

United Kingdom-Bristol: Higher education services
OJ S 58/2016 23/03/2016
Contract notice
Services

Directive 2004/18/EC

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1. Name and addresses

Official name: Higher Education Funding Council for England

Postal address: Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford

Town: Bristol

Postal code: BS34 8SR

Country: United Kingdom

Contact person: UK

E-mail: procurement@hefce.ac.uk

Internet address(es):

General address of the contracting authority: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

Address of the buyer profile: <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/hefce/asp/Home>

Additional information can be obtained from:

the abovementioned address

Specifications and additional documents (including documents for competitive dialogue and a dynamic purchasing system) can be obtained from:

the abovementioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted: the abovementioned address

I.2. Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.3. Main activity

Education

I.4. Contract award on behalf of other contracting authorities

The contracting authority is purchasing on behalf of other contracting authorities: yes

Official name: Welsh Funding Council (Lots 3, 5, 6 and possibly Lots 1, 2 and 4 from August 2017), Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (Lots 1 to 6), Scottish Funding Council (Lots 5 and 6)

Section II: Object of the contract

II.1. Description

II.1.1. Title attributed to the contract by the contracting authority

Invitation to Tender for Quality Assessment Services.

II.1.2. Type of contract and place of performance or delivery

Services

Service category No 24: Education and vocational education services

NUTS code UK United Kingdom

II.1.3. Information about a framework agreement or a dynamic purchasing system

The notice involves a public contract

II.1.4. Information about framework agreement

II.1.5. Short description of the contract or purchase(s)

This is a notice for social and specific services in accordance with Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and is for higher education services.

HEFCE has a statutory duty to ensure that the quality of education is assessed in the institutions it funds or is considering funding. The services covered by this tender will support a revised operating model for quality assessment and will include:

- Review visits to test a provider's ability to meet baseline regulatory requirements;
- Verification of a provider's methodology for its own internal review process;
- Support for governing bodies to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities for academic governance;
- Investigations, where serious concerns about a provider have been raised;
- Exploration of approaches to the training of external examiners and to the calibration of standards;
- Support for strategic engagement with international higher education developments and the review of UK providers' activities overseas.

The services will be required to be delivered to locations across England and Northern Ireland. Some services may also be delivered to locations in Wales and/or Scotland.

II.1.6. CPV code(s)

80300000 Higher education services

II.1.7. Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: yes

II.1.8. Lots

This contract is divided into lots: yes

Tenders may be submitted for one or more lots

II.1.9. Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: no

II.2. Scope of the procurement

II.2.1. Total quantity or scope

Please refer to Annex B for the breakdown of the lots.

Estimated value excluding VAT: 11 000 000 GBP

II.2.2. Information about options

Options: yes

Description of options: As set out in the contract documents.

II.2.3. Information about renewals

This contract is subject to renewal: yes

II.3. Duration of the contract or time limit for completion

Start 1.8.2016.

Information about lots

Lot No: 1

Lot title: Gateway into the higher education sector

1) Short description

The revised operating model for quality assessment includes a Gateway process for providers seeking to enter the higher education sector. This process consists of a number of checks on a provider's ability to meet the 'baseline regulatory requirements'. Some components of these requirements will be tested through a review visit to the provider. This Lot relates to the design and operation of these review visits.

There are 3 circumstances in which a review visit will be required:

- For a provider seeking to enter the higher education sector;
- For a provider that is a recent entrant to the higher education sector and is approaching the end of its developmental period;
- Where evidence occurs of a sufficiently serious problem in an 'established' provider resulting in that provider requiring enhanced monitoring.

In addition, review visits will be required for some existing providers as part of transitional arrangements to the new operating model.

2) CPV code(s)

80300000 Higher education services

3) Quantity or scope

Estimated value excluding VAT: 3 000 000 GBP

4) Indication about different time frame or duration

Duration in months: 60 (from the award of the contract)

5) Additional information about lots

Lot 1 will be used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. Services may also be provided to the Welsh Funding Council from August 2017.

