

CASE Assessment Request for Proposal

Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE) is currently seeking Requests for Proposal (RFP) related to national assessment of CASE curriculum. The following document outlines the deliverables expected, timeline, and proposal submission process for the establishment of the student assessment component of CASE.

The mission of the CASE project is to prepare youth for world-class opportunities in the dynamic fields of tomorrow's food, fiber, fuel, and natural resources industries. CASE carries out this mission using an innovative approach to agricultural education including well-designed curriculum resources that are comprehensive to provide excellent teacher support. In addition to curriculum, CASE also provides professional development related to the elements of the teacher resources. Assessment of student performance related to the curriculum is the next phase of the project.

CASE is a project sponsored by The National Council for Agricultural Education. The National Council for Agricultural Education provides leadership, coordination and resources for the total education process in career and technical education involving career awareness, exploration and implementation in agriculture for pre-K through adult including teacher education and supervision.

Funding for CASE has been initially provided by a consortium of states investing in the development of an alternative model for agricultural education. Future funding includes a wider range of sources, such as grants, state contributions, and participant fees. Current CASE staff is contracted by The Council for project operations and the CASE Advisory Committee governs activities.

Deliverables

The following identifies the expectations of a Contractor related to this RFP. CASE has identified the below deliverables as the minimum elements to be incorporated into CASE assessments including the services provided to the teachers and administrators.

The Contractor will work with CASE staff to develop valid and reliable assessments to measure specific CASE curriculum elements. The Contractor will also provide appropriate delivery systems to administer assessments and manage data. As part of this partnership, CASE will be seeking a profit share from revenue generated by assessment activity related to this contract.

The following provides information related to the specific deliverables. CASE welcomes proposals that include creative approaches to meeting these deliverables effectively and economically. The overall goal of the CASE project is to help the teacher better serve students of agriculture. A successful proposal will reflect this

goal by meeting the deliverables first and providing the greatest utility to teachers at a fair cost.

Section A – Project Management and Coordination

Deliverable 1: The Contractor must plan, implement, continuously monitor, and coordinate communication between CASE staff and the Contractor.

- Initiate planning meetings with CASE staff to develop a plan to accomplish work within the timeline appropriate for the project.
- Provide a modified timeline for development and implementation of assessment instruments if necessary.
- Submit monthly reports explaining the scope of work completed including test item developed and any documentation created.
- Coordinate review sessions with CASE staff as needed and provide drafts of documents and instruments to CASE staff for review in advance of session.
- Present to annual CASE planning meetings if required.

CASE staff will be involved with the assessment development process to ensure that products are meeting the requirements of the curriculum. A successful contractor will be considered a partner in the development of the CASE project. Therefore, communication and deliberation of ideas and products are necessary to develop an environment of collaboration toward the completion of deliverables.

Section B – Test Item Development

Deliverable 2: The Contractor must develop assessment questions according to accepted industry standards that are appropriate to evaluate CASE concepts and national content standards identified in the CASE curriculum.

- Use specific CASE concepts to create criterion-reference exams that assess student knowledge, understanding, and technical skill related to CASE subject matter.
- Develop test questions within CASE contexts to assess the level of student proficiency related to the national standards for AFNR, science, mathematics, and English language arts identified in CASE lessons.
- Develop specific assessment questions for End-of-Course exams for the following courses:
 - *Principles of Agricultural Science – Animal and Principles of Agricultural Science – Plant courses*
 - *Introduction to Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources course*

All test questions will be reviewed by CASE staff and post-secondary CASE affiliate faculty. Questions will not be accepted if the review committee determines problems with question readability, clarity, intent, bias, or other inconsistency with acceptable assessment item design. It will be the responsibility of the Contractor to rewrite questions deemed inadequate. An adequate number of questions per CASE concept will need to be developed to meet Deliverable 3 and Deliverable 4 requirements.

Section C – Assessment Delivery System

Deliverable 3: The Contractor must provide online test bank for internal testing purposes.

- Provide online access for CASE teacher subscribers.
- Provide a test bank of questions that will be used by CASE teachers to create unit or midterm exams for internal assessment. This test bank will include a minimum of four questions to address each CASE concept identified in the curriculum.
- Allow teachers to have the ability to change wording of questions and add their own test questions if needed.
- Provide internal assessments for teachers to utilize at anytime free of charge for an unlimited amount of testing.
- Automatically determine test scores and provide results to the teacher according to preferences that they desire.
- Ensure that access and features are user-friendly for both students and the teacher.

