

SWan Awards for Innovation in Education & Research Technologies

Scheme Guidance Document for 2008-09

Introduction

The award scheme is applicable to both education and research technologies and will be known, in short, as the “**SWan Awards for Innovation**”.

The scheme is concerned with innovation within the context of the Collaboration & Learning Environments strand (see www.swlacademicnetwork.ac.uk/cle.html) of the SWan Alliance. Thus, something that is new to three Institutions of the Alliance would be eligible for an award, even if it was a proven idea in use in other Universities or research establishments and the output was the sharing of good practice, rolled out across the three Institutions.

Scope

This awards scheme is to be used to promote innovative ideas that have the potential to contribute to the Collaboration & Learning Environments aspect of the SWan Alliance to deliver benefits to either education (i.e. teaching & learning) or collaborative academic research. Bids would be expected to focus on one of the following two broad areas:

- Technology-related developments or new ways of exploiting existing technologies. Output would typically be a pilot of some technology and/or a method of using the technology. The application could be in education or in collaborative research, or both.
- Content-related developments that demonstrate real innovation and address the particular challenges of delivering SWan courses and enhancing the learning experience of SWan students. The output could be some type of interactive content (e.g. innovative e-learning materials).

Bids are encouraged from both academics and administrative/support departments. They could come from individuals, teams (e.g. course development teams, e-learning support teams, or research teams) within one or more institutions, or indeed from one or more of the SWan Institutes. Bids are particularly sought from multi-institution multi-disciplinary groups, building on existing or emerging educational or research relationships, and bringing together both potential users of and experts in the technology involved.

The work must demonstrate benefit in an applied context, relevant to the SWan Alliance, its Institutes, courses and Institutions, by the end of academic year 2009/10. It is, however, acceptable that the major impact would come further downstream, provided that there is some potential impact within this initial lifetime of the SWan Alliance.

Results of educational technology projects should have the potential to be relevant to a number of current or future SWan courses. Thus, subject-specific content development would not be appropriate unless it demonstrated a new approach to content development & the lessons learned can be widely applied. Given the number and specific nature of initial SWan courses (listed in Annex A), it is recognised that needs identified for one course may not be relevant to any of the other initial SWan courses. In such cases, the needs being addressed by a bid should be relevant to potential future SWan courses. In all cases, bidders are encouraged to identify additional relevance outside the SWan alliance to demonstrate wider applicability, e.g., to the joint Faculty of Health & Social Care Sciences (SGUL & Kingston), the University of London in Paris (Royal Holloway), or research collaborations with external partners.

Research Priority for 2008-09

Priority will be given in 2008-09 to bids that address the research agenda of the SWan alliance. Bids are sought which will encourage and support collaboration in research. Indeed, in the first round of bids, to be submitted by the end of October 2008, only bids that are intended to benefit collaborative research will be considered. If there are sufficient unallocated funds to support a second round of bids, to be submitted by the end of December 2008, then ones proposing projects that focus on educational development, benefitting SWan courses in particular, will also be considered.

Size and Duration

Projects should normally last between 9 and 12 months, but may be extended to 24 months total duration provided adequate justification is given. However, there will be a progress check by the SWan Project Board after an initial phase, which should be between 2 and 4 months in duration. Satisfactory progress must be demonstrated in the initial phase, otherwise the SWan Project Board reserves the right to terminate the award at that point.

This award scheme is funded from the Collaboration & Learning Environments' Innovation Fund, which began at £256k to be spread over the three academic years from 2007/08 to 2009/10, of which £125k remains unallocated after the first year.

Awards are limited to a maximum of £50k for each project, and the initial phase is limited to a maximum of £25k. However, given the limited funds available for the scheme, bidders are encouraged to seek less than these maxima and to find other sources of funding to co-fund their projects. As an indication, the first four projects supported in 2007-08 included one costing £26k and three costing £35k.

Eligible Costs

The following types of cost are eligible for inclusion in bids for this scheme:

- Equipment purchase or hire
- Software or service licence costs
- Staffing to run the trial
- Staff training or development
- Costs of gathering student or collaborator feedback
- Other evaluation costs
- Other consumable costs

However, efforts should be made to use available resources funded from other sources to ensure that call upon this scheme's funds is not unduly inflated, so that the available funds are used to maximum effect.

