methodology and template and to integrate some stages with critical reviews from stakeholders into the work plan at critical package development points in order to use resources optimally.

43. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

#### 44. Work Packages for Project and Risk Mitigation

WP no	Scope	Stakeholders	Timing	Risks	Risk Mitigation
0	Reflective Diary	All	Throughout	Not kept	Blog/PebblePad to monitor
1	Redesign of module to embrace new features – notably Spine; EFL issues and blended content	All : PM; LD; LT; CAW; ML; SMEs	End Feb - May	Poor preparation  Failure to reach shared vision in time	Agenda circulated by mid Feb  Pre-circulation of ideas and canvassing. Circulation of Phoebe plan Shared project
2	Assessment of existing material inside Coventry University; Search and collation of existing material from external sources;	PM, LD, re-use of existing material  CAW to review	March-May	Summer rush so issues about prioritising	Early diarising and some slack in path
3	New Common Spine outline:  Development of re-purposed existing in house materials and integration of content into final version	PM, LD, ML to review	April to June	Disagreements over content  Disagreement over design  Disagreement over pedagogy  Delays	ML view is final  LD view is final  PM/LD to resolve  Clear WBS and allocation of tasks System slack
4	Development of metadata schema	All + Library	April-July	Agreement on standards	Preliminary discussions and keeping all parties informed
5	Preparation of final version of Module	ML + observations PM/LD	July – September 2008	ML changes  Holiday season	Good background briefing documentation  Check diaries
6	Live run of Module, in-use adjustments, final revision, collation of feedback	ML + observations PM/LD/LT	September – February 2008	ML changes  Failure to agree on final version	Background briefing documentation Root cause analysis meeting
7	Preparation for Repository	LT plus library + LD team	December - February 2009	Technical problems	Slack in schedule. Pilot trials
8	Dissemination, peer review  Evaluation of another project and final report to JISC	All	May 2008- Feb 2009  Feb. 2008- May 2009	Papers. Seminars not prepared  PM changes	Interim internal reports and presentations  Good handover notes, reflective diary

## 8. Brief description of University Quality Assurance Processes

45. The Coventry University Quality Assurance process is similar to many other universities. The first key point or gateway is the Subject Assessment Board (SAB) through which all modules are routed. Subject Assessment Boards are established by the relevant Faculty/School Board(s) for each subject area concerned with modules assessed by the University. Each SAB is responsible for determining the assessment results for each module within its remit and operates with authority vested in it by the Academic Board and with due regard to the relevant regulations.

46. The SAB for this module is Strategy and Applied Management. After SAB, each programme has separate review. The module is also the subject of student feedback, course consultative committees and subject to external examination and external review if major changes are made.

## 9. Budget and costings

47. The budget is shown below:

Directly Incurred Staff	August 07– July 08	August 08– July 09	TOTAL £
	£	£	£
<b>Total Directly Incurred Staff (A)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Non-Staff</b>			
	August 07– July 08	August 08– July 09	TOTAL £
Travel and expenses	£ 250	£ 250	£ 500
Hardware/software	£ 2500	£ 2500	£ 5000
Dissemination	£ 500	£500	£ 1000
Evaluation	£ 200	£ 200	£ 400
Other	£ 1000	£ 1000	£ 2000
<b>Total Directly Incurred Non-Staff (B)</b>	<b>£4450</b>	<b>£4450</b>	<b>£8900</b>
<b>Directly Incurred Total (A+B=C) (C)</b>	<b>£4450</b>	<b>£4450</b>	<b>£8900</b>
<b>Directly Allocated</b>			
	August 07– July 08	August 08– July 09	TOTAL £
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Estates	£876	£876	£1752
Other	£	£	£
<b>Directly Allocated Total (D)</b>	<b>£7472</b>	<b>£7671</b>	<b>£15143</b>

<b>Indirect Costs (E)</b>	<b>£6549</b>	<b>£6549</b>	<b>£13098</b>
<b>Total Project Cost (C+D+E)</b>	<b>£18471</b>	<b>£18670</b>	<b>£37141</b>
<b>Amount Requested from JISC</b>	<b>£12500</b>	<b>£12500</b>	<b>£25000</b>
<b>Institutional Contributions</b>	<b>£5971</b>	<b>£6170</b>	<b>£12141</b>
<b>Percentage Contributions over the life of the project</b>	<b>JISC 67%</b>	<b>Partners 33%</b>	<b>Total 100%</b>

## 10. Staffing for this project

48. Key Staff are shown below, more detailed c.v.s are attached in Appendix 2

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Relevant experience</b>
Dr Carmel de Nahlik	Project Manager	SME/LD expertise
Dr John Beech	Academic Contributor	SME/EFL expertise
Dr Nigel Trodd	Academic Contributor	SME/LD expertise
Dr Steve Jewell	Module Leader	SME expertise
Centre for Academic Writing	Academic /Delivery Contributor	SME/LD/ EFL expertise
Learning Design Team	Learning Design and Specialist Pedagogy	LD expertise
Learning Technologist	Content Generation	Learning Technology , software packages, DA issues
CURVE/Library Team	Content/Repository Transition Management	Content Management Repository Standards Management

Key: SME=Subject Matter Expert; EFL=English as a Foreign Language; LD=Learning Design; DA=Disability Awareness

## 11. Institutional support and acknowledgment of future responsibilities

49. Letters of support are attached from the Vice Chancellor, the Dean of BES Faculty, A Principal Lecturer from the Engineering and Computing Faculty and the Module Leader.

