



**Request for Proposal
for Content Management System**

10/16/2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. About Carlow University	3
II. Project Overview	4
III. RFP Clarification	8
IV. Proposal Submittal Guidelines	9
V. Proposal Evaluation	11
VI. Proposal Presentation	11
VII. Proposal Award	12
VIII. Notification of Intent to Submit Proposal	13

I. About Carlow University

Mission

Carlow University, rooted in its Catholic identity and embodying the heritage and values of the Sisters of Mercy, offers transformational educational opportunities for a diverse community of learners and empowers them to excel in their chosen work as compassionate, responsible leaders in the creation of a just and merciful world.

Overview of the University

Carlow University is a small, private, Catholic coeducational university. Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, the University has a strong commitment to social justice, academic excellence, and student success. It has more than 40 undergraduate and 35 graduate and certificate programs. Within six months of graduation, 97 percent of its graduates are employed or enrolled in an advanced degree program. Located in the heart of Pittsburgh's innovation district, it boasts a 12:1 undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio and experiential learning opportunities and internships through regional partnerships. Popular degrees include nursing, education, art, social work, and psychology. Carlow provides transformational learning experiences that empower graduates to become forward-thinking, ethical leaders who give back and make a difference in the world.

Carlow's 13 athletic teams are known as the Celtics, a reflection of the university's Irish heritage and roots.

Address

3333 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Website

www.carlow.edu

Phone

412-578-6000

II. Project Overview

Carlow University is in need of a new content management system to better serve our prospective and current students, donors and partners. It is seeking a vendor with in-house resources to design and build an entirely new website.

Carlow aims to improve user experience by fielding a new site that:

- is efficiently organized with high-end search capabilities;
- contains dynamic, immersive and engaging content;
- with a modern, fresh visual presentation.

A. Current Website Status

1. Current CMS: Ektron v8.5 CMS
 - a. Ektron, now owned by Episerver, is projected to cease updates and security patches as early as 2020.
 - b. The current website communicates through three servers: database, staging and primary in a Microsoft environment. The servers are hosted by a Pittsburgh-based firm and physically housed on their site.
 - c. Carlow works with a Pittsburgh-based backend developer who performs accessibility and compliance scans, completes updates, edits code and addresses day-to-day issues.
2. Website is managed by the university's marketing and communications department. It is not supported by the university's IT department.
3. The university has nearly 20 content contributors in the CMS with full permissions and no approval process in place.
4. Common content updates are:
 - a. Changes to programs and degrees
 - b. News Stories
 - c. Press Releases
 - d. Blogs
 - e. Athletic Updates
5. No ability to easily share content via email or social media channels
6. Current overall design and organization of webpages are more for web editors and faculty than user experience
7. Inefficient content publishing – A full sync of the website is completed at 3:00 a.m. every morning. It includes all the changes and updates that were completed during the day. If there is time-sensitive information to post, a force sync must be completed. A slower, almost unusable website results for the user until the sync is complete. There are no cache or static pages.
8. Excessive webpage count (2,500 pages)
9. User interaction with website is confusing and cumbersome
 - a. Side navigations menus are unwieldy (too many and poorly organized)
 - b. Architecture requires user to engage in multiple clicks
 - c. Inconsistent program pages with non-uniform design throughout website

- d. Page load times are slow for desktop and mobile
- 10. Absence of built-in accessibility and compliance tools
- 11. Mobile site is not fully functional
- 12. Poor code in CMS causing sitemap errors with Google
- 13. Tracking and metrics conducted through Google Analytics (September 2019)
 - a. 126,000 pageviews with 28,878 users
 - b. 2,147 users in 25-34 age group
 - 1,310 female with avg. session of 3 min. 14 sec.
 - 839 male with avg. session of 2 min. 49 sec.
 - c. 1,525 users in 18-24 age group
 - 982 females with avg. session of 3 min. 4 sec.
 - 543 males with avg. session of 2 min. 11 sec.
 - d. Top 3 cities of users: Pittsburgh, New York, Chicago

B. New Website Goals

- 1. Elevate Carlow University's perception, brand and credibility
 - a. Communicate the value and benefit of Carlow University programs and degrees
- 2. Increase Traffic
 - a. Attract prospective students and engage them in the decision-making process
 - b. Effectively optimized for SERP
- 3. Provide efficient access to web resources for current students and other key audiences such as alumni, community businesses and donors
 - a. Potential integration or scalability with Carlow systems
- 4. Clean site architecture, organized with user in mind
 - a. Less clicks
 - b. Easy access to priority pages
- 5. Efficient, secure workflow capabilities
- 6. Integrated accessibility and compliance tools
- 7. Utilization of marketing trends and expertise integrated into all aspects of the website

