



## JISC Project Plan

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## **Overview of Project**

### **1. Background**

The eRETURN project builds on the work of two existing initiatives. The first is the national RETURN campaign which has been co-ordinated by the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET based at Bradford College. Funded by the UK Government (formerly DTI, now DIUS) the RETURN campaign was set up to support women who wanted to return to working in Science, Engineering or Technology after taking a career break. Centred around an online course run by the Open University, the campaign provided an integrated model of additional support into employment including, mentoring, careers advice and work placements. The Open University course (known as T160 ) used a simple prototype eportfolio that had been developed in house by the OU. The course evaluation confirmed the importance of portability of eportfolios for these types of learners and within a national partnership offering integrated support. The second initiative informing this project is the development by the OU of a new open source eportfolio product using a Moodle platform as part of the transfer to a new VLE. A new version of the T160 course is being developed which uses this eportfolio (MyStuff) as an integrated tool. This project therefore aims to test out models of portability for eportfolios within the context of the former RETURN partnership which will continue to offer support to women returners to employment.

### **2. Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the project is to evaluate the feasibility of developing a portable version of the Open University's ePortfolio (MyStuff) for cross institutional use, which will be piloted by women returning to Science Engineering and Technology after a career break .

#### Objectives:

- To identify the ways in which specific groups of stakeholders that work with returners could integrate the MyStuff eportfolio into their current working practices (careers advisors, mentors and employers)
- To develop and test models of transferring eportfolio content from OU MyStuff to other systems used by partner institutions, for example the ViewSET Moodle platform at Cardiff and Goldmine database held by UKRC.
- To support 2 groups of returning learners to create and continue to use their MyStuff eportfolios during and after undertaking an online Personal Development Planning course at the Open University;

Project Acronym: eRETURN

Version:2

Contact: Clem Herman

Date:17/03/2008

- To evaluate how learners have used MyStuff eportfolios to support transition to employment by carrying out surveys and interviews with participants on the course and their mentors/advisors/employers after the end of the course
- To disseminate findings and results to the wider community of e-learning professionals through a series of workshops and seminars

### 3. Overall Approach

#### **Strategy and/or methodology and how the work will be structured**

The Open University as the lead partner will undertake project management and co-ordination of the partnership. Three other partners (SHU, Salford, UKRC) will host focus groups for careers advisors, mentors and employers to assess user requirements for a transferable eportfolio. The Open University will carry out technical development of the MyStuff eportfolio software including creating and delivering an online course for returners during which learners will develop their e-portfolios. The partnership will work with these learners after they have completed the course to offer further support into employment. The Open University will design and carry out evaluation and partners will test the transferability and useability of MyStuff within their own institutions. The ALT will organize two dissemination events

#### **Important issues to be addressed, e.g. interoperability**

The project will be investigating how the MyStuff eportfolio can be used by learners as they progress to other institutions or into employment. Therefore issues of interoperability will be critical. We will examine the literature and previous learning from other JISC projects in this area and aim to incorporate this into the models we are working to develop.

Other important issues are usability (to ensure that any recommended product is fully compatible with a wide range of users including assessing impact that takes account of equality and diversity issues)

#### **Scope and boundaries of the work, including any issues that will not be covered.**

While we will aim to provide a technical solution to the needs identified we are also clear that the complexity of interoperability issues and standards means we should not be too ambitious about claiming we can develop a solution within such a short project timescale. We therefore will limit our goals to identifying and specifying the requirements for a portable version of MyStuff and if possible to go some way towards implementing this if we can.

#### **Critical success factors**

Involvement of external stakeholders – it is vital that all partners are fully engaged in the project for its success to be ensured. A crucial part of this will be to bridge the gap between those who have technical expertise within the institutions and those who are working on employability issues particularly with Gender and SET. HE partners must engage relevant parts of their own institutions in developing and testing.

Involvement of internal development teams – while MyStuff development is fully integrated into the Open University's VLE development plans, the project will need to ensure that our objectives are embedded within planning processes and that sufficient resources are made available to ensure synergy between general MyStuff development and the portability issues we have identified within the project.