Internal assessment features are important to CASE teachers for preparing students for End-of-Course examinations and grade determination. Because of the variations in school formats, such as block scheduling or trimester systems, flexibility for internal assessment is required. For this reason teachers will have very unique needs for customizing tests. A test bank that teachers can select desired questions and add alternative questions will accommodate their needs.

Deliverable 4: The Contractor must provide online instruments intended for End-of-Course assessment.

- Online delivery but have restricted access options
- Restricted access, face and content validated, and checked for reliability
- Pretest and posttest options
- Assessment of both knowledge and technical skill attainment
- Must have a capacity to provide online assessments to all CASE programs:
 - 800 students in 2010
 - 3000 students by 2011
 - 8000 students by 2012
- Coordinate efforts with CASE staff to solicit post-secondary representatives to set cut scores for End-of-Course assessments.
- Provide academic accommodation features for special needs students, such as Spanish versions and modified choice option items.

Post-secondary articulation credit offerings and CASE certification will be based on student performance related to End-of-Course examinations. Therefore this assessment will be a standardized instrument that is checked for reliability and validity. Data collected from this instrument will be used to evaluate curriculum effectiveness and student proficiency according to goals of the project. The Contractor will need to coordinate password and log in logistics specifically for school districts and assign students an anonymous student code.

It should be noted that CASE is seeking a contractor to assess student learning for the domains of knowledge, understanding, and skill attainment. Knowledge is to simply recognize or comprehend at some level concepts or terminology. Understanding is referred to in this context as a comprehension of underlying theory and reasoning that is transferrable to different context than how the information was learned. Skill attainment refers to technical skill development and replication of steps and key points associated with such skill.

Please note: The End-of-Course instrument may have marketability beyond CASE programs, such as National AFNR Content Standards assessment or pathway assessment.

Section D – Reliability and Validity Attainment

Deliverable 5: The Contractor will report reliability and validity metrics for End-of-Course assessment instruments.

- Coordinate and conduct a field test of assessments and assessment delivery systems.
- Conduct an analysis to determine reliability for End-of-Course testing instrument according to industry standards.
- Evaluate testing instruments for face, content, and context validity.
- Provide a plan for industry validation of CASE end-of-course exams and work with CASE staff to coordinate industry involvement in such process. Industry validation can include some post-secondary faculty of CASE affiliate institutions.

CASE assessments will be a tool that researchers use to evaluate many different aspects of teacher and student performance of CASE. It is critical to develop student assessments according to industry standards for assessment and evaluation. All instruments, including specific items within instruments will be scrutinized for appropriate reporting of metrics and must reflect sound design.

Section E – Teacher Services: Communication and Professional Development

Deliverable 6: The Contractor will provide tutorials or training workshops (face-to-face or virtual) to inform teachers how to access the system and utilize the features available to them.

- Attend CASE Lead Teacher Orientation Conference in the spring of each year to provide training to Lead Teachers.
- Attend National FFA Convention in the fall of each year to offer training workshops or tutorial sessions for teachers.

Teacher workshops may be optional depending upon the usability features of the product. Because the Contractor will be considered a partner in the CASE project, it is suggested that they plan to participate in the marketing activities of CASE. Professional development workshops of this nature will provide indirect marketing aspects and are important for the long term success of the CASE project.

Deliverable 7: The Contractor will provide customer support for teachers to assist with technical problems or other delivery related questions.

It will be expected that the Contractor has in place customer support for teachers. The Contractor must work this cost into their budget for development to prevent additional charge to teacher user for this service.

Section F – Data Management and Availability

Deliverable 8: The Contractor will provide data collection and analysis features.

Included in the data collected from students must include but is not limited to the following:

- Test scores and analysis
- Student demographics

Data collected must be stored in a secure database according to IRB or industry standards. Restricted access is necessary to protect student records. CASE and the Contractor may need to provide additional accommodations for sensitive materials according to individual state policies.

Deliverable 9: The Contractor will provide access to student assessment results to CASE staff, teachers, administrators, and state leaders.

