

Media Technology and Engineering Skills Taskforce (M.TEST)

Specification for consultancy support

- 1 M.TEST¹ is looking for a consultant to undertake the work described below. We are looking to start this work as soon as possible, and expect the work to equal approximately 40 - 50 days (though this will be negotiated with the consultant). We also expect the total duration of the work to span from April – December 2008. See Appendix 1 for more detail on the history of activity from M.TEST.**

Ideally, the consultant will have a good knowledge of the different aspects of the Creative Media sector. Essentially, they will have a background and direct experience of engineering and technology within the sector. As much of the work will be directly interacting with employers, they will be well respected within the industry. It is essential that the consultant understands the nature of engineering tasks undertaken in the sector and the associated skills required together with the likely training needs. In addition it would be useful if the consultant understands the current landscape of skills, (i.e. the work of Skillset, Sector Skills Agreement, the Government Departments and Public Agencies involved in skills, the key funding mechanisms, the different delivery partners).

- 2 The key tasks are to:**

- 2.1 Examine and describe the engineering needs of the different sub-sectors of the creative media industry** (Television, Radio, Interactive Media, Facilities, Broadcasting, etc). This work will include detailed description of the occupational roles (and levels) within these sub-sectors that use technology and engineering skills, what recruitment practices currently exist, what issues surrounding skills and recruitment they face and what efforts they currently undertake to improve these.
- 2.2 Examine and describe existing Engineering qualifications and accreditation that the Creative Media industry currently uses.** This should include (but not be limited to) undergraduate and postgraduate Degrees, placements, Continual Professional Development, IET, ICIA, SBE, SMPTE amongst others.
- 2.3 Examine the embryonic MITC1 scheme being rolled out in Australia, and describe its relevancy for Creative Media sector:** By using (amongst other material) 2.1 and 2.2, map against MITC any existing framework that the industry currently uses, the needs at all different levels of seniority within the industry.
- 2.4 Discuss with wider stakeholder group (including international partners) and create an analysis of context and fit with global work.** This should include (but not be limited to ICIA, SBE, SMPTE and similar schemes)
- 2.5 If appropriate, create a detailed Project Plan to implement MITC (or equivalent).** This will include timetable, task list, and indication of likely resource need.
- 2.6 Examine and if appropriate, source further sustainable funding to carry out Implementation,**

- 3 Methodology and deadlines for consultant.** We will be expecting the successful consultant to agree a detailed methodology and timetable with the M-TEST Board. In your application please include your vision of how this work is best carried out, including engagement strategy for industry and stakeholders. We envisage this work to be roughly equal to 40 - 50 days and would like to see it completed by end of 2008. We envisage this work to be completed in three phases:

¹ For more on the background to this, see Appendix 1

Phase	Task	Output	Estimated deadlines
1	(2.1) Examine and describe engineering needs	Report	July 2008
	(2.2) Examine and describe existing Engineering qualifications and accreditation	Report	
2	(2.3) Examine the MITC and describe relevancy	Report	October 2008
	(2.4) Discuss with wider stakeholder group and create an analysis of context and fit with global work	Report	
3	(2.5) create a detailed Project Plan to implement MITC	Project Plan	December 2008
	(2.6) Create sustainable funding plan	Funding Plan	

4 Management and Intellectual Property Rights: As the key financial contributor for this work, Skillset will manage the contract and provide contacts of delivery partners. All information and contact details will remain the property of Skillset. All written material will be the property of Skillset.

5 Responding to this specification: Please provide:

- a copy of your most recent CV;
- a brief outline of your planned methodology;
- proposed dates and costs (inclusive of VAT, if applicable);
- a recent example of your written work – preferably with relevant content (around 1000 words).

Please send these documents electronically to tristonw@skillset.org (direct line: 0207 520 5778)

Tenders will be assessed on applicants' experience and knowledge of the creative media industry (particularly with an engineering focus), the current skills landscape, and their writing ability.

Applications should reach Skillset by Midnight, 7th May, 2008.

ENGINEERING AND THE CREATIVE MEDIA INDUSTRY

For some time there has been a perception from many parts of the creative media industry that there are serious issues within engineering. A combination of lack of new recruits, inappropriateness of training in further, higher and private education and training provision, an ageing profile of the workforce and the intense impact of high technology change has meant that many companies feel this area is a priority.