### 4. Project Outputs

Deliverables:

- Summary Report of requirements for a portable e-portfolio (following stakeholder focus groups)
- Report outlining Specification options for portable version of MyStuff
- Enhancement to MyStuff functionality to include CV Builder and portability options
- Interim Project Report
- Final Project Report
- Evaluation Report

- 2 x academic journal papers

Knowledge and experience:

- Understanding of needs of transitory learners with respect to eportfolios
- Experience of working across institutions with eportfolios
- Increased knowledge and skills re Moodle and open source development to be shared between partners

## 5. Project Outcomes

The project is intended to explore how a network of learning providers and other stakeholders can use an e-portfolio effectively to provide integrated support for women returners. Some partners are new to the concept of e-portfolios as a tool for personal development so we envisage one of the key outcomes being to raise awareness of the potential benefits of using such an approach and a greater willingness on the part of stakeholders to introduce and work with eportfolio tools in the future.

The project will pilot the use of the MyStuff eportfolio embedded within an online personal development course provided by the Open University – we anticipate that the lessons learned from working with MyStuff on this course will be of benefit to other institutions hoping to integrate similar approaches with their own learning programmes.

Our evaluation and research will aim to collate valuable evidence and offer other learning providers with practical advice and examples of good practice to take this forward elsewhere.

## 6. Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder	Interest / stake	Importance
OU VLE Team	MyStuff is central to their strategy. We need them to be involved and to see benefits from the project	High
OU LTS Department	MyStuff is central to their strategy. They will need to do the development work or work closely with the person who is doing it.	High
OU MCT Faculty	The project is based in the Faculty – they should be aware of it and also use the outcomes in future work with employability courses – support essential in order to free Clem's time for working on the project. Project Officer is based in the Faculty and so all admin and financial transactions will be here.	High
OU IET	Two staff are involved in the project. Need to ensure that IET can free up their time and receive appropriate funding back	High
Partners	All need to ensure that there is full support for the project within their own institutions	High

	and the results can be used following the project.	
JISC community	Interested in how we are working with eportfolios and portability issues – will be end users of any new product	Medium to high
ePortfolio community	Academics and practitioners who are interested in new eportfolio research – especially may be interested in any reports or papers we publish	Medium
Employers/employment agencies such as JobShare UK	A focus group with employers at the start of the project will identify their needs from a portable eportfolio – we hope some will continue use after project ends	Medium
Careers advisors and their institutions	A focus group with careers advisors at the start of the project will identify their needs from a portable eportfolio – we hope some will continue use after project ends	Medium
Mentors/mentoring projects and agencies	A focus group with mentors at the start of the project will identify their needs from a portable eportfolio – we hope some will continue use after project ends	Medium

## 7. Risk Analysis

Risk	Probability (1-5)	Severity (1-5)	Score (P x S)	Action to Prevent/Manage Risk
<b>Staffing</b>				
Project staff fail to fully engage with project objectives	2	5	10	Ensure good line management and regular contact for Project Officer. Identify training needs early on.
Project Director short of time and has conflicting priorities	2	5	10	Plan time and ensure colleagues are aware of time commitment required
Partners are not engaged with the project and fail to bring their institutions on board	2	3	6	Keep engaged with partners, offer them training and support, ensure we are all clear about commitments and responsibilities
<b>Organisational</b>				
OU MyStuff development team are too busy to engage with the project	3	5	15	Plan contingency for employing external developer Develop and foster good relationship with relevant staff
<b>Technical</b>				
Solution is too difficult to implement	5	2	10	Ensure we are clear about aims and objectives of the project and

				do not set our sights too high
<b>External suppliers</b>				
If we have to employ external developers then risk is that they will not work effectively with OU staff or there will be conflicts of interest	2	2	4	Make sure that LTS are involved and consulted about any external appointments. Develop realistic and achievable objectives between us.
<b>Legal</b>				Data protection needs to be ensured for personal student data transferred between institutions. While MyStuff is being developed using open source software, clarification still needs to be made about any IPR relating to final versions that are developed in one institution.

## 8. Standards

- To be confirmed – plan to liaise with CETIS in order to clarify this issue

## 9. Technical Development

- Once requirements have been confirmed, a technical development plan will be created.

