

SUBMISSION TO JISC – October 2008
Mini project to extend Portfolio Interoperability Prototyping [PIOP] work
Leicester+ shire e-PF/ILP [electronic Progress File/Individual Learning Plan] pilot project

1. Partners in this bid

- 1.1. This bid is being submitted by the Leicester Shire partnership that has been working on the development and implementation of e-PF/ILP locally. It includes:
- 1.1.1. Loughborough College
 - 1.1.2. VESA 13-19 Education Support Agency
 - 1.1.3. Connexions Leicester Shire
- 1.2. A list of the staff who are involved in the development of e-PF/ILP is included towards the end of this bid

2. Background and context for e-PF/ILP developments in Leicester+shire

- 2.1. Leicester+shire has been an enthusiastic supporter of Progress File even since the national demonstration project in 2002. Despite DfES's [now DCSF] decision to withdraw the national free supply of Progress File folders and presenters in 2006, we have continued to co-ordinate a local purchasing arrangement through Connexions Leicester Shire for our local schools and colleges. Our developments with e-PF/ILP should be seen as an organic extension of our efforts to embed Progress File principles and practices within local learning organizations.
- 2.2. The Leicester+shire e-PF/ILP emanated from the original Post 16 product developed successfully by Loughborough College a number of years ago using JISC funding. The Post 16 e-PF/ILP is now used extensively by learners in the college.
- 2.3. Local schools and colleges became aware of the Loughborough College e-PF/ILP product a number of years ago and following a successful bid to the Government Office for the East Midlands, small-scale funding was secured to develop Key Stage 3 and 4 versions. These are built around the original Progress File materials in "Getting Started" and "Moving On" and, in common with the Post 16 version, link into a comprehensive Individual Learning Plan [ILP].
- 2.4. Following on from this original pilot work, we secured some funding from the local 13-19 partnership in 2007 to undertake a 2 year "managed roll-out" of the product with a pilot cohort of 16 local schools and colleges spanning Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post 16. We are just about to embark on the 2nd year of this "managed roll-out". We currently have approximately 1200 learners using the e-PF/ILP across the pilot schools and colleges in addition to the 800 learners at Loughborough College who used the original Post 16 version in 2007/08.
- 2.5. The technical expertise underpinning the roll out is located primarily at Loughborough College. The Webmaster at the College had a key role to play in developing the original e-PF/ILP for use Post 16. Loughborough College has agreed to second the Webmaster to support the "managed roll-out" over the 2 years. Additional technical expertise has been developed within VESA and the IT Administrator has developed significant skills and knowledge in supporting schools and colleges with the installation and use of e-PF/ILP.

- 2.6. The original Post 16 version was developed by staff at Loughborough College who also led much of the work on the Key Stage 3 and 4 versions. Responsibility for continued developments currently resides with the VESA 13-19 Education Support Agency which is a “trading arm” of the Leicester City Council being managed through Children and Young Peoples Services [CYPS], Learning Services. VESA has a strong track record with broader 13-19 curriculum developments and CPD and led the original national demonstration project for Progress File in Leicester+Shire. However, it is understood and acknowledged locally that the intellectual properties for e-PF/ILP reside with Loughborough College.
- 2.7. The implementation of e-PF/ILP in Leicester+shire has been taken forward within the context of the 14-19 Learning Prospectus [“Coursefinder”] and the common electronic application process [“LeCAP”]. Both of these products are being led by colleagues within Connexions Leicester Shire, who are also key partners in the implementation of e-PF/ILP. It is Connexions Leicester Shire who are providing the main link through to the 13-19 Partnership making the case for funding and support for our integrated approach.
- 2.8. A straightforward way of explaining the linkages between these products is as follows: e-PF/ILP contributes towards helping students to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of themselves which will enable them to make more sense of information about future courses and options [Learning Prospectus]. This, in turn, means that they are more likely to make appropriate choices, reflected in LeCAP, and the quality of their application will be enhanced by the information and evidence they have generated, particularly through the summative e-ILP [within e-PF].

3. Features and strengths of e-PF/ILP & how these help to underpin wider 13-19 developments

- 3.1. The general perception of those who have seen and/or used our local e-PF/ILP product is very positive. We believe that our local e-PF/ILP incorporates a number of unique features that contribute to a tool that can enhance student learning and progression.
- 3.2. Progress File [both electronic and manual] has always been about the process of skill development in learners, as well as providing an opportunity to record and present evidence of achievements. This focus on skill development is congruent with the new secondary curriculum requirements and 13-19 delivery. The latest guidance from QCA on delivering PLTS within Diplomas makes explicit reference to good practice around the use of Progress File and the NRA. The local effort over recent years to sustain and embed Progress File practice provides a sound platform for, and contribution towards, meeting the skills challenge.
- 3.3. The anticipated national requirements and guidance for on-line Area Learning Prospectuses suggests that each area’s Learning Prospectus should include features beyond just the listing of information about courses and opportunities. In particular, equipping young people with the skills to assimilate and use the information in the Prospectus to inform their basis for choice. Locally, this is the path that is being followed with LeCAP and e-PF/ILP. If the national requirements are produced in line with expectations, the local approach should go a long way towards satisfying any proposals.

