

## GUIDANCE NOTES

### Funding for new Mathematics/Statistics Support Centres Enhancement of existing provision

**sigma** – the national network for cross-university mathematics and statistics support - is pleased to be able to offer funding to pump-prime the development of new mathematics and/or statistics support centres in institutions with little or no existing provision, and the development of substantially new lines of activity within existing centres<sup>1</sup>. The funding is available to five English<sup>2</sup> Higher Education Institutions for two years [up to £10,000 for 2013/2014 and up to £5,000 for 2014/2015, see addendum]<sup>3</sup>.

The **sigma** Network exists to encourage and support staff whose work involves the provision of mathematics and statistics support to students in higher education institutions. One of its aims is to encourage further development of mathematics and statistics support activities that will enhance the experience of students who need to study these subjects whilst at university.

For the purposes of this funding call, mathematics and/or statistics support refers to activities which are provided to support and enhance students' learning of mathematics and/or statistics (in one or more disciplines, at any level of higher education) and which are provided separately and in addition to traditional lectures, tutorials, examples classes, personal tutorial sessions etc. We would normally expect this would involve substantial opportunities for face-to-face contact between students and centre staff.

#### What is the aim of the funding?

The aim of the funding will be to:

- (a) pump-prime mathematics and/or statistics support provision in an HEI in England that currently has no such provision
- and/or
- (b) enhance provision in an HEI in England where such provision has been established but is not as highly developed as it might be.

Because priority is being given to institutions where no provision exists, all that is required at this stage from applications from institutions falling into category (b) is

<sup>1</sup> Priority will be given to those proposals that intend to establish support centres in institutions where none currently exists. Applicants from institutions that already have mathematics/statistics support centres should note carefully the separate application process.

<sup>2</sup> Only English HEIs are eligible to apply for this funding since the grant award was made by HEFCE.

<sup>3</sup> Note a second call for a further five new centres will be made later in the academic year 2013/14.

submission of the expression of interest form. If there is an insufficient number of awards made under category (a) then full bids will be sought from those in category (b) who have expressed their interest at this stage.

Successful bidders will be expected to play an active role in the **sigma** mathematics and statistics support Network and particularly in their local **sigma** hub, for example hosting a local hub event, submitting articles for the **sigma** Network e-newsletter, attending the annual CETL-MSOR conference.

A **briefing day** will be held on Friday January 17<sup>th</sup> 2014 at Loughborough University, prior to the closing date, in order that potential applicants have the opportunity to hear about the work of mathematics/statistics support centres and have the opportunity to ask questions, the answers to which may help shape and focus their bids. If you are interested in attending the briefing day please email Moira Petrie with your details: email: aa3782@coventry.ac.uk

### **Key Dates**

Call for first stage proposals	Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2013
Briefing day at Loughborough University	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> Jan. 2014
Closing date for proposals	Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2014
Successful proposal announced	Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2014
Induction day (venue to be announced)	Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2014

### **Who can apply?**

Any full or part-time member of staff at an HEI in **England** can apply. Applicants may be based in a mathematics department; applications from staff in other departments, including central support services, will also be considered. Applications can be accepted from Further Education institutions that offer courses at higher education level and where it is the higher education students who are expected to benefit.

### **What can the funds be used for?**

The funds can be used where they can directly benefit students, such as staffing, equipment, resources, consumables, etc. The funding is not available to cover the costs of research projects. It is required that the initiative be up and running so as to be supporting students by the start of the academic year 2014/15.

### **What support will be provided by sigma?**

Members of the **sigma** team will be available throughout the two years of funding to offer support and guidance, as well as to provide access to numerous paper and computer-based resources. All new centres will be assigned an experienced mathematics / statistics support provider as a mentor. Evaluation of the initiative will be carried out by an external evaluator in association with **sigma** colleagues.

### **How do I apply?**

Proposals for funding must be made using one of the submission form templates which are available for download from [www.sigma-network.ac.uk](http://www.sigma-network.ac.uk). Completed

forms should be sent via email to [a.c.croft@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:a.c.croft@lboro.ac.uk) by 5pm on **Friday 14 February 2014**.

#### **How will the successful proposals be selected?**

- The proposals will be assessed, against the criteria given below, by the **sigma** management team<sup>4</sup>.
- The **sigma** management team will make final decisions on which proposals to fund.
- Proposers of the successful bids will then be notified and terms and conditions will be drawn up.
- Proposers of rejected bids will be given feedback on why they were not funded.
- The successful initiatives will be published on the **sigma** website.

An Induction event will be held on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Successful applicants will be expected to attend or send a representative from their institution.

#### **Assessment Criteria**

- Clearly specified outline for the proposed centre initiative which is relevant to the specified aims of the funding
- Extent of need/demand explained
- Clear outline of the student groups to be targeted and the numbers of students this would involve
- Expertise of the staff involved
- Quality of approach and feasibility of timetable
- Commitment to provide (at least) matched funding
- Outline of how the funding will be spent
- Clear commitment of the senior management of the institution to the ethos of mathematics support.
- Clear plans for continuation at the end of the funding period.

#### **Informal Contact**

Informal contact about all ideas for submission is strongly encouraged. Please contact Moira Petrie by email: [aa3782@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:aa3782@coventry.ac.uk).

#### **Addendum 7 January 2014**

Due to the HEFCE funding profile to Loughborough it is desirable if the £10,000 element of the funding available for this round can be spent within the current year. However, we do appreciate that some centres will have a problem with this and we are willing to accommodate reasonable requests for an alternative funding profile (into the second year) provided that we can be assured that the new centre/activity will be demonstrating its worth early in the academic year

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<sup>4</sup> Prof. Tony Croft, Prof. Duncan Lawson, Dr. Trevor Hawkes, Moira Petrie, David Bowers.

2014/15. This point is important for us because, in turn, we need to demonstrate to our Advisory Board and HEFCE that timely progress is being made.