**Request Of Proposals**

**Learning Management System (LMS)**

October 23rd, 2024

All communications regarding this RFP must be directed, **by e-mail**, to: [xxx@wit.edu](mailto:xxx@wit.edu)

Executive Summary

Wentworth Institute of Technology (WIT) is in the fourth year of a five-year contract with Brightspace as its Learning Management System (LMS). As the contract approaches its conclusion in Summer, WIT is inviting vendors to submit proposals to help determine whether the university should renew its contract with Brightspace or transition to a new LMS that better meets the needs of its faculty, students, and administrative staff.

Vendors are expected to provide solutions that will address the university’s need for an LMS that supports teaching, learning, and administrative processes efficiently. This tender is aimed at evaluating the performance of Brightspace in comparison with other potential LMS options to identify the best path forward for the university.

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1. Purpose of this RFP

1.1 Business Objectives for LMS Selection

The primary business objectives of Wentworth Institute of Technology (WIT) in selecting or renewing its Learning Management System (LMS) include:

* **Enhance User Experience:** The LMS must offer a user-friendly, intuitive interface for both faculty and students. It should simplify course creation, grading, and student engagement while minimizing the learning curve for new users.
* **Support Teaching and Learning:** The LMS should provide robust tools that support teaching and learning activities. This includes features like content management, assignment tracking, grading systems, and the ability to facilitate blended or online learning environments.
* **Seamless Integration with Existing Systems:** The LMS must integrate effectively with the university’s existing infrastructure, including systems like the Student Information System (SIS), Banner, and third-party tools such as Turnitin, Zoom, and others.
* **Customization and Flexibility:** The LMS must be flexible enough to meet the specific needs of various departments. It should allow for easy customization and updates to reflect new teaching methodologies, departmental requirements, and emerging technologies.
* **Scalability for Future Growth:** The LMS must be able to scale to accommodate future growth in terms of users, courses, and new programs. It should also support the introduction of new features and technologies as the university evolves.
* **Data Security and Compliance:** The LMS must ensure the highest standards of data security and privacy. It should comply with relevant data protection regulations and institutional policies to safeguard sensitive information.
* **Reporting and Analytics:** The LMS should provide robust reporting and analytics tools that enable faculty and administrators to track student progress, engagement, and performance. These features should offer insights that help improve student outcomes and support academic planning.
* **Cost of Change:** While financial costs are not the primary focus, vendors should provide a rough estimate of the potential costs of transitioning from Brightspace to a new LMS. This includes considerations for the time required for implementation, training, and the overall ease of migrating data and users to a new platform.

2. Organizational overview

2.1 About Wentworth Institute of Technology

Founded in 1904, Wentworth Institute of Technology is a nationally recognized university based in Boston, Massachusetts. Wentworth offers a variety of undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs, with a focus on engineering, architecture, design, computer science, and other applied technical fields. With a strong emphasis on hands-on learning, Wentworth integrates theoretical education with real-world experiences, including mandatory co-ops for all undergraduate students, fostering strong connections with industry and preparing students for successful careers.

Wentworth’s student body consists of 4,000 students, with a vibrant community engaged in research, internships, and projects that emphasize practical application and innovative problem-solving. The institution’s close ties with industry leaders and organizations provide unique opportunities for students to connect their academic experiences with professional development.

2.2 Key Properties

The primary system used for academic management at Wentworth Institute of Technology is Brightspace by D2L, which serves as the university’s Learning Management System (LMS) for all courses and academic activities. Brightspace is the central platform for managing course content, assignments, assessments, grades, and communications between students and faculty.

Key integrations that enhance the LMS experience include:

* **Panopto:** For lecture capture and multimedia content delivery.
* **Turnitin:** To maintain academic integrity and for plagiarism detection.
* **Zoom:** For virtual classes and remote meetings.
* **Banner:** Integrated with Brightspace to manage student data such as enrollment and grades.

Brightspace is not only designed to enhance the student learning experience but also provides resources and training to faculty members. The Teaching and Learning Collaborative (TLC) offers workshops, tutorials, and personalized consultations to help faculty effectively utilize the platform’s features. Faculty members are trained on how to manage courses, create assessments, engage with students through discussion forums, and track student progress.

