

DPC Career Development and Training Task Force: Draft Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a not-for profit membership organisation whose primary objective is to raise awareness of the importance of the preservation of digital material and the attendant strategic, cultural and technological issues. Its vision is to **make our digital memory accessible tomorrow**.

The DPC strategic plan includes a high level objective to support members' workforces through the provision of specialised training. Recognising the costs of provision and the very great range of expertise required, in 2009 the DPC established a 'Leadership Programme' which offered scholarships in order that members could send staff to attend training courses offered by third party providers. Since then, the DPC has made available 24 scholarships to attend ULCC's *Digital Preservation Training Programme*, 3 scholarships to attend UKDA's *How to set up and run a data centre* and 38 scholarships to attend the British Library's *Digital Preservation the Planets Way*. To date this has cost the Coalition just over £14,000 and an allocation of £10,000 is available in financial year 2011-12.

Grants are decided by a small committee of 3 or 4 people drawn from the Board, the Training Provider and the DPC Executive. Grants are advertised and awarded against a clearly defined set of criteria. As often as not more scholarships are awarded than are advertised. Feedback from recipients is consistently positive. Grants meet the costs of tuition (though not travel or subsistence), are only available to DPC members and are only available to short courses that are not sponsored or supported in other ways. Although the principal beneficiary is the student, the course organisers also benefit because they can rely on income from a core set of funded places. The consequent reduction of risks makes training viable and thus provides an indirect benefit to all stakeholders. This helps to deliver the DPC's core mission. The grant awarding process is transparent and methodical.

The process by which courses are selected to be considered for support from the Leadership Programme is ad hoc. It is entirely based on informal contacts and personal recommendations. No criteria exist and no grounds for prioritising or refusing a request for support have been published. Given the growing number of courses, the demand for more specialised and more diverse training, the DPC needs to be able to respond confidently to members and external agencies alike.

2. Vision

The DPC Career Development and Training Task Force will establish and monitor criteria through which training providers can access support from the DPC Leadership Programme. It will ensure that grants are awarded to credible and viable training courses of demonstrable quality that will help deliver the DPC's strategic objective. It will identify, assess, monitor and promote short courses that provide informed and credible training in digital preservation and cognate fields.

In this way the Task Force will help to ensure that our members' workforces are better supported with higher quality and ever more relevant training.

3. Audiences

- *DPC Board*. By introducing greater rigour into the decision making processes, the DPC Board will be better placed should it seek to develop the Leadership Programme. (Primary Audience)
- *Training officers and staff within DPC member agencies*. By sharing information about current provision and analysing strengths and weaknesses, it will be possible for DPC members to understand more clearly the value and relevance of a wider range of training opportunities. By articulating their needs they will be able to influence the development of training provision.
- *Training providers*. By publishing explicit quality checks based on the needs of DPC members, and by associating quality with funding opportunities, training providers will be able to deliver more relevant and more valuable training which has an explicit and independent statement of quality. Such a statement could be advantageous for marketing.

- *Training officers and staff outside the DPC.* By clearly identifying high quality training provision, all staff involved in DP activities will be better placed to understand the value of a wider range of higher quality training opportunities and to benefit from the indirect subsidy that DPC's support implies.

4. Terms of reference

The rapid adoption of new technologies, the relative novelty of the problem and the number of stakeholders involved has encouraged the proliferation of training courses in digital preservation. Different audiences and different sectors need different types of training and may thus find it hard to identify relevant, credible and high quality training which will make a practical difference to ensuring our digital memory is accessible tomorrow.

The Task Force will establish and publish explicit criteria that will govern the allocation of grants from the DPC Leadership Programme. It will provide a strategic forum in which members can articulate their needs, establish common goals and inform the development of existing training materials. The Task Force will invite training providers to apply for support from the Leadership Programme and assess their relevance to the needs of the DPC members. It will receive feedback from recipients of grants. It will promote diversity and competition among existing providers and encourage new entrants to develop high quality and relevant training. Focussed, dynamic and credible, the Task Force will ensure that training supported by the DPC prepares our workforces for the disparate and changing demands of digital preservation.

The Task Force will not take responsibility for training provision, will not attempt to define curricula and will not undertake the development of tools, resources or standards, except to lobby for these as necessary. It will focus on short-course training provision and will not concern itself with degree level qualifications or personal accreditation except insofar as these contribute to the quality and relevance of short courses.