## 10. Intellectual Property Rights

The MyStuff eportfolio will be based on an open source Moodle platform so the intention is that all products will be freely available after the end of the project

## *Project Resources*

### 11. Project Partners

Institution	Role	Main Contact	email
Sheffield Hallam University	Project Manager	Denise Eaton	denise.eaton@shu.ac.uk
University of Salford	Senior Lecturer	Haifa Takruri-Rizk	h.takruri-rizk@salford.ac.uk
Association of Learning Technologists	Chief Executive	Seb Schmoller	sschmoller@brookes.ac.uk
UK Resource Centre for Women in SET	Assistant Director	Jane Butcher	j.butcher@bilk.ac.uk
The Women's Workshop Cardiff	Director	Liz Fahy	liz.fahy@womensworkshop.org.uk

Consortium Agreement signed on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008

## 12. Project Management

The project will be managed as follows.

Project Acronym: eRETURN  
 Version:2  
 Contact: Clem Herman  
 Date:17/03/2008

### Project Director

Clem Herman

### Steering Group

Project Steering Group meets every 3 months. Its membership includes a senior individual from each partner-organisation, chaired by Niall Sclater Director of VLE at the Open University

- steer the project;
- resolve any strategically significant issues which emerge during the course of the project;
- sign off major project deliverables;
- sign off quarterly progress reports to JISC
- authorise any significant deviations from the project plan, in collaboration with JISC.

### OU Project Implementation Team

This will comprise of Project Director, Project Manager and other OU based team members as appropriate who will meet on a regular basis to progress and monitor the project development. Meetings will be held via phone or face to face usually once a fortnight. Decisions about day to day management will be made by this group.

### Work Package Sub Groups

A series of sub groups (comprising individuals from the lead partner and from participating partner organisations) will be set up for each work package and arrange meetings according to the needs of the work package. Sub groups will function through face to face and telephone or video conference meetings and email (OU has a national network of video conference facilities in each region). Groups will be chaired by the Project Director or delegated to another partner. The group's remit will be to:

- produce project deliverables on time and to a high standard;
- deal with operational issues which emerge during the course of the project;

### Project Team

Role	Name	Reports to	Contact details	% time on project
Project Director	Clem Herman	JISC Programme Manager	c.herman@open.ac.uk	■
Project Manager	Deirdre Bethune	Clem Herman	d.bethune@open.ac.uk	■
OU Project Implementation Team/ Evaluator	Gill Kirkup		g.e.kirkup@open.ac.uk	■
OU Project Implementation Team/ Evaluator	Robin Goodfellow		r.goodfellow@open.ac.uk	■
OU Project Implementation Team	Neil Murray		c.n.murray@open.ac.uk	■
Eportfolio development	Thanh Le and other	Rachel Hawkins Niall Sclater		■

## 13. Programme Support

There are currently no specific areas of support required from the programme or programme manager

## 14. Budget

See below Appendix A

## Detailed Project Planning

## 15. Workpackages

See Appendix B

## 16. Evaluation Plan

See Appendix C

## 17. Quality Plan

To be completed once technical development plan is finalised

Output					
Timing	Quality criteria	QA method(s)	Evidence of compliance	Quality responsibilities	Quality tools (if applicable)

## 18. Dissemination Plan

Timing	Dissemination Activity	Audience	Purpose	Key Message
Sept 08	Workshop at ALT conference	Learning technologists	To disseminate findings to JISC community	Gender issues related to e-learning technologies
Oct-Nov 08	Stakeholder feedback sessions	Employers, careers advisors, mentors	To give feedback to original stakeholder groups	How they can use portfolios in future work – benefits of cross institutional collaboration
Jan 09	OU seminar	Internal OU staff	To disseminate findings to OU community and encourage further take up of eportfolio usage and research	How MyStuff can be used in future collaborative work

## 19. Exit and Sustainability Plans

Project Outputs	Action for Take-up & Embedding	Action for Exit
My Stuff ePortfolio – models and/or prototype	Dissemination workshops (internal and external)	Documentation to be written and made available for Moodle users

Project Outputs	Why Sustainable	Scenarios for Taking Forward	Issues to Address
Model for portable	Can be used by	OU adopts	Technical Support

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version of MyStuff	future OU students and other agencies	recommendations and implements model for future use by all students	Feasibility for non experts
Evaluation of eportfolio use with returners	Can be used by other agencies working with returners	Publication of results and widespread distribution among learning providers	Capacity building within support organisations