2.3 Operational Background

Wentworth Institute of Technology operates under a decentralized model where individual academic departments and faculty manage their course content using Brightspace. Faculty members are responsible for structuring their courses and uploading materials, while the Teaching and Learning Collaborative (TLC), in collaboration with Digital and Technology Services (DTS), plays a key role in managing the backend of Brightspace.

The TLC ensures smooth operation and integration of third-party tools into Brightspace, including platforms like Panopto, Turnitin, and Zoom. They provide essential technical support for integrating Brightspace with Banner (the university’s Student Information System) and other critical applications.​

The DTS team works closely with TLC to handle technical aspects, including updates, security protocols, and troubleshooting system-wide issues. Together, TLC and DTS ensure that Brightspace remains a reliable and functional system for the entire Wentworth community.

3. Program Scope and Plan

3.1 Scope

The following services and activities are considered within the scope of this Request for Proposal (RFP) for selecting a Learning Management System (LMS) for Wentworth Institute of Technology:

* **LMS Software Management**: This includes the continued use and management of the current LMS platform or exploring options for alternative LMS platforms that meet Wentworth’s needs.
* **Integration Services**: The LMS must integrate with existing university systems such as Banner (for student information) and third-party tools like Panopto, Turnitin, and Zoom.
* **Faculty and Student Training Services**: Sufficient training must be provided to both faculty and students to fully utilize the LMS’s features.
* **Support and Maintenance Services**: Ongoing technical support for users, troubleshooting assistance, and periodic maintenance to ensure reliable operation of the LMS.
* **Assessment and Analytics Tools**: Incorporation of tools that allow faculty to track student performance, manage assessments, and provide timely feedback.
* **Grading and Assessment Tools**: The LMS should handle comprehensive grading systems, supporting various types of assessments (quizzes, assignments, projects, participation, etc.).
* **Customization and Flexibility**: The LMS should offer flexibility to meet specific departmental needs, allowing for easy customization and updates that reflect new teaching methodologies, departmental requirements, and emerging technologies.
* **Mobile Accessibility**: The LMS must offer a mobile-friendly interface to enhance accessibility and ensure that faculty and students can engage with the system on various devices.

**Out of Scope**:

* **Non-Academic Platforms**: Tools or software unrelated to core academic functions, such as student life applications, are out of scope unless specified as part of the LMS integration.

3.2 Selection Plan

The selection and implementation process for evaluating various LMS platforms will involve multiple phases with participation from diverse stakeholders at Wentworth Institute of Technology, including faculty, administrative staff, and students.

1. **Proposal Review**: Written technical and pricing proposals from vendors will be assessed by a core selection team consisting of representatives from key departments.
2. **Demonstration & Presentation Phase**: Shortlisted vendors will conduct demonstrations to showcase the technical capabilities, user interface, and integrations offered by their LMS. Feedback will be collected from participants to evaluate user-friendliness and system flexibility.
3. **Proof of Concept (PoC) Phase**: The top two vendor finalists will be asked to participate in a PoC phase where their LMS platforms will be implemented in a limited, sandbox environment at Wentworth. This phase will assess each LMS’s performance, security, and integration capabilities in a real-world scenario.
4. **Final Vendor Selection**: After completing the PoC phase, the selection team will decide on the LMS platform that best meets Wentworth’s requirements based on overall performance, cost, and ease of integration.

3.3 Implementation Plan

The LMS implementation process will be carried out in a phased approach to ensure a smooth transition. The key steps are as follows:

1. **Initial Setup and Integration:**
   1. Install and configure the LMS platform (whether on-premises or cloud-based).
   2. Integrate the system with existing tools like Banner, Panopto, and Turnitin.
2. **Training and Onboarding:**
   1. Conduct targeted training for faculty and students, focusing on core features and system navigation.
   2. Offer personalized support for advanced users and specific departmental needs.
3. **Pilot Phase:**
   1. Deploy the LMS for a select group of departments to test functionality and gather feedback.
   2. Resolve any technical issues identified during the pilot before campus-wide rollout.
4. **Full Deployment:**
   1. Roll out the system across all departments.
   2. Migrate data from the current LMS to ensure that course content, grades, and student records are securely transferred.
5. **Ongoing Support:**
   1. Provide continuous technical support, regular updates, and troubleshooting services to ensure the system remains stable and user-friendly.
   2. For this RFP, we request fixed-price bids for the initial setup and training, along with estimates for further phases.