Payments will be made by instalments, normally one per phase. The initial payment will only cover the first phase. Subsequent payments will be dependent upon satisfactory progress.

Bid Content

Each bid should address the following elements:

- Names, positions and e-mail addresses of bidders, identifying the lead bidder.
- The proposed work, including what technology and/or tools are to be used, and the application, including the teaching/learning scenario, the course(s) and/or the research collaboration(s) to which it is to be applied.
- The problem(s) or need(s) that the work aims to address.
- The target audiences and expected benefits for each audience.

- The relevance to the SWan Alliance and its three Institutes – has it been discussed with key Institute staff, including the Institute Director?
- Why this is considered to be innovation?
- The proposed staff and student involvement, indicating which institution they are from.
- Other resources required and the amount of co-funding secured.
- The costs to be charged to the scheme and budget code to which it is to go.
- The duration.
- The criteria for success – to be used in evaluating the results.
- Sustainability and transferability – how feasible is it that this could be rolled out across all three institutions for long-term use?

For details of the bid submission process and the application form, see the separate application guidance document, which can be downloaded from www.swlacademicnetwork.ac.uk

Criteria

Bids will be judged on the basis of their quality, provided that they comply with the rules regarding scope, size, duration, and eligible costs. There is no requirement that the fund should be spent equally at each of the three Institutions or in each of the three SWan Institutes. The fund is not to be used for 'normal' course development work nor to replace failed research grant bids (innovation awards should not be confused with the business case development process nor 'normal' research funding).

The following six quality criteria will be used:

1. The **importance** to the SWan Alliance of the problem(s) or need(s) being addressed.
2. The **potential benefits** to SWan's three Institutes and its Collaboration and Learning Environments work stream. Bids should clarify dissemination plans to achieve these benefits.
3. The **potential user benefits** to the student learning experience and/or to the experience of research collaborators. Bids should clarify how students and/or collaborators will be involved in the trials in order to help evaluate the delivery of these potential benefits.
4. The **project feasibility** – the likelihood of the proposed work delivering meaningful results in the timescales proposed for both the initial phase and the full project. This will include the feasibility of the necessary staff and other resources being available.
5. The **feasibility of adoption** – the potential that the results of the trial could be adopted longer-term by the three Institutions, considering the sustainability and transferability issues (e.g. affordability of long term licences and how easy it would be to roll out the technology across the three Institutions).
6. The **degree of innovation** compared to existing activities within the Alliance, i.e. is it really new, is it doing something different? In particular, the following types of innovation are to be encouraged if they really bring something new to the Alliance:
 - Trials of technology or tools new to the three Institutions.
 - Trials of innovative applications for available technology and tools.
 - Trials that build upon existing institutional projects, applying the technology or tools in innovative ways to SWan programmes.
 - Trials of existing technology or tools to new teaching or research environments.
 - Application of good practice established in one part of the SWan Alliance to another part of the Alliance (i.e. one or more other Institute(s) or Institution(s)) that has never used it before.

Approval Process

The approval process is owned by the SWan Project Board. To create an efficient responsive process, it is necessary for bids to be analysed, with the opportunity for dialogue with bidders to clarify and improve bids, where necessary, prior to being considered at a Board meeting. Bids should, therefore, be submitted to the CLE Project Head by e-mail (d.rayner@kingston.ac.uk). He is charged with producing an assessment and recommendation for approval by the SWan Project Board. In producing this assessment, he will involve such other people as are deemed appropriate (e.g. e-learning specialists), ensuring that there is no conflict of interest. The assessment and recommendation will be sent to the SWan Project Board electronically, seeking majority voting, but with the proviso that any Project Board member can request that the bid be considered at a subsequent SWan Project Board meeting if they feel it requires further discussion before being approved.

