

Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of **Higher Education Funding
Council for England (HEFCE)**

Subject Contracting Authority **REF Impact Specification**

Sourcing reference number **BLOJEU-CR17147HEFCE**



UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)
www.uksbs.co.uk

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for Contracting Authorities for of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

Our broad range of expert services is shared by our Contracting Authorities. This allows Contracting Authorities the freedom to focus resources on core activities; innovating and transforming their own organisations.

Core services include Procurement, Finance, Grants Admissions, Human Resources, Payroll, ISS, and Property Asset Management all underpinned by our Service Delivery and Contact Centre teams.

UK SBS is a people rather than task focused business. It's what makes us different to the traditional transactional shared services centre. What is more, being a not-for-profit organisation owned by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), UK SBS' goals are aligned with the public sector and delivering best value for the UK taxpayer.

UK Shared Business Services Ltd changed its name from RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd in March 2013.

Our Customers

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Services (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UK SBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Contracting Authorities.

Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

HEFCE funds and regulates universities and colleges in England. We invest on behalf of students and the public to promote excellence and innovation in research, teaching and knowledge exchange. In all our activities we aim to:

- ensure accountability for funding and be a proportionate regulator
- act in the public interest and be open, fair, impartial and objective
- be an effective broker between Government and the sector and in doing so, ensure that we are implementing government policy effectively.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

Section 3 - Working with the Contracting Authority.

In this section you will find details of your Procurement contact point and the timescales relating to this opportunity.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1	Contracting Authority Name and address	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Nicholson House, Lime Kiln Cl, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8SR
3.2	Buyer name	Kerry Hammond
3.3	Buyer contact details	research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	£20,000.00 ex VAT
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available here. Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	Tuesday 21 st November 2017 Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	Friday 1 st December 2017 14.00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	Tuesday 5 th December 2017
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	Wednesday 6 th December 2017 14.00
3.10	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Friday 15 th December 2017
3.11	Anticipated Award date	Friday 15 th December 2017
3.12	Anticipated Contract Start date	Monday 18 th December 2017
3.13	Anticipated Contract End date	Tuesday 31 st July 2018
3.14	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

HEFCE funds and regulates universities and colleges in England. We invest on behalf of students and the public to promote excellence and innovation in research, teaching and knowledge exchange. We inform, develop and implement government policy to benefit the sector, students, and society. As part of its function, HEFCE carries out a periodic assessment of the quality of research in UK universities. The Research Excellence Framework is undertaken by HEFCE on behalf of the four UK funding bodies.

Aims

The aims of this exercise are twofold:

- 1) The identification of quantitative indicators used as evidence of impact in the submissions to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014.
- 2) The development of recommendations as to how these identified indicators can be standardised so as to ensure effective and consistent assessment across the REF 2021 panels. These recommendations will inform the development of the guidance and criteria for institutions.

Objectives

In light of the aims of this exercise, the following objectives are identified:

- 1) To review approximately 170,000 instances of numerical data (to be provided) captured from the REF 2014 impact case studies and identify those that were used as evidence of impact, and remove extraneous data (e.g. dates).
- 2) By way of grouping these identified instances (1) into key indicators, articulate a catalogue of impact measures.
- 3) Provide the methodology by which identified indicators (2) may be standardised, providing a clear recommendation and rationale for the preferred method of standardisation for each.
- 4) Identify the benefits and potential challenges around the chosen standardisation (3) in each instance.

In order to fulfil the aims and objectives we seek the following outputs:

- 1) An oral presentation of draft methodologies (Objs. 1 & 3), initial findings (Obj. 2) and the associated benefits and challenges of the approaches chosen (Obj. 4) to a working group of the Forum for Responsible Research Metrics (5th February 2018).
- 2) A report of the findings with recommendations (Objs. 1 – 4) to be submitted to the REF team (1 March 2018), for consideration by the panels.
- 3) We intend to publish the report (2) alongside the draft panel criteria and guidance on submissions (July 2018).

Background to the Requirement

The 2nd Research Excellence Framework (REF2021)

The [Research Excellence Framework](#) (REF) is the system for assessing research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). It was first conducted in 2014, and replaced the previous Research Assessment Exercise. The REF will be undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies: the Higher Education Funding Council for England

(HEFCE), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE). The exercise will be managed by the REF team based at HEFCE and overseen by the REF Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the four UK higher education funding bodies.

The funding bodies' shared policy aim for research assessment is to secure the continuation of a world-class, dynamic and responsive research base across the full academic spectrum within UK higher education. We expect that this will continue to be achieved through the threefold purpose of the REF:

- To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
- To inform the selective allocation of funding for research.

Assessment methods

Submissions to the REF are assessed in three areas: research outputs; the wider impact of research; and the research environment in which it was produced.

The REF is a process of expert review. Institutions are invited to make submissions in 34 units of assessment (UOAs) that roughly align with discipline areas. The submissions are assessed by an expert sub-panel for each UOA, working under the guidance of four main panels. The panels are made up of senior academics and research users from the private, public and third sectors.

The REF panels are responsible for developing the assessment criteria and working methods within their disciplinary areas during the criteria-setting phase of the REF in 2018.

Impact

REF 2014 included for the first time an assessment of the broader impact of universities' research beyond academia: on the economy, society, culture, public policy and services, health, the environment and quality of life – within the UK and internationally. In REF 2021 impact will be assessed through the submission of impact case studies, which describe the changes or benefits brought about by research undertaken by researchers at the institution, and a section in the environment template setting out approaches and strategies around impact.

The impact case study template (cf. [REF3b](#)) required a submitting unit to detail how the research output underpinned the impact, and the nature and extent of that impact. This included details of the beneficiaries, evidence or indicators of the extent of impact, and dates of when the impact occurred. [An analysis of impact in REF 2014](#), carried out by King's College London and Digital Science, highlighted the variety of evidence cited both across and within Panels and UOAs. The report described, for example, the impact topic 'Technology Commercialisation' which