50. The University has been awarded JISC Funding before and fully understands and accepts its responsibilities regarding the requirement to participate in evaluation feedback after the funded period and to participate in peer review of one other module.

## 12. Summary of qualitative and quantitative benefits to Coventry University

51. Qualitative benefits: Better integration of interdisciplinary approaches to Research Methods Teaching; Better student engagement and success; Management of diverse learning cultures and pedagogies;

52. Quantitative benefits: Economies of scale and scope of learning objects and resources.

## Appendix 1: FOI forms

### 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, or if we are successful in our bid for funding and our project proposal is made available on JISC's website.

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.

<b>Section / Paragraph No.</b>	<b>Relevant exemption from disclosure under FOI</b>	<b>Justification</b>
47. Budget Table	s.43 Commercial Interests	Commercial in confidence, budget information refers directly to individual salaries

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

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## **Centre for Academic Writing**

In October 2004, the new Centre for Academic Writing at Coventry University opened its doors to all students seeking advice on writing essays, reports, dissertations and other types of academic prose. CAW offers various forms of support, including one-to-one consultations, group workshops, and paper-based and electronic materials on topics ranging from how to construct an academic argument to how to improve grammar and sentence structure. CAW also helps student writers by working with academic staff to design and implement effective writing assignments within subject courses.

CAW has been established as the result of a growing recognition that students need support in Academic Writing. This need stems from a combination of factors characterising Higher Education today: widened access for 'non-traditional' students, increased student numbers, modular degree structures, and an unprecedented diversity of Academic Writing tasks. CAW recognises that all students can benefit from writing support because the discipline-specific forms of HE writing are shaped by very different conventions and expectations from those of school and A-level writing assignments.

At Coventry University, discussions about establishing support for student writers have been ongoing for the past 8 years and have involved staff from the Centre for Higher Education Development, the Library, the Language Centre, and the Student Disability Office, among others. CAW's central position within the institution makes it unique among UK universities and will facilitate research on student writing across the disciplines.

Dr. Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams is the Co-ordinator of CAW. Formerly the Co-ordinator of Academic Writing for the University of Warwick Writing Programme, Lisa has taught Academic Writing courses for undergraduate and postgraduate students in a variety of disciplines. Lisa has also had considerable experience as a writing centre tutor in US universities and has worked with the Royal Literary Fund to set up one-to-one tutorials in Academic Writing in UK universities.



## **Coventry University Repository Validation & Enhancement (CURVE)**

### **Repositories Enhancement project**

CURVE is an online repository that will be fully integrated with CUOnline (Coventry University Online). It will enable the sharing of e-resources between modules as well as allowing direct access to them via a sophisticated search facility. Tutors will be able to control the access to any material they place in CURVE.

The content of the repository (and the harvestable metadata) will be freely available to the HE and FE community and beyond. The population, enhancement and management of the repository will form the core of the project work. Learning outcomes on cultural issues and institutional implementation from these activities will also be shared with the community in a variety of ways.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The project is aimed at enhancing the Coventry University institutional repository, to add high quality content, and to technically enhance it to interoperate with the network of repositories being created through the JISC funding for digital repositories and preservation.

In addition to the creation of the repository itself, it is proposed to carry out detailed investigations into the usefulness of learning objects deposited in it. Particular emphasis will be placed on the practical issues associated with the possible implementation of standards.

The proposal will achieve several key objectives outlined in the JISC Circular 04/06, namely:

- A sustainable and embedded interoperable repository for learning, teaching and research
- Deposit supporting institutional policy
- Content deposit built into workflows in learning, teaching and research
- Documented strategies for content population

### **Project Methodology**

The population, enhancement and management of the repository will form the core of the project work. Learning outcomes from these activities will also be shared with the community in a variety of ways. The project team leaders will be responsible for directing the work in their particular content area (library, automotive design, dance, research objects, inter-professional learning and HE in FE resources).

We will work with other JISC approved projects in the programme and other JISC programmes, building on the existing repository to effectively contribute to a network of distributed and cooperating services.

### **Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes**

The work will result in a number of sector wide benefits. In particular the dance learning objects collection, resources in the area of design and the internationally important digital archive of material on the Coventry motor vehicle industry, that will be made available to all.

A use case study of HE in FE collaboration, focussed on the joint development and use of the institutional repository, will also be published.