To examine these issues and suggest ways forward, Skillset brought together a high-level industry working group², named **M.TEST** (Media Technology and Engineering Skills Taskforce). This group has met four times since January 2007, and have agreed the following recommendations for next steps.

Context

The 2006 Skillset Census³ estimates that approximately 8000 individuals work in a technical engineering capacity in the creative media industry. Of this number, over 90% are employed. This figure excludes engineers working in the Broadcast Manufacturers as Skillset have had little response from this sector.

The Broadcast and Media technology industry is estimated to have an overall global market sizing of around £6.2 billion⁴. Out of this estimate, the UK has a 22.8% share of the global market, with a total value of £1.41 billion, a figure far in excess of the expected given the industries relevant size.

All companies involved in the Working Group, and others in post production⁵, satellite transmission⁶ and other creative media sectors have stated that the current levels of graduate entry is way below their needs. IABM have audited the employment rates of their members discovering that most UK manufacturers want to employ more engineering technical staff but cannot find them.

Issues

The working group agreed that the problems facing this sector can be grouped into four main areas:

1. Lack of attractiveness to the sector for new entrants
2. Lack of appropriate undergraduate provision
3. Lack of clarity in job roles and skill requirements
4. Lack of credible and relevant Continual Professional Development providers.

Some of these issues can be seen as symptomatic of the wider engineering sector – for example making more young people choose engineering as a study option can be seen as a wider problem where the creative media industry can be thought of as a minor part. However, the lack of clarity, Further and Higher Education provision and short courses are firmly the concern of the creative media industry.

² 2 Richard Brooking (BSkyB), Roger Crumpton (International Association of Broadcasting Manufacturers), Hamish Greig (CTV Outside Broadcast), Andrew Jones (BBC), Triston Wallace (Skillset), Dave Walters (Chrysalis Radio).

³ http://www.skillset.org/research/census/article_5136_1.asp

⁴ Figure for 2006, from "The UK broadcast and media technology industry – a report for the IABM prepared by Screen Digest" January 2007

⁵ Including the UK Post Training Committee

⁶ Including Arqiva

Solutions

The issues recognised here is part of a global problem, with work already underway in Australia and America to solve them. Having examined both of these, the working group would like to draw particular attention to the Media Industry Technologist Certification (MITC)⁷ that is being developed by the media industry in Australia.

MITC

In order to understand, map and progress the skills of technologists in Australian media, the industry (alongside education, the equivalence of a Sector Skills Council, Awarding Bodies) has developed a Certification Scheme. Similar to our Occupational Profiles and Standards, this outlines what competencies individuals need to demonstrate that they are at a particular level within the industry. This is tested by a bank of multiple choice questions and by peer/management review. MITC is slowly creating these competencies and questions by focusing on key sub-sector roles.

Recommendation

The Working Group recommends that the UK industry join forces with their Australian counterparts in completing the framework for the MITC.

By having an industry-recognised Competency map, with clear skills levels and job functions defined, many of the issues identified will be solved;

1. Lack of attractiveness to the sector for new entrants

An industry-wide understanding of the opportunities and progression routes available will help assist Information, Advice and Guidance, and create opportunity for case studies.

2. Lack of appropriate undergraduate provision

The framework developed by such a scheme will provide all education providers with a list of key competencies that all parts of the creative media technology industry requires from their new entrants.

3. Lack of clarity in job roles and skill requirements

By undertaking this piece of work, a clear map of job roles and skills requirements (including where convergence between sectors can occur) will be developed.

4. Lack of credible and relevant Continual Professional Development providers.

By looking at all skills levels (not just new entrant) a continuing list of up-to-date skills issues will be developed, ready for training providers to use when developing their courses.

Next Steps

The Working Group realises that there are a number of hurdles to overcome before the industry will be ready to accept a certification scheme. In order to overcome these, we recommend that a consultant is employed to;

- Examine the MITC model and check relevance with UK industry
- Work with UK industry to identify and map skills and competencies at all levels of engineering
- Recommend an ongoing programme that is sustainable and has industry buy-in
- Recommend shorter term fixes for the ongoing issues facing engineering

⁷ <http://www.smppte.org.au/mitc.asp>