*(Note: For detailed schedule view section 7.1 & for detailed plan with diagrams view section 8)*

4. Business Scenarios

Please provide a response to each business scenario below. Take care to provide “non-technical” responses when referring to non-technical scenarios and focus on a narrative description of the user experience, using screen shots where useful. Please indicate how a particular set of tasks and events could be realized in your solution. You are welcome to describe alternative approaches where it makes sense.

4.1 Structure

* **User Profile:** A description of the user that includes audience type, demographics, preferences, and any other details that are appropriate to the scenario.
* **Background:** The set-up for the scenario. This section contains information about how the user came to use the application, and any pertinent details that influence their interaction.
* **Objective:** The task that the user will complete in the scenario. This section describes what the user’s intentions are for the scenario.
* **Narrative:** What happens. A story is told about what the user experiences and does. Included are decisions that the user makes and the consequences.

4.2 Scenarios

4.2.1 Scenario 1: Submitting Assignments via LMS

**User Profile:** Sophomore student, John Whitmen, enrolled in the Computer Science program. John is familiar with using the LMS to submit assignments but prefers a mobile experience.

**Background:** John is finishing his programming assignment, which is due later tonight. He has completed the work on his laptop and needs to upload the file through the LMS using his mobile device.

**Objective:** John must submit his programming assignment through the LMS by uploading the necessary files and confirming that they have been submitted successfully.

**Narrative:** John accesses the LMS on his mobile device to submit his programming assignment. He navigates to the assignment section within his course, selects the relevant assignment, and uploads the required files directly from his phone’s storage. Upon submission, the system provides immediate confirmation and sends an email notification to confirm the successful submission.

4.2.2 Scenario 2: Faculty Uploading Grades

**User Profile:** Professor Walter White, a full-time faculty member teaching a Chemistry 1 class. He is familiar with using the LMS for course management and grading.

**Background:** Professor White has finished grading all the final lab reports for his Chemistry class. He now needs to upload the final grades into the LMS and ensure they are accessible to students.

**Objective:** Professor White must upload the final grades for his course, verify the accuracy of the entries, and ensure that students can view their final grades.

**Narrative:** Professor White logs into the LMS and navigates to the “Gradebook” section of his Chemistry course. He selects the "Upload Grades" option, allowing him to import a pre-formatted CSV file containing the final lab report grades. The system prompts him to map the columns in the CSV to the correct gradebook categories, ensuring that the grades are properly assigned to the final assessment. After successfully uploading the grades, the system performs a validation check to ensure that all entries are correctly formatted and that no grades are missing. Professor White reviews the grades in the system, making any necessary adjustments. Once satisfied with the entries, he finalizes the grades and publishes them. The system automatically sends notifications to the students, informing them that their final grades are now available for viewing.

4.2.3 Scenario 3: LMS Role in Supporting Accreditation

**User Profile:** Jane Adams, the Director of Accreditation at Wentworth, responsible for ensuring that the university meets the rigorous standards set by accreditation bodies.

**Background:** Jane’s role involves collecting and analyzing data to submit for accreditation reviews. This includes compiling reports on student performance, faculty engagement, and course outcomes from various departments. Jane needs to ensure that the LMS effectively supports this data collection, providing reliable and accessible information for accreditation.

**Objective:** Jane must generate and review detailed reports on course completion rates, assessment results, and student performance across different programs. The LMS needs to support compliance by offering robust reporting and data aggregation tools to meet accreditation standards.

**Narrative:** Jane logs into the LMS and accesses the “Accreditation Compliance Dashboard.” She reviews reports from multiple departments, focusing on student completion rates, grade distributions, and faculty participation in assessments. The LMS allows her to filter data by department, course, and academic year, giving her the ability to pull specific information needed for accreditation.