The types of recommendation that the CLE Project Head will make include:

- Immediate go ahead
- Put on reserve list, to go ahead when more money becomes available (might apply if the fund is overspent in a given period)
- Send back to proposer to be reworked, with points to be addressed in the revision – if revisions can be made in time, the revised bid may still be considered at the intended Project Board meeting
- Reject, with reasons

Phase 1 Reports and Assessment

For approved projects, at the end of Phase 1, a report must be submitted to the CLE Project Head for assessment. The CLE Project Head will produce an Assessment Report, including a recommendation concerning the continuation of the project, and send this report together with the Phase 1 Report by email to the SWan Project Board members for approval by correspondence.

The Phase 1 Report should include evidence of progress made and detailed plans for Phase 2, including confirmation of the budget requirements. Phase 2 must include dissemination of the results of the project.

The Assessment Report will address each of the above six criteria, as used in assessing the original bids. The CLE Project Head will be looking for confirmation that the expected benefits are being realised and evidence to give the SWan Project Board confidence that Phase 2 of the project will be successful.

If project continuation is approved by the SWan Project Board members, the CLE Project Head is then authorised to release the funds for Phase 2.

If project termination is approved by the SWan Project Board members, then the project team has the right to appeal. If an appeal is made, the reasons must be set out in writing and submitted to the SWan Project Board through the CLE Project Head. The appeal will then be heard as soon as practical at a SWan Project Board meeting.

Evaluation

Following completion of an approved project, the CLE Project Head will work with the project team and, if possible, an independent evaluation specialist to produce an evaluation report for consideration by the SWan Project Board. The evaluation report should cover:

- The overall success of the project, considering the project's own "criteria for success".
- The extent to which the potential benefits were realised and assessment of the impact of the project.

- The feedback received from students and/or collaborators, as relevant.
- The reaction received from staff who would be the ones using the technology if this was to be rolled out more widely.
- The acceptability of including this technology within the SWan supported tools and technologies, if relevant.
- A recommendation on what should happen next:
 - Grant extension to continue the project funded by the innovation fund (the extra cost, duration and aims to be specified).
 - A follow-on innovation award bid to be encouraged.
 - Give a public demonstration/showcase of the results of this project. Then, the SWan team to take up and promote this technology for use within the Alliance, to be funded by the appropriate part of the SWan budget (budget line to be specified).
 - Any further related work to be decided by the Institutions outside the scope of the SWan Alliance.
 - Cease work on this technology (reasons to be specified).

Contacts and Further Information

Bidders are encouraged to discuss potential bids with the CLE Project Head, who will act as a critical friend to help improve the bid before formal consideration by the SWan Project Board. His contact details are as follows:

- Dr Dave Rayner, e-mail: d.rayner@kingston.ac.uk, desk phone at SGUL: 020 8725 1642, mobile: 0787 232 0716, Skype: swan-champion.

Bidders may find it useful to contact the relevant Institute lead. Their contact details are as follows:

- Institute of Biomedical & Life Sciences (IBLS), Prof. George Dickson, e-mail: g.dickson@rhul.ac.uk, phone: 01784 443559
- InterProfessional Institute (Health and Social Care) (IPI), Director from October 2008: Prof. Jan Fook, contact via her PA: Alex Webster, e-mail: AWebster@hscs.sgul.ac.uk, phone: 020 8725 6431
- Institute of Leadership and Management in Health (ILMH), Prof. Christine Edwards, e-mail: c.edwards@kingston.ac.uk, phone: 020 8547 7220

Further information about the SWan Alliance and its Institutes can be found on its website: www.swlacademicnetwork.ac.uk

Annex A: SWan Alliance Courses

SWan Alliance courses	Institute	Starts	Delivering HEIs	Awarding HEIs
BSc Biomedical Science(s)	IBLS	Sep-07	Royal Holloway, Kingston, St George's	Royal Holloway, Kingston, St George's
BSc Biomedical Informatics	IPI	Sep-06	Royal Holloway, Kingston, St George's	St George's
FD Health Informatics	IPI	Jan-09	Royal Holloway, Kingston, St George's	Kingston
FD Long Term Conditions	IPI	Sep-08	Kingston, St George's	St George's
PG Dip Physician's Assistant Studies	IPI	Jan-08	Kingston, St George's	St George's
MSc Leadership and Management in Health	ILMH	Oct-08	Royal Holloway, Kingston	Kingston