4. Technical description of e-PF/ILP

The e-PF/ILP we will be exporting from is built on an ASP web application backed by a MYSQL database. The system we will be exporting to will be a combination of ASP and PHP, backed by a Microsoft SQL Database Server.

For exporting the information from our e-ILP, we will develop a basic function that was set up a couple of years ago to test interoperability with using the older UKLeap Specification. This wasn't developed further than a basic XML export, but we could use this as the basis for the new export and import developments using LEAP2A XML specification.

5. Information held within e-PF/ILP that will be available for export to other systems

Under the previous JISC funded project that led to the development of the Loughborough College Post 16 e-PF/ILP, the College worked with Loughborough University to test the inter-operability between e-PF/ILP and the RAPID e-Portfolio system used at the University. Although small scale, this was a successful pilot. We are seeking to extend this facility for inter-operability across other key stages of transition.

There are 2 main scenarios for interoperability:

- 5.1. The bulk transfer of as much information as possible from the e-ILP [developed by the learner as part of e-PF] at Key Stage 4 to Post 16 systems. This is an urgent issue for us as in 2008/09 we will have Year 11 learners who have used e-PF/ILP and who are planning to progress into Post 16 learning in the autumn of 2009. We would like to find a method for exporting the learners e-ILP so that it informs the ILP used by Post 16 providers with these learners from autumn 2009 onwards.
- 5.2. The transfer of information to support student applications from KS4 to Post 16. The e-ILP includes information that could be exported into the personal statement sections of LeCAP as learners apply for Post 16 opportunities in Year 11 thereby avoiding the duplication of inputting of information. Discussions have already taken place with Connexions Leicester Shire about this and we would hope to use this bid, if successful, to fund the work to facilitate an electronic transfer of information into LeCAP.
- 5.3. There are specific sections of the e-ILP that would be the focus for developing an export facility including:
 - Personal skills
 - Career Goals
 - Prior qualifications
 - Work Experience
 - Targets set through the Achievement Log and Diary
 - Core learner information such as contact details
 - Personal Statement
 - Targets linked to progress reviews
 - Uploaded Files [these could be certificates of accreditation or pieces of work that a student wants to keep for the future]
 - The relationship to targets

6. Project Team

The current project team supporting the development of e-PF/ILP in Leicester+shire are:

- Tim Farthing VESA Co-ordinator and main contact for this bid with responsibility for allocating the work of the IT Team

[responsible for Progress File and wider aspects of personal development within the broader 13-19 curriculum]

- Bill Leivers VESA Co-ordinator

[currently supporting the implementation and delivery of key aspects of the 13-19 agenda in Leicester+shire including new Diplomas, FLT and e-PF/ILP. In his former role at Loughborough College, Bill led the development of the Post 16 e-PF/ILP]

- Megan Jones VESA IT Administrator **[attended the JISC briefing on the 30th September]**

[expertise in database development and web design. Megan has been supporting local schools and colleges with the technical aspects of introducing e-PF/ILP]

- Fiona Henry A Level Business Studies Course Leader and secondee to the local e-PF/ILP “managed roll-out” for 1 day a week

[extensive experience and expertise in driving the use of e-PF/ILP in Loughborough College and more recently has been seconded to work on the managed roll-out of e-PF/ILP in local schools and colleges providing INSET and curriculum support]

- Sam Persse Webmaster, Loughborough College **[attended the JISC briefing on the 30th September]**

[designed the original Post 16 e-PF/ILP and has extensive experience in database and web developments within Loughborough College and more recently with local schools and colleges]

- Roz Smith Information & Communications Manager, Connexions Leicester Shire

[has led the development of the 13-19 Learning Prospectus and LeCAP in Leicester+shire and provided the key support for e-PF/ILP with the 13-19 partnership]

7. Project Budget

Our bid is for £10k and would comprise the following costs:

- 5 days of project management [VESA, Loughborough College and Connexions Leicester Shire managers] [REDACTED]
- 40 days of IT and Technical support [to be used by IT staff from Loughborough College, VESA and Connexions Leicester Shire] [REDACTED]
- Project administration costs [phones, meeting venues etc] [REDACTED]

8. Contact details for this bid

Tim Farthing
Co-ordinator
VESA 13-19 Education Support Agency
Knighton Fields Centre
Herrick Rd
Leicester
LE2 6DH
Tel. No. 0116 2707942
e-mail tim.farthing@vesa.org.uk