As Jane prepares to submit the data, she notices that while the LMS has robust assessment tools, it lacks full integration with external reporting software, which is crucial for automating the accreditation submission process. She manually compiles some of the external data, such as faculty reviews, to ensure that all required documentation is included. After reviewing the data and making minor adjustments, Jane exports the necessary reports to share with external accrediting bodies. She concludes that while the LMS supports the majority of their data needs, improved integration with third-party tools would further streamline the accreditation process.

4.2.4 Scenario 4: Resolving LMS Integration Issue with External Tools

**User Profile:** Justin Maxell, Senior IT Project Manager in the Digital and Technology Services (DTS) department at Wentworth Institute of Technology. His responsibilities include overseeing the integration of the LMS with other campus systems like Banner and external tools like GitHub and Gradescope.

**Background:** A faculty member, Professor Susan Johnson, is trying to upload final assignment grades for her Intro to Computer Science class. The grades, which were submitted via GitHub and graded through Gradescope, are not syncing correctly with the LMS and the Banner system. This issue affects multiple courses across the department, causing concern about the accuracy and consistency of grade reporting for the semester.

**Objective:** Justin must resolve the issue causing the failure in syncing grades from external tools (GitHub and Gradescope) into the LMS and Banner, ensuring that all data is accurately reflected in both systems.

**Narrative:** Justin receives a support request from Professor Johnson indicating that the grades entered through GitHub and Gradescope are not being properly synced with the LMS or Banner. After logging into the systems and reviewing the integration logs, Justin discovers that a recent API update between the LMS and these external tools caused a compatibility issue, disrupting the flow of data. Justin contacts the LMS support team and works with the vendors responsible for GitHub and Gradescope to troubleshoot the integration. After identifying the root cause, he collaborates with his DTS colleagues to implement a patch that resolves the sync problem. Once the patch is applied, Justin tests the system by running a few grade syncs using sample assignments. He confirms that grades from GitHub and Gradescope now seamlessly sync with the LMS and Banner, allowing for accurate grade reporting. Justin informs Professor Johnson and the affected faculty that the issue has been resolved. To prevent similar issues in the future, he sets up monitoring tools to flag any discrepancies in the syncing process, particularly when external grading tools are used.

4.2.5 Scenario 5: Faculty Uploading Course Content and Syllabus for a New Course

**User Profile:** Professor David Evans, a faculty member in the Management Department. He is responsible for teaching a newly introduced course called Technology Acquisition.

**Background:** Professor Evans is preparing to teach the new Technology Acquisition course, which is being offered for the first time in the Management Department. He needs to upload the syllabus and course materials to the LMS before the semester begins. Since this is a new course, Professor Evans wants to ensure that all content is well-organized and accessible to students.

**Objective:** Professor Evans must upload the course syllabus and initial learning materials for the Technology Acquisition course onto the LMS, ensuring that students can access the content before the start of the semester.

**Narrative:** Professor Evans logs into the LMS and accesses the course setup for Technology Acquisition. As this is a new course, he begins by uploading foundational materials, including the syllabus, which provides details on course objectives, weekly topics, and grading policies. He organizes the course content by creating modules, adding lecture materials, readings, and links to relevant external resources. To ensure easy access for students, he enables a feature that allows in-platform viewing of the syllabus without downloading. After organizing the course layout, he activates notifications to inform students when new materials are available and sets up a discussion forum for student introductions and course-related questions.

5. Advanced Q&A

We have specific questions about your solution that do not fit neatly into the scenarios above. We’ve grouped these into several categories below:

5.1 Integration requirements

5.1.1 Banner Integration

**Background:** Wentworth uses Banner for student records, registration, and grading processes.

**Question:** How does your LMS handle real-time synchronization with Banner for managing student data and grades? What custom configurations, if any, are required to ensure seamless integration?

5.1.2 External Tool Integration

**Background:** Wentworth relies on third-party tools like GitHub, Gradescope, and Turnitin for grading and plagiarism detection.

**Question:** How does your LMS integrate with these third-party tools? Does the integration allow for real-time grade syncing, and what additional configuration or setup is required for optimal performance?

5.2 Functional & Technical requirements

5.2.1 Course Content Migration

**Background:** Wentworth faculty use existing platforms to host and organize course content.

**Question:** How does your system handle migrating course content from an existing LMS? Can the system maintain the course structure, including assessments, media, and assignments, during migration?

