

## Routes into Languages

### Call for tenders for research project on Translation and Interpreting for the Public Services (PSIT)

#### Background

The LLAS Centre for Languages Linguistics and Area Studies invites bids to carry out a research project to address provision of education in Translation and Interpreting for the Public Services (PSIT) in higher education (HE) in England. This project will be conducted under the auspices of Routes into Languages ([www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk)). Routes is a national programme currently funded by HEFCE, which aims to widen participation in language learning and to increase the numbers of first language English students taking translating and interpreting courses in English universities.

#### Research project Introduction

As part of Routes into Languages continuation work, a research project will be funded to investigate issues in the following areas:

- Teaching provision in Interpreting and Translation for the Public Services in higher education in England
- The role of HE in supporting the profession and the sector more broadly

This theme has been chosen to support the PSIT sector through raising professional standards and through building a community of practitioners and stakeholders in the sector.

The six-month project aims to provide information on the current context in which PSIT is taught by identifying the barriers and issues around provision of PSIT courses and/or units. This research will eventually shed light on a number of practical steps that may be taken to support PSIT in higher education and other sectors, such as further education. It is anticipated that the project will have a community-building aspect to it. A report outlining a set of recommendations and suggestions for the HE sector will be published at the end of the project and will be disseminated through LLAS events and publishing tools.

Bidders will be able to bid for up to £20,000 to carry out the research outlined below. Work should start no later than **30 January 2012** and will have to be completed by **31 July 2012**.

Deadline for submission of proposals: 13 January 2012.

The successful applicant will be notified in the week beginning 23 January 2012.

#### Project Description

While recent research has provided a clear picture of PSIT education at EU level, no accurate information about provision of PSIT education in England has as yet been made available to stakeholders and practitioners in the sector. This research project aims to fill lacunae in our knowledge and understanding of PSIT in HE by providing clear information on the current situation in England. Recent debates on PSIT have highlighted that lack of attention to education and training could have a negative impact on professional standards.

However, as it stands, PSIT in HE faces considerable challenges both financially and in the provision of language-specific tuition. In addition, the subsequent income that graduates of PSIT courses can earn in the public sector is often relatively low and careers are insecure.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this project is to analyse the current landscape of PSIT, to highlight examples of good practice and to offer some practical recommendations on ways in which the HE sector may support PSIT in a rather more sustainable way.

The project is divided into two parts. Part 1 involves data collection and analysis in four thematic areas while Part 2 is practical and focuses on the collection of resources and examples of good practice and community-building activities, as detailed below. For both parts it is desirable to gain an insight into the current situation in PSIT for languages of the wider world (including less widely taught and used languages) and for British Sign Language (BSL).

## **PART 1**

### **a) Research questions**

#### 1. Analysis of the context

- What are the barriers, problems and issues in the provision of courses in PSIT at higher education level in England?

This should include an overview of existing reports and research relevant to the field of PSIT and a list of existing provision. Barriers to provision of teaching in PSIT should then be identified so that a clear picture of the context can be established.

#### 2. Education and Pedagogy

- What are the views of practitioners in PSIT on the practical steps which could be undertaken to improve the viability of PSIT teaching in HE?
- How can curriculum innovation and teaching expertise in languages, cultures and conference interpreting in HE contribute to the PSIT curriculum?
- How can research conducted in PSIT contribute to teaching in the same area?

One or two case studies showcasing good practice in either or any of these two areas should be provided:

- Curriculum development and innovation in PSIT
- Teaching in PSIT

#### 3. Quality

- Can HE contribute to raising standards in PSIT provision generally and in a sustainable way? How might this objective be achieved?
- Is there scope for HE to provide support for the professional development needs of PSIT trainers outside HE (e.g. in further education and in the private sector)?

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<sup>1</sup> Special Interest Group on Translation and Interpreting for Public Services, Final report of the Specialist Interest Group meeting, DG Interpretation, European Commission (9 September 2011); this can be accessed at <http://www.eulita.eu/sites/default/files/SIGTIPS%20Final%20Report.pdf>

One or two case studies illustrating current good practice in quality in HE should be included. Please note that, case studies for languages of the wider world (including minority languages) and BSL are especially welcome.

#### 4. Community

- What practical steps can HE undertake to improve collaborations between employers, professional associations and practitioners?
- What can HE do to support other sectors, e.g. further education?