C. New Website Design

- 1. All design and organization of the site should put the user first
- 2. On-brand with Carlow University
 - a. Brand standards will be provided
- 3. Create an experience for the user through dynamic, immersive and engaging content
 - a. Virtual Tour
 - b. Interactive Map
 - c. Chatbot
 - d. High resolution images
 - e. Visual cues

- f. Videos
- g. Uniform pages with clear CTAs
- h. Icons to share easily across multiple platforms
- 4. Easily find and navigate through information
 - a. Simple and streamlined with less clicks
 - b. Thorough search capabilities
- 5. Real-time publishing capabilities
- 6. Dynamic, integrated presentation of course information and program differentiators (i.e. career listings, student clubs, certificates)
- 7. Fast load times for each page on desktop, mobile and tablet
- 8. Mobile friendly
- 9. Compatible with multiple search engines
- 10. Ability to assign roles and create secure workflows with versioning
- 11. Scalable templates

D. New Website Programming

- 1. New Content Management System
 - a. Compatible with our existing enterprise server or
 - b. Ability to host on vendor's enterprise server
- 2. Potential integration with Carlow University systems

Vendor will need to complete hardware validation, software validation and installation. Carlow will need complete documentation of the install including configuration, sizing and environment.

During development and prior to launch, vendor will work with Marketing and Communications and focus groups (identified by Marketing and Communications) to fully test the site. Vendor will share an equal part of the testing tasks to include cross browser testing of page display, functionality, applications, etc. Troubleshoot and resolve any issues in testing.

Vendor will assist or support usability testing with a group of Carlow users (identified by Marketing and Communications) during and after site implementation to validate and refine the design and functionality of the site.

E. New Website Training

Vendor will provide training for the web management team as identified by Carlow University. The training sessions with qualified trainers must cover all relevant functionality of the CMS. Written documentation of the training for future reference should be provided.

F. Timeline

1. Selection of vendor

Milestones	Dates
Release of RFP	10/16/2019
RFP Responses due by 5 p.m. EST	11/15/2019
Notification of 3 finalists	11/25/2019 - 12/06/2019
Presentation/Finalist Interviews	12/11/2019 - 12/18/2019
Selection and Notification	01/06/2020 - 01/10/2020

2. Desired project completion
08/01/2020**G. Key Carlow University Personnel**

Name	Position
Mollie Cecere	Vice President for Enrollment Management
Greg Dumont	Chief Information Officer
Beth Fazzini	Senior Director of Marketing and Brand Management
April Gratton	Web Content Manager
Heather Farah	Procurement Specialist

H. Budget

\$75,000 – \$100,000

I. Notification of Intent to Submit Proposal

Respondents who plan to submit a proposal must submit the Notification of Intent to Submit Proposal form to procurement@carlow.edu (page 13) no later than Oct. 28, 2019 by 5 p.m. EST

III. RFP Clarification

Respondents may request an explanation of the intent or content of this RFP and clarification of procedures used for this procurement. No interpretations made to any respondent as to the meaning of the RFP shall be binding on the University unless repeated in writing or distributed as an addendum by the University's Procurement Office.

Email questions must be directed to amgratton@carlow.edu. Such requests must be received no later than Nov. 1 by 5 p.m. EST.

Failure of the respondent to make appropriate inquiries, evaluate any special conditions, or verify requirements of this RFP shall not relieve the vendor of responsibility for fulfilling the contract in accordance with this RFP.

Oral communication with any University employee, unit, department, or organization concerning this RFP is not binding on the University and shall in no way modify the RFP or the obligation of the University or vendor.

A. Addenda to the RFP

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, Carlow's Procurement Office will provide addenda in writing to all respondents who submitted a Notification of Intent to Submit Proposal form (page 13).

IV. Proposal Submittal Guidelines

A. Proposal submission deadline

Respondents are asked to submit their proposal no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, Nov. 15, 2019 via email to procurement@carlow.edu with the subject line: Website Proposal for Carlow University.

B. Acceptance of proposals

The University reserves the right in awarding the contract to consider the competency, responsibility, and suitability of the respondent, as well as the services to be provided. The University further reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive any irregularities or informalities, and to award the contract in the best interest of the University. Neither the University nor any agent thereof on behalf of the University will be obligated in any way by any respondent's response to this RFP.

The University also reserves the right to allow a respondent to correct a defect in its Bid provided that the correction of the defect does not alter the amount of the Bid or the scope of work required under the Bid.