5.2.2 User-Friendly Interface

**Background:** Faculty and students require an LMS interface that supports efficient navigation and interaction.

**Question:** Does your LMS provide configurable navigation options and modular layouts that can be tailored to enhance user accessibility and course structure needs?

5.3 System requirements

5.3.1 Security and Privacy

**Background:** As an institution dealing with sensitive student and faculty data, security is a priority.

**Question:** How does your LMS ensure compliance with privacy standards such as FERPA? What encryption and security measures are in place to prevent unauthorized access to student data?

5.3.2 Disaster Recovery

**Background:** Wentworth needs robust disaster recovery protocols to ensure data integrity and availability during system outages.

**Question:** What disaster recovery solutions do you provide? How quickly can data be restored, and what options do you offer for regular backups and disaster recovery planning?

6. Written Submission Outline Section

Vendors are required to provide detailed responses following the structure outlined below. Submissions must address all questions and requirements specified in the RFP, ensuring that each section is clearly labeled and easy to navigate. The proposal should be organized into the following sections:

1) Executive Summary

* Provide a high-level overview of your solution.
* Summarize how your LMS meets Wentworth’s requirements and the key benefits of adopting your platform.
* Highlight any unique features or functionalities that differentiate your solution from others.

2) System Architectural Design

* Provide diagram(s) and a description of how your solution is designed to accommodate Wentworth’s needs.
* Suggest a physical architecture suited to Wentworth’s scale. Present any alternative designs as you see fit.

3) Completed Responses to Business Scenarios

* Include detailed responses to the Business Scenarios outlined in Section 4.

4) Completed Responses to Advanced Q&A

* Address all questions in the Advanced Q&A from Section 5.

5) Proposed Approach to Maintenance and Support

* Propose a suitable level of ongoing technical support and maintenance, including updates and upgrades.
* Please address the following questions:
  + How are support issues escalated through your organization?
  + What is your typical issue solving process?
  + How quickly are escalated issues resolved?
  + How is communication with university stakeholders handled during major support issues?

6) Proposed Approach to Proof of Concept (PoC)

* Describe your approach for participating in a Proof of Concept (PoC) if selected.
* Provide details on the team that would participate, their qualifications, and your experience with similar PoC engagements.

7) Training

* Recommend a training curriculum suitable for Wentworth's DTS, TLC, faculty, and staff (assume 40 participants).
* Include details on your “train the trainer” programs and any customized training sessions specifically tailored for these roles:
  + **DTS:** Training should focus on system administration, backend configuration, integration with third-party systems (e.g., Banner, GitHub, Gradescope), and troubleshooting.
  + **TLC:** Training should focus on how to create instructional resources, assist faculty with course design, and manage user experience for students and faculty. Include content on utilizing assessment and reporting tools within the LMS to support accreditation and learning outcomes.
  + **Faculty:** Training should cover course content creation, syllabus management, grading tools, and best practices for engaging students through the LMS. Focus on tools that simplify grading, assignment management, and communication with students.
  + **Staff:** Training should focus on non-academic use of the LMS for administrative tasks.

8) Background About Your Company and Solution

1. **Corporate Profile**
   * Provide a company profile, including:
     1. including your experience in the LMS industry, number of years in business, office locations, and the size of your team dedicated to LMS development.
     2. Support and customer success.
     3. Highlight your growth in serving higher education institutions and your commitment to innovation in educational technology.
2. **System Releases**
   * Describe the most recent major and minor releases of your LMS, highlighting any significant improvements.
   * Include information on the next anticipated release, including the expected release date and key enhancements.
3. **Financial Viability**
   * Provide evidence of long-term financial viability, including:
   * Audited financial statements for the past two years (or equivalent financial data).
   * Current balance sheet and any other relevant financial documentation.
4. **References**
   * Supply at least three references from higher education institutions in North America that use your LMS solution.
   * Include contact names, phone numbers, and relevant details regarding the implementation.

