

NOWAL / Northern Collaboration Future Options Consultant Brief

1. Introduction and context

North West Academic Libraries (NoWAL) is a regional subgroup of SCONUL based in the North West, and uses its close geographical proximity to enhance its outstanding reputation for knowledge exchange, staff development and training; benefitting all staff and students by providing access to specialist skills and sharing expertise and best practice. NoWAL came into being in 2004 when the existing Consortium of Academic Libraries in Manchester (CALIM) extended membership to include HEIs across the whole North West region and now serves all the UK Universities and Colleges of Higher Education libraries in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside. Our mission is:

- To inspire excellence in the learning, teaching and research services of member libraries, supporting their strategic aims
- To celebrate success through collaboration, innovation, influence and partnership.

The Northern Collaboration (NC) is a grouping of the university libraries in the north of England formed in 2011, currently numbering 29 members. It is a subgroup of SCONUL, which provides its administrative and financial support. Its aims are:

- To provide a framework of collaboration within which libraries can work together to improve the quality and efficiency of services, and to explore new business models
- To exchange ideas and good practice
- To make connections between library staff and with related professional groups
- To enhance awareness amongst member library staff of changes in the external environment

Some institutions are currently members of both NoWAL and Northern Collaboration.

A briefing pack will be provided to the successful consultant with full details of NC and NOWAL structures, activities, events, subgroups, governance and finances.

2. Project management

The project will be jointly overseen by Alison Mackenzie, Acting Chair of Northern Collaboration,
and Susan Murray, Chair of NoWAL. Their contact details are:

Alison Mackenzie Dean of Learning Services, Edge Hill University alison.mackenzie@edgehill.ac.uk
Susan Murray Director Library and Learning Spaces, Liverpool Hope University murrays@hope.ac.uk

3. Project brief

The purpose of the project is to engage with the NC and NOWAL membership to produce some options for the future configuration and organisation of the groups' work and outputs, in order to:

- Maximise the benefits of collaboration, and members' investment of resources and time in collaborative working;
- Ensure value for money and efficiency in the operation of collaborative services and activities, and avoid duplication;
- Preserve the value, culture and distinctiveness of cooperative working and sense of community in the region.

Elements of the project will be:

- To identify similarities and differences between the groups, and the degree to which they complement or overlap one another;
- To identify the relative merits and disadvantages of potential options, e.g. two separate groups, a single group, two separate groups with distinctive roles;
- To consider whether there are implications for the relationship with SCONUL;
- To review briefly sector practice in collaborative/regional groups for elements of best practice to improve communication to address geographical spread of institutions and avoid duplication of effort

Why now?

Whilst there are some clearly distinct purposes and activities of each group, there are also a number of overlaps and some duplication which in recent years have been growing. These risk the efforts and resources of the groups being diluted, and may undermine the effectiveness of activities and impact. The two groups have agreed to examine and resolve these.

Approach

Methodology should include:

- Survey the Directors of NoWAL and Northern Collaboration Libraries to identify their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the current groups and their future needs from regional consortia
- Online opportunity for NoWAL and Northern Collaboration staff to contribute feedback on the benefits of their institution being a member of NoWAL, Northern Collaboration or both
- Sector analysis to identify models and best practice for regional consortia groups

4. Project outputs

The output will be a written report outlining a number (not more than four) of potential options for the future of the groups. Anonymised raw survey data should be provided.

5. Project timescales

Project brief advertised	w/c 8th July 2019
Deadline for receipt of completed submissions	Friday 30th August 2019
Shortlisting including clarification and further information if required	By 11th September 2019
Interviews if necessary (by phone/skype)	By 20th September 2019
Award of consultancy	By 1st October 2019
Work to commence	w/c 7th October 2019
Project deliverables to be completed by	Monday 11th November 2019

6. Project costs

It is anticipated that this will be primarily a desk-based piece of work, with engagement with members via email/phone/Skype, etc. A broad estimate of the time resource is about 5 days and with a budget of up to £3,000.

7. How to respond to this brief

Consultants are asked to provide a proposal (maximum 5 pages) for the completion of the project within the timescales above. To inform your proposal full background information including details of members, activities and events can be found at:

[NoWAL](#)

[Northern Collaboration](#)

Please include the following in your response:

- the proposed methodology
- the cost
- identify any potential risks
- provide evidence of experience of undertaking a project of this nature and of previous experience of using the proposed methods for data collection and analysis
- confirm the consultant has had no involvement with Northern Collaboration or NoWAL within the last 5 years

Proposals should be emailed to Susan Murray murrays@hope.ac.uk and Alison Mackenzie alison.mackenzie@edgehill.ac.uk by Friday 30th August 2019, 5pm.