Discussions may be held with respondents to promote understanding of the RFP requirements and to answer questions about the oral presentations.

C. Proposal submission

Any term or condition stated in this RFP document shall be considered accepted by the respondent unless specifically objected to by the respondent. The University may accept or reject respondent's alternative terms to this RFP. A proposal may be rejected if it is incomplete or conditional.

To receive consideration, proposals shall be made in agreement with the instructions as stated in this RFP.

D. Preparation

Proposals should provide a straightforward, concise description of the respondent's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

E. Incurred cost

The University is not liable for any costs incurred by the respondent in the preparation and presentation of the proposals.

F. Proposal Format

The proposal must:

- Be clear and concise
- Use a table of contents for ease in finding necessary information
- PDF of a Word document
- Contain the following:

1. Title page

- a. Include a title page with signatures of the person or persons required and authorized to legally bind the respondent to the proposal
- b. Specifically state that the respondent shall complete all services set forth in the proposal within the proposed time limits to the satisfaction of the University.

2. Cover letter

The cover letter page shall be on company letterhead and shall contain:

- a. Name and working address of respondent
- b. Name and contact information of the primary company representative to be contacted in reference to the proposal
- c. Date of submission
- d. Brief introduction of the respondent
- e. Brief explanation of why the company is a good fit for Carlow University, acknowledging its mission and audience
- f. Any terms or conditions of this RFP to which the respondent objects and/or does not accept along with any alternatives or further explanation

3. Designated project personnel

The proposal must contain a detailed list of designated project personnel.

- a. Clearly identified respondent liaison/team supervisor
- b. Entire team who will be completing the work identified in this proposal
- c. Each team member's name, title/position and role as it correlates to this RFP

4. Itemized scope of work

The proposal must contain an itemized scope of work containing:

- a. A detailed list of all services to be provided with succinct explanations
- b. Projected time to complete each service
- c. Projected cost of each service

5. Timeline

The proposal must contain:

- a. Clearly defined and concise timeline
- b. Highlight key milestones
- c. Communication schedule

6. Website samples produced by vendor
The proposal must contain three website links the respondent has built to show their qualification in completing this RFP.

V. Proposal Evaluation

A. Proposal Criteria

Proposals must meet the following criteria in order to be considered:

- Submission by the deadline
- Total cost within the budget range
- Project personnel clearly designated
- Detailed, itemized scope of work
- Detailed timeline for completion of the project

If all criteria above are met, the proposal has met the minimum requirements to be reviewed and evaluated.

B. Evaluation Criteria

All qualifying proposals will be evaluated by the Website Selection Committee utilizing a rubric system with additional consideration given to qualitative, subjective criteria. The committee will evaluate each proposal based on the factors set forth in this RFP.

This includes:

- Minimum criteria as noted above
- Cost effectiveness and value
- Clear understanding of the project's goals
- Innovative approach or methodology to successfully meet project's goals
- Necessary qualifications, experience and resources to undertake the project
- Sufficient training resources and personnel dedicated to the project
- Accessibility and compliance knowledge and efficiency
- Organized and written clearly in layman's terms, free of technical jargon

VI. Proposal Presentation

The Website Selection Committee will select 3 finalists who will be asked to present their proposal on campus to the committee and a select group of internal stakeholders. The length of this presentation should not exceed 1 hour.

Once selected, additional information will be provided.

VII. Proposal Award

The University reserves the right to cancel the selection process or the negotiations when a selection is made or at any time prior to entering into a formal written agreement with the vendor.

The University intends to execute a contract with the vendor submitting the proposal which the University determines to best meet the University's requirements. The University will be the sole judge of the acceptance of any and all proposals.

In awarding the contract, the University may take the following into consideration: the references, experience, responsibility, reputation, and the ability of the vendor to provide an advantageous time schedule for providing service. The inability of any respondent to meet the requirements may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The University reserves the right to entertain post-submittal feedback.

After selection approval by the Website Selection Committee, the Procurement Office will generate an agreement to be prepared for signatures by both parties. The decision of the award will be communicated in writing to all respondents and is final.

The University reserves the right to approach any respondent with a "best and final" offer. One or more respondents may be provided an opportunity to submit a "best and final" offer.

VIII. Notification of Intent to Submit Proposal

If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please complete the information below and email to Carlow University's Procurement Department at procurement@carlow.edu no later than Oct. 28, 2019 by 5 p.m. EST.

Name of Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Representative's Name: _____

Representative's Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____ - _____

Fax Number: (_____) _____ - _____

We will submit a proposal.

Signed: _____

Date: ____/____/____