9) Costs and Charges

* Provide a detailed cost breakdown for all components, including:
  + Software or service license fees.
  + Optional module costs.
  + Licensing costs for development, staging, and QA environments.
  + Annual maintenance and support costs.
  + Costs related to participation in the Proof-of-Concept phase and training.
  + Provide estimates for any optional pilot phases.
* Clearly indicate which costs are attributed to which vendor if multiple vendors are involved.
* Include any assumptions or variables that may affect the pricing.

10) Sample Contracts

* Include sample contracts for the software and services provided, along with terms for maintenance and support at the recommended level.

11) Appendices

* Include any additional materials not covered above in a separate appendix. This appendix should be delivered as a separate file with its own table of contents.

7. Selection Process and Schedule

This section outlines the key activities and dates for the selection process, which includes vendor submissions, presentations, and Proof of Concept (PoC) phases. Note that the PoC and any subsequent phases are estimates at this point.

7.1 Schedule of Events

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task Name** | **Duration** | **Start** | **Deadline** |
| RFP Release | 0 days | Wed 10/23/24 | Wed 10/23/24 |
| Intent to Respond Period | 45 days | Wed 10/23/24 | Tue 12/24/24 |
| Questions Period | 45 days | Wed 12/25/24 | Tue 2/25/25 |
| Proposal Submission | 0 days | Tue 2/25/25 | Tue 2/25/25 |
| Proposal Review | 20 days | Wed 2/26/25 | Tue 3/25/25 |
| Demonstration & Presentation Phase | 14 days | Wed 3/26/25 | Mon 4/14/25 |
| Proof of Concept (PoC) Phase | 30 days | Tue 4/15/25 | Mon 5/26/25 |
| Final Vendor Selection | 12 days | Tue 5/27/25 | Wed 6/11/25 |
| Initial Setup and Integration | 20 days | Thu 6/12/25 | Wed 7/9/25 |
| Training and Onboarding | 14 days | Thu 6/12/25 | Tue 7/1/25 |
| Pilot Phase | 21 days | Thu 7/10/25 | Thu 8/7/25 |
| Full Deployment | 15 days | Fri 8/8/25 | Thu 8/28/25 |
| Ongoing Support | 40 days | Fri 8/29/25 | Thu 10/23/25 |

**Table 7.1**

* **Intent to respond:** Interested vendors must reply via email, using the statement provided, confirming their intent to respond.
* **Vendor presentation:** Vendors will be asked to demonstrate their proposed solutions, following a script tied to the scenarios outlined in the RFP.
* **Proof of Concept (PoC):** Finalists will be required to develop a PoC based on the university's requirements.

7.2 Agenda for Full-Day Demo Meetings

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Agenda Item** | **Length** |
| 9:00 – 9:10 | Introductions | 10 minutes |
| 9:10 – 9:30 | Bidder company overview | 20 minutes |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | Overview of proposed architecture, approach | 1 hour |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break | 15 minutes |
| 10:45 – 12:15 | Demonstration of use-case scenarios | 90 minutes |
| 12:15 – 1:00 | Joint lunch break and informal discussions | 45 minutes |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | Continue scenario demonstrations | 1 hour |
| 2:00 – 3:00 | Demonstrate bidder answers to "Advanced Q&A" | 1 hour |
| 3:00 – 3:30 | Proposed pricing walk-through | 30 minutes |
| 3:30 – 4:00 | Break and private team caucus | 30 minutes |
| 4:00 – 5:00 | Final questions, discussion | 1 hour |

**Table 7.2**

7.3 PoC Process

The Proof of Concept (PoC) phase will involve two finalists whose LMS platforms will be tested in a sandbox environment at Wentworth. The PoC will last two to four weeks, and will include:

* Development of functionality: Vendors will implement their LMS in a controlled environment, addressing specific scenario scripts provided by Wentworth.
* Mid-PoC and Final Presentations: Vendors will present their progress at mid-point and final stages, including a half-day training session for Wentworth stakeholders.

7.4 Cancellation of Request

Wentworth reserves the right to cancel all or part of this RFP at any time. The issuance of this RFP does not imply any commitment to purchase products or services.