Lot No: 2

Lot title: Verification of provider's approach to its own review processes

1) Short description

The funding bodies wish to ensure — through an external verification process — that the methodology for a provider's own internal review process is focused appropriately to meet the needs of the revised operating model for quality assessment. The verification process will be operated as a 1-off transition activity that will take place during 2016-17 and 2017-18 for established providers.

The contractor for this Lot will therefore be required to design and operate a desk-based process to verify the approach taken by an individual provider to its own internal review processes.

2) CPV code(s)

80300000 Higher education services

3) Quantity or scope

Estimated value excluding VAT: 1 000 000 GBP

4) Indication about different time frame or duration

Duration in months: 24 (from the award of the contract)

5) Additional information about lots

Lot 2 will be used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department

for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. Services may also be provided to the Welsh Funding Council from August 2017.

Lot No: 3

Lot title: Support for Governing Bodies

1) Short description

The revised operating model for quality assessment includes a more central role for a provider's governing body. Governing bodies may require additional support to fulfil their responsibilities for academic governance and this Lot relates to the identification of such support requirements. The Lot includes:

- Identification and analysis of any gaps in the capabilities of a range of governing bodies;
- Piloting different approaches to providing support for governors to ensure they are able to discharge their responsibilities for academic governance;
- Evaluation of pilot activity and development of proposals for longer term approaches to support governing bodies in both new and established providers.

2) CPV code(s)

80300000 Higher education services

3) Quantity or scope

Estimated value excluding VAT: 250 000 GBP

4) Indication about different time frame or duration

Duration in months: 24 (from the award of the contract)

5) Additional information about lots

Lot 3 will be used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. Services may also be provided to the Welsh Funding Council.

Lot No: 4

Lot title: Unsatisfactory Quality Investigations (UQI)

1) Short description

The revised operating model for quality assessment includes a mechanism through which concerns about the integrity of degree standards, or about the quality of the student academic experience can be reported directly to the relevant funding body for investigation and, if necessary, intervention. This Lot relates to the design and operation of UQI visits to providers in these circumstances and includes:

- Design of an overarching approach for operating UQI visits;
- Carrying out tailored UQI visits and any necessary follow up action;
- Reporting the outcomes of each UQI visit to the relevant funding body, and publishing a report.

2) CPV code(s)

80300000 Higher education services

3) Quantity or scope

Estimated value excluding VAT: 500 000 GBP

4) Indication about different time frame or duration

Duration in months: 60 (from the award of the contract)

5) Additional information about lots

Lot 4 will be used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department

for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. Services may also be provided to the Welsh Funding Council from August 2017.

Lot No: 5

Lot title: Degree standards

1) Short description

There is a significant student and public interest in the maintenance and comparability of degree standards. The funding bodies have concluded that strengthening of the external examining system, and work to explore approaches to the calibration of standards would be helpful in this area. This Lot relates to developing approaches to this work and includes:

- Design and pilot of different approaches to providing training for external examiners;
 - Evaluation of the pilot activity and making recommendations for the ongoing support of external examiners;
 - Implementation of the agreed approach to training of external examiners;
 - Design and pilot of different approaches to the calibration of degree standards;
 - Evaluation of the calibration pilot activity and recommendations on relevant future work.
- These activities will be overseen and managed by the sector representative bodies.

2) CPV code(s)

80300000 Higher education services

3) Quantity or scope

Estimated value excluding VAT: 2 000 000 GBP

4) Indication about different time frame or duration

Duration in months: 60 (from the award of the contract)

5) Additional information about lots

Lot 5 will be used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. Services may also be provided to the Welsh and Scottish Funding Councils.

Lot No: 6

Lot title: International activities

1) Short description

The revised operating model for quality assessment is designed to preserve and enhance the international reputation of UK higher education. This Lot will deliver:

- A strategic understanding of quality-related developments in specific countries, including the nature and maturity of such arrangements and the way these are evolving;
- Mutual recognition of international quality assessment arrangements and participation in multinational decision-making fora;
- Soft intelligence about specific UK providers and their operations in a specific country;
- Reputational benefits to the UK higher education brand through regular engagement with higher education ministries and assurance agencies in those countries;
- A risk-based approach to the review of UK providers' Transnational Education (TNE) activity.