Access to data will be highly restricted and all data must be provided in way to protect the anonymity of individual students. The data and analyses of data will be used to determine effectiveness of CASE resources within states and across the nation.

Section G – Teacher Subscription or Use Charges

Deliverable 10: The Contractor will develop a budget outlining a profit-sharing proposal for the collection of revenue associated to CASE assessments.

Part of the sustainability plan for CASE is to recover revenue from fees related to student assessment. CASE will seek the rights to a full or a partial financial fee for each end-of-course exam administered. This fee is expected to be in the range of \$10-\$20 per student who takes the End-of-Course exams. Money generated from the assessment fees will go toward cost recovery of the development of the assessment and assessment system, future exams, such as the program of study exit exam, CASE certification costs, and general CASE operations. CASE would seek contractors who wish to profit share in this venture or take up front money for the development and reward CASE full rights to assessment fees.

The Contractor must submit a three-year budget identifying projected costs to both the Contractor and/or CASE in addition to potential revenue figures for both entities. The CASE Project Director can be consulted in preparing the RFP budget regarding the level of CASE funding available to be incorporated into a budget proposal.

Proposed Timeline*

The following is the proposed timeline for the implementation of CASE assessments. Contractors can submit their version with modifications based on their ability to meet deliverables.

	Action	Target Due Date	Party Responsible
1.	RFP made available to interested contractors	January 15, 2010	CASE Project Director and Advisory Committee Chair
2.	Proposal submission deadline	February 15, 2010	Prospective contractors
3.	Award contract(s)	March 1, 2010	CASE Project Director and Advisory Committee Chair
4.	Develop assessment instruments for ASA and ASP courses	April 30, 2010	Contractor(s) with assistance from CASE staff
5.	Pilot ASA and ASP assessment instruments and assessment delivery system	May-June 2010	Contractor(s) and CASE field test teachers
6.	Revise ASA and ASP assessment instruments and troubleshoot assessment delivery system	September 30, 2010	Contractor(s) with assistance from CASE staff
7.	Validate ASA and ASP end-of-course assessments with industry	January 1, 2011	Contractor(s)
8.	Develop assessment instruments for AFNR	April 30, 2011	Contractor(s) with assistance from CASE staff
9.	Pilot AFNR assessment instruments and assessment delivery system	May-June 2011	Contractor(s) and CASE field test teachers
10.	Revise AFNR assessment instruments and troubleshoot assessment delivery system	September 30, 2011	Contractor(s) with assistance from CASE staff
11.	Validate AFNR end-of-course assessments with industry	January 1, 2012	Contractor(s)

*The duration of the first contract(s) will be January 15, 2010 through January 15, 2012. Only internal assessments and end-of-course exams for ASA, ASP, and AFNR are included in this first contractual period. Future courses and program of study exit exams will be visited in future contracts or agreements.

Specific Information for Request for Proposal

Services described in this RFP are intended to begin once initial funding/commitments for the project are secured. Respondents may offer quotes for any and all combinations of services contained in the technical specifications; however, special consideration will be given to respondents who can provide all identified services. Respondents may employ stated subcontractors or may bid in partnership with another firm so long as one firm takes lead responsibility for performing all contracted services. The Council reserves the right to split the contract among vendors, to award only part or none of the services listed, or to use other vendors. The Council may choose to negotiate different terms and conditions with any respondent after reviewing all proposals.

The submission of a response in no way obligates the National Council for Agricultural Education to any bidder. All vendors who submit proposals will be notified of the results of the selection process.

In the event that modifications or additions to the RFP become necessary, vendors will be notified. After the bidding deadline, only respondents will be notified of any changes, additions or clarifications to the RFP. The supplier will absorb all costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of their proposal. All supporting materials, exhibits, software, references and other documentation submitted with the proposal will become the property of The Council, unless otherwise explicitly requested by the vendor at the time of submission.

All information provided to bidders by the National Council for Agricultural Education in connection with this initiative is confidential. It is being provided solely to enable you to respond to this RFP. If you do not agree to this condition, you must return the RFP to the National Council for Agricultural Education and agree not to disclose any information gained to any third party. You are not authorized to disclose to any third party, without written consent, that you are a potential bidder for this RFP. The Council reserves the right to require at any time that you return or destroy this document. Any information received from your firm designated confidential or proprietary with the same consideration.