## **PART 2**

### **b) Practical steps for building a community of practice**

This section of the project will involve collecting typical resources and examples of good practice which teachers and trainers of PSIT will find useful in their teaching and learning and piloting a collaborative tool as detailed below:

1. Develop, pilot and evaluate a tool for promoting collaboration and networking in PSIT on a small scale. This may include blogs; discussion fora; mailing lists; repositories and other tools which you think will contribute to the formation of virtual communities of professionals, interpreters and translators, those working in training centres and interpreting and translation users. Make recommendations on ways in which collaboration and networking may be developed and enhanced in the future through use of technology. A set of practical guidelines and evaluation of this tool should be included in this section.
2. Provide 2/3 examples of good practice for each of the following categories:
  - Audio resources, e.g. examples of telephone interpreting or audio exercises on telephone interpreting
  - Video-conferencing resources, e.g. examples of video conferences or exercises on video-conferencing
  - Lesson plans
  - Self and peer evaluation
  - Examining

## **Methodology**

This research will involve:

### Part 1

- A review of relevant literature on teaching PSIT, on the context of teaching and learning PSIT in England
- Telephone interviews with stakeholders and with university staff
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Web searches

## Part 2

- Discussion with stakeholders
- Web searches
- Development of collaborative tools
- Evaluation of blogs, forums, and any other tool used

Note that for Part 2 creative suggestions on how innovative community-building activities might be implemented are welcome.

### Outputs

- A research report of approximately 15,000 words
- A set of discrete resources which might encourage collection and circulation of quality teaching materials among PSIT practitioners
- Recommendations to providers and stakeholders in the HE sector on the (potential) practical steps which would need to be undertaken to address problems and issues in the provision of PSIT as indicated in the report
- A number of case studies showcasing examples of good practice in PSIT teaching and learning and of successful community-building activities
- Materials produced in Part 2 of the project and related records
- A descriptive bibliography of the literature available on the topic

### Outcomes

- A detailed overview of the PSIT sector in HE in England including a clear identification of the problems and issues in PSIT provision and a number of examples of good practice
- A robust set of recommendations for providers and stakeholders in the HE sector
- An indication of the future sustainability of PSIT provision
- Avenues for further research

### Conditions of funding

Bidders will be expected to:

- Be able to provide a proven track record of expertise or research in the PSIT sector or a related field
- Have a background/experience of successful research and/or development of projects. Some project management experience is desirable, but not essential.
- Be willing to participate in dissemination events and other events relevant to the topic that LLAS or Routes into Languages may organise in the future

Preference will be given to bids where the principal investigator will be substantially undertaking the research.

Bidders should submit a proposal for up to £20,000 of funding. Funding may cover

- Buying out staff time
- Office costs

- Travel expenses
- Development of online tools
- Contribution to overheads (to be included in the amount bid for)

### **Allocation of funding**

25% of funding requested will be allocated at the start of the project (January 2012). A further 25% will be allocated in April 2012 on receipt of satisfactory updates on progress and the final 50% will be awarded on receipt of a satisfactory research report.

### **Submitting a proposal**

Proposals should be sent using the official form only. One electronic copy and one copy signed by the lead investigator and the Head of School/Dean of Faculty or equivalent should be sent to:

Dr Angela Gallagher-Brett  
LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Southampton  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

[routes@soton.ac.uk](mailto:routes@soton.ac.uk) (Please note that all network, email and internet access will be down from 3 – 6 January 2012, if you require any assistance during this time please call 023 8059 9413)

Both the electronic and signed copies of the proposal should be received by Monday 9 January 2012.

**Application form for research project**

Total Funding sought	
Name of lead investigator	
Brief description of current role and responsibilities of lead investigator	
Name(s) of other staff involved	
Brief description of current role and responsibilities of other staff	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Brief description of current role and responsibilities of lead investigator	

**Project timetable and milestones**

Please describe how you will carry out the research project below

February to April 2012
May to July 2012

**Funding sought**

Please outline the funding sought in each section

Staff costs	
Travel and subsistence	
Office costs	
Development of online tools	

Please give your reasons for applying and explain your qualifications, experience and existing achievement in this area (no more than 500 words)

Please briefly outline any ethical issues that may arise in your project and how you intend to address them.

I confirm that I will be the lead investigator in this project and will contribute substantially to the report

Signature of lead investigator:.....

Name and position:.....

Institution (if applicable) .....

Agreement of senior management of institution(s) involved (if applicable)

Signature of Head of School or Dean of Faculty

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Name and position

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