8. Detailed Plan with Diagrams

8.1 Work Breakdown Structure

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

**Fig 8.1**

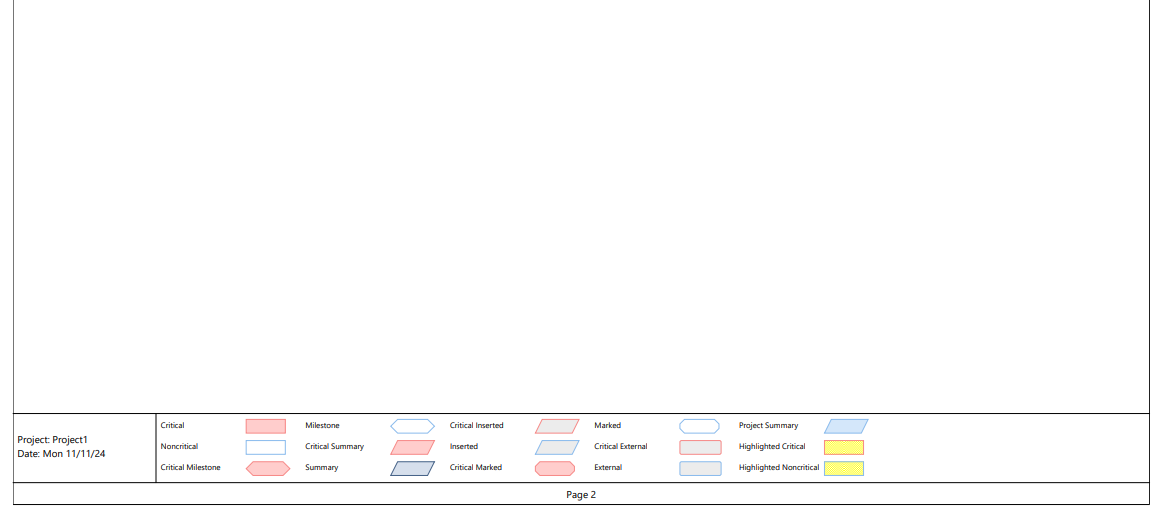
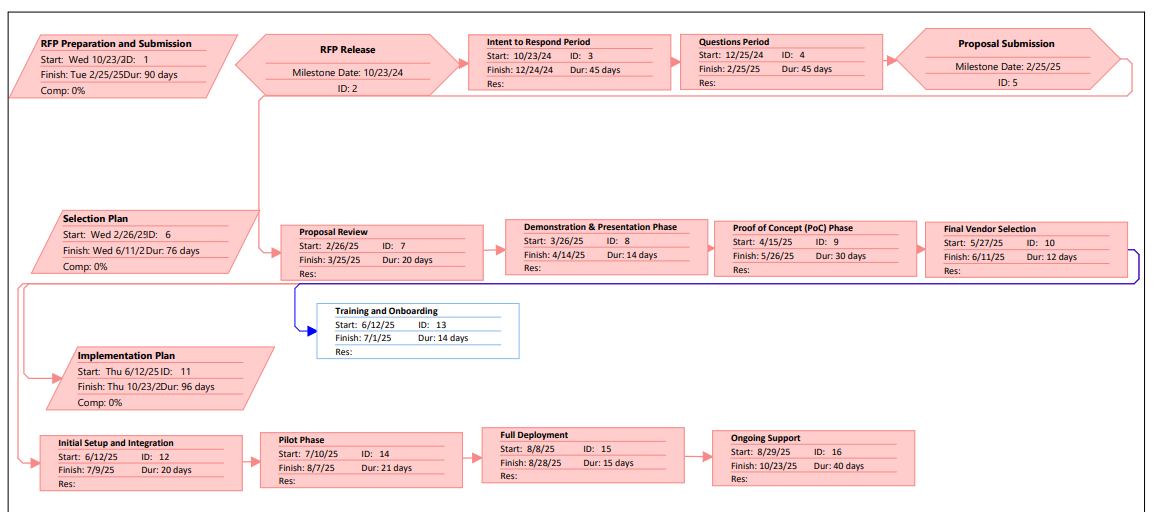
A screenshot of a project

Description automatically generated8.2 Gantt Chart with Deadlines

**Fig 8.2**

**Fig 8.2.1**

8.3 Network Diagram



**Fig 8.3**