An individual provider remains responsible for degree standards, student outcomes and for the quality of the student academic experience, wherever its students are based and however they study.

2) CPV code(s)

80300000 Higher education services

3) Quantity or scope

Estimated value excluding VAT: 1 000 000 GBP

4) Indication about different time frame or duration

Duration in months: 60 (from the award of the contract)

5) Additional information about lots

Lot 6 will be used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. Services may also be provided to the Welsh and Scottish Funding Councils.

Section III: Legal, economic, financial and technical information

III.1. Conditions related to the contract

III.1.1. Deposits and guarantees required

III.1.2. Main financing conditions and payment arrangements and/or reference to the relevant provisions governing them

As set out in the contract documents.

III.1.3. Legal form to be taken by the group of economic operators to whom the contract is to be awarded

Requests to participate will be accepted from groupings of economic operators (consortia). In the event of a successful consortium bid, the authority may specify that the consortium member takes a particular legal form and/or require that a single consortium member takes primary liability or that each member undertakes joint and several liability irrespective of the legal form adopted.

III.1.4. Contract performance conditions

The performance of the contract is subject to particular conditions: yes
Description of particular conditions: As set out in the contract documents.

III.2. Conditions for participation

III.2.1. Suitability to pursue the professional activity, including requirements relating to enrolment on professional or trade registers

III.2.2. Economic and financial ability

III.2.3. Technical and professional ability

List and brief description of conditions:
As set out in the Invitation to Tender.

III.2.4. Information about reserved contracts

III.3. Conditions specific to services contracts

III.3.1. Information about a particular profession

III.3.2. Information about staff responsible for the performance of the contract

Obligation to indicate the names and professional qualifications of the staff assigned to performing the contract: no

Section IV: Procedure

IV.1. Type of procedure

IV.1.1. Type of procedure

Open

IV.1.2. Information about the limits on the number of candidates to be invited

IV.1.3. Information about reduction of the number of solutions or tenders during negotiation or dialogue

IV.2. Award criteria

IV.2.1. Award criteria

The most economically advantageous tender in terms of Price is not the only award criterion and all criteria are stated only in the procurement documents

IV.2.2. Information about electronic auction

An electronic auction will be used: no

IV.3. Administrative information

IV.3.1. File reference number attributed by the contracting authority

PAN441/442/443/444/445/446/111/G0030

IV.3.2. Previous publication concerning this procedure

no

IV.3.3. Conditions for obtaining specifications and additional documents or descriptive document

Payable documents: no

IV.3.4. Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate

3.5.2016 - 12:00

IV.3.5. Estimated date of dispatch of invitations to tender or to participate to selected candidates

IV.3.6. Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted

English.

IV.3.7. Minimum time frame during which the tenderer must maintain the tender

Duration in days: 180 (from the date stated for receipt of tender)

IV.3.8. Conditions for opening of tenders

Date: 3.5.2016 - 12:00

Section VI: Complementary information

VI.1. Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: no

VI.2. Information about European Union funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds:
no

VI.3.

Additional information

The Authority reserves the right not to award any or part of this opportunity, postpone or terminate the procurement process (or part of it) or change the procedure used, at any time without liability on its part.

The Authority is not liable for any costs (including third party costs, fees or expenses) incurred by those bidding for this opportunity and no implied contract is created.

Tenders and all supporting documentation for the contracts must be priced in sterling, excluding VAT, and written in English.

Each Lot will be treated as a separate contract award procedure. Suppliers are not restricted on the number of Lots they may apply for. There is no restriction on the number of Lots a supplier can be successful in.

The opportunity being advertised is for a social and specific service in accordance with Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council. Accordingly, the reference to the open procedure at Section IV.1.1) does not apply. The procurement will be run in accordance with Section 7 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) that sets out the specific Regulations that apply to contracts for SOS services. The Authority does not intend to be bound by any additional Regulations. Full details on the process which will be used to procure each of the Lots is set out in the ITT.

VI.4. Procedures for review**VI.4.1. Review body****VI.4.2. Review procedure****VI.4.3. Service from which information about the review procedure may be obtained****VI.5. Date of dispatch of this notice**
18.3.2016