5. Provisional criteria and values

The Task Force will initiate its work by debating and refining a broad set of criteria provided by the DPC Board as the basis for assessing the quality of courses. Accordingly, short courses that seek the support of the DPC Leadership Programme should have the following characteristics:

- Courses should have clearly articulated aims and objectives
- Courses should further the DPC's principle strategic goal of ensuring our digital memory is accessible tomorrow
- Course materials should be subject to peer review
- Teachers, supervisors and assessors must be knowledgeable about digital preservation through their own practical experience, research or qualifications
- Courses must bring relevant and clear benefits to the workforces of DPC member institutions
- Courses must lower the barriers to ongoing and practical participation in digital preservation
- Course content must be concise, current and accurate
- Courses must employ teaching methods that are proven and appropriate to the subject matter
- Courses should be open to the whole membership of the DPC

In addition, courses must be in accordance with the values of the DPC:

- Providers must be neutral bodies.
- Providers must embrace a consultative, innovative and open approach.
- Providers must engage in a collaborative manner with stakeholders and respond to their needs.
- Providers must maintain sound stewardship of the Coalition's resources including its reputation.
- Providers should share best practice and knowledge with our members to support their priorities.
- Providers should maintain vendor neutrality.
- Providers should support developments of standards and generic approaches to digital preservation.

The Task Force will be required to debate, refine and enhance this list of criteria and establish mechanisms to test performance against them.

6. Operation of the meetings

Papers will be produced in advance and the DPC will provide a secretarial function for the meetings and arrange logistics. Notification will be given in good time and papers will be distributed at least three working days before the meeting. Meetings will be chaired by a DPC board member and report to DPC board meetings.

Given the nature of the topics it will be important that participants are appropriately selected and delegated from their institutions. It is appropriate to bring more than one representative to any meeting and for representatives to vary between meetings. Members may be asked to leave meetings to ensure transparency of process. Facilitators or commentators will also be invited as required.

7. Roadmap 2011-2012

The Task Force is expected to evolve into standing committee which will have a standing agenda. In the first instance the Task Force will establish and publish criteria which will then be disseminated to the wider community with an invitation to respond. The group will then meet (perhaps by teleconference) to discuss responses received as and when it is appropriate to do so.

The first meeting of the Task Force will be in the third quarter of 2011 and is intended to agree and publish criteria.

8. Outputs

The primary outputs from the group will be a set of criteria which training courses would be expected to meet and a mechanism to test whether proposed courses meet those criteria.

The chair of the Task Force will provide a short report to DPC Board meetings where it will have a standing agenda item.

9. Quality measures and evaluation

The ultimate goal of the Task Force – to support the DPC leadership programme through the publication of explicit criteria - cannot be measured directly. Proxy measures of success include:

- Willingness of members to participate
- Quality and timeliness of documents produced
- Quality and focus of discussion
- Number of courses seeking support
- Usefulness of criteria for cognate developments
- Interest from prospective members

The Task Force will evaluate its own success after 12 months and opt to wind up at this point or to continue for an additional period.

The Task Force will be evaluated as part of the DPC's three year evaluation (2012-2015) to be completed in 2015.

10. Values and constitution

The Task Force will be facilitated by the DPC as a working party of the DPC board. As a task force of the DPC, it will adopt the values and relevant parts of the constitution of the DPC. Consequently it will:

- Operate as a neutral body.
- Embrace a consultative, innovative and open approach.
- Engage in a collaborative manner with all stakeholders to comprehend and respond to their needs.
- Maintain sound stewardship of the Coalition's resources.
- Share best practice and knowledge transfer with our members to support their local priorities.
- Maintain vendor neutrality.
- Support developments of standards and generic approaches to digital preservation.

11. Membership

The Task Force will be open to all current members and associates of the DPC. From time to time and as the need arises, third party experts will be invited to contribute to and facilitate meetings. Should parties wish to join the Task Force that are not current members of the DPC then they should be directed to join the DPC as an

associate or full member. The DPC Board will reserve the right to levy a subscription to non-members that wish to have a regular presence at the task force.

12. Example scope

The following are considered as examples of things that are within scope:

- analysis and promotion of three to five day training courses
- analysis and promotion of one or two day introductory or specialist courses
- analysis and promotion of course materials and online training resources for Career development
- analysis of specialist DP content within cognate training courses
- assessment of value for money from short courses that seek DPC support
- assessment of relevance of a course to the needs of the DPC members
- agreements in principle that DPC should offer grants to support a course
- examination of the impact of course and feedback from participants sponsored by the DPC
- needs analysis
- awarding of 'DPC-Approved' or similar quality mark to courses

The following topics are examples of topics outwith the scope of the Task Force:

- accreditation of degree level courses or any other courses lasting more than one month
- accreditation of teaching practice or individual teachers
- specification of generic curricula
- assessment of training or career development plans
- assessment of in-house training which is not available to the whole DPC membership
- accreditation of individuals as effective practitioners
- applications from individuals to attend any given course

About this document

Version 1	Document initiated by WK after consultation with ULCC and DPC Staff	13/07/11	WK
Version 2	Distributed to ULCC and DPC Staff for proof and correction	26/08/11	RD, EP, PS, CJ, AD, SMM
Version 3	Distributed to DPC Board	30/08/11	WK
Version 4	<i>Distributed to members</i>		
Version 5	<i>Updated, made operational and released</i>		