### **Technology / Standards Used**

Learning Edge focuses on dealing with the resources users commonly use for learning object creation (i.e. HTML, Word, PDF, Flash), and tries to assist with re-use by integrating a simple java-based authoring environment directly with the repository that allows people to drag and drop existing content into new collections. It interoperates with the VLE and we will also be building links into external content and repositories for use by our staff.

#### ***Lead institution***

- [Coventry University](#)

#### ***Project partners***

- [Warwickshire College](#)
- [The Learning Edge](#)

JISC Executive  
Northavon House,  
Coldharbour Lane,  
Bristol,  
BS16 1QD.

30<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Dear Executive Members

JISC Capital Programme: Re-use of learning content

Project: Re-use and extension of a post graduate Research Methods course to assist universities dealing with large cohort numbers, ESL issues and remote student groups

I have pleasure in providing a letter of support for Coventry University's proposal for the development of this project which will transform some of the content of a post graduate research methods course into a new e-delivered common postgraduate research methods module.

Coventry University fully supports this proposal led by Doctor Carmel de Nahlik. Further, this proposal supports the aims of Coventry University which seeks to provide high quality support for student learning and foster innovation, creativity and enterprise among our students, staff and partner organisations

Yours faithfully



Professor Madeleine Atkins  
Vice Chancellor

Coventry University  
Priority Street  
Coventry CV1 5FB  
Telephone 024 7688 7688

JISC Executive  
Northavon House,  
Coldharbour Lane,  
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I have pleasure in providing a letter of support for Coventry University's proposal for the development of this project which will transform some of the content of a post graduate research methods course into a new e-delivered common postgraduate research methods module.

I am the Module leader for the Post graduate research Methods module which is the subject of the bid and I fully support this proposal led by Doctor Carmel de Nahlik, our Teaching Development Fellow and her team to look at how we can improve the way we transfer valuable research skills to our students to prepare them for their dissertations. This proposal is congruent with the aims of Coventry University which seeks to provide high quality support for student learning and foster innovation, creativity and enterprise among our students, staff and partner organisations. It addresses Faculty issues we have prioritised. It also addresses particular needs of many post-92 Universities which have large module cohorts, large numbers of ESL students and who have yet to integrate best practice from other disciplines. We hope this project will be a small step towards addressing these issues that we can share with fellow universities.

**Business Development Support Office**  
Direct Line 024 7688 8003/7799  
Fax 024 7679 5666

[www.coventry.ac.uk](http://www.coventry.ac.uk)

Professor Paul Ivey  
Dean of Faculty

JISC Executive  
Northavon House,  
Coldharbour Lane,  
Bristol,  
BS16 1QD.

30th November 2007

Dear Executive Members

JISC Capital Programme: Re-use of learning content

The decision by our Faculty of Business, Environment and Society to bid for funding to develop e-learning materials for Research Methods is of great interest to me and to other colleagues in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing involved with delivering postgraduate taught programmes.

Although some of the research methods curricula requirements can vary between programmes, much of the typical content could be designed to meet the needs of most disciplines. The potential for reuse of the material across Faculties and subjects could make this development very attractive and cost effective.

The need was identified some time ago by the EC Faculty for this type of resource for the EC Faculty's research methods modules and it was proposed again very recently during discussions about the review of postgraduate taught programmes. However it has so far not proved possible to complete the development of these materials for the Faculty.

The EC master's research methods modules operate throughout the calendar year and normally have large populations of up to one hundred students. Provision of e-learning materials would facilitate a range of options for delivery formats, to the benefit of both staff and students.

It is my belief that the major beneficiaries of an e-learning approach to this topic would be part-time postgraduate students in employment, who find it difficult to balance their work and study commitments. They would particularly benefit from being able to study this subject by e-learning. However the e-learning materials could also be an effective additional source of information, or alternative delivery method, for full-time students.

In summary, I strongly encourage and support this proposal, on behalf of colleagues in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing.



Irene Glendinning  
Academic Manager for Student Experience  
Faculty of Engineering and Computing.

Dean of School  
Prof David Noon

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30<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Dear Executive Members

**JISC Capital Programme: Re-use of learning content**

**Project: Re-use and extension of a post graduate Research Methods course to assist universities dealing with large cohort numbers, ESL issues and remote student groups**

I have pleasure in providing a letter of support for Coventry University's proposal for the development of this project which will transform some of the content of a postgraduate research methods course into a new e-delivered common postgraduate research methods module.

Coventry University, and my Faculty, fully support this proposal led by Doctor Carmel de Nahlik. Further, this proposal supports the aims of Coventry University which seeks to provide high quality support for student learning and foster innovation, creativity and enterprise among our students, staff and partner organisations. It addresses Faculty issues we have prioritised. It also addresses particular needs of many post 92 Universities who have large module cohorts, large numbers of ESL students and who have yet to integrate best practice from other disciplines. We hope this project will be a small step towards addressing these issues that we can share with fellow universities.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Noon', written over a horizontal line.

Professor David Noon  
Dean, Faculty of Business, Environment and Society

**C O V E N T R Y**  
U N I V E R S I T Y