Questions and clarification inquiries about this RFP should be directed to Dan Jansen, CASE project Director (dan.jansen@case4learning.org). All respondents must provide a primary contact person, phone number, email address and be able to receive large Word, PowerPoint and Excel email attachments. Any significant questions and responses will be provided to all participating vendors.

This schedule outlines the major activities that will occur in the bid process and the due dates. Any changes in dates will be communicated to all participating suppliers via email. Granting of any extension is solely at the discretion of The Council. The Council reserves the right to disqualify any supplier who does not comply with these deadlines.

Submitting Proposals

Proposals must be **RECEIVED by February 15, 2010**. The preference is to receive the proposal in electronic form sent to dan.jansen@case4learning or mailed to Dan Jansen, CASE Project Director, 17946 SW Inkster Drive, Sherwood, OR 97140. Bidders who do not constructively respond to each question or generally follow the required format may be disqualified at The Council's sole discretion. The Council reserves the right to request additional information and to conduct in-person interviews. The Council may choose to request clarifications or additional information from prospective bidders at any time.

The proposal application must consist of the following elements:

1. Introduction and Cover Letter – Vendor name and address; primary contact person, title, phone, fax and email; signature of contact person testifying that the vendor is a legal entity professionally qualified to perform the services and that the contact person is authorized to act on the vendor's behalf.
2. Information for the vendor and any third parties. Provide full name, address and business form (individual, partnership, corporation) of all parties. Indicate the principal partners or corporate officers. Document current financial status through credit report, credit rating, audited financial statements or bank references. Indicate quality or professional certifications of the company.
3. General overview of the organization's experience providing project management services, with special attention devoted to similar education projects, use of provided third party software, association with not for profit experience, and renewal rates on expiring contracts for the last three years.
4. A description of the work to be performed as described in this request for proposal. You may include optional materials that provide an example of similar products of those requested or examples of services currently available.
5. Provide an organization chart indicating the titles of all individuals who would be directly serving this account during the year and any key management or support staff. Provide the number of full-time equivalent staff employed during the year.
6. Describe standard operations and financial reports to be prepared monthly, quarterly and annually. Confirm that all requested services will be provided, note any exceptions and specify any services to be provided by subcontractors.
7. Organization References - Include three clients, client contact persons, telephone numbers and email addresses where past work performed on projects of a similar nature would typify the qualifications of the vendor. Provide a brief description of the work performed on each project.
8. Professional Resumes - For key individuals who will work on this project, provide professional resumes that describe each person's education background, work experience, registrations and certificates and roles in projects similar to this one.

Proposal Selection Process

The Council reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, with or without cause, even if all of the stated requirements are met. In addition, The Council may enter into negotiations with more than one entity simultaneously and award a contract or contracts without prior notification to other bidders. The Council reserves the right to schedule a visit at the vendor's principle place of business to meet with key employees designated to provide future services and to observe the vendor in action in a comparable project management situation.

The vendor(s) shall provide all labor, materials and equipment for the work to be performed under this agreement. The National Council for Agricultural Education selects these vendors, negotiates long-term contracts and then employs the winning project manager to initiate requisitions for such services for the project on its behalf, within the annual budget and service plan approved by The Council. The vendor and any subcontractors the vendor might hire shall be independent contractors. As such, the vendor and any subcontractors are solely responsible for their staffs and employees.

The service agreement between The Council and the vendor shall provide for the inclusion of a comprehensive liability insurance policy naming the vendor and The Council as co-insured for personal injury and/or property damage in an amount to be determined.

No MINIMUM or MAXIMUM amount of work is guaranteed. The Council, at its sole discretion, may eliminate scheduled services or may request additional services. Ninety (90) days written notice will be provided for any elimination of services.

The vendor shall coordinate the acquisition of all services, unless specified otherwise, required to perform the work specified in this request for proposal. The project management organization shall initiate purchase order requisitions, oversee performance of work and approve supplier invoices for National FFA Foundation payment if negotiated.

The Council and CASE staffs will evaluate all proposals to determine the Contractor who reflects the goals of the project the best. Once a determination has been made, the primary contact person for each proposal will be contacted to inform them of the decision. Inquiries related to the selection process can be addressed to Dan Jansen (dan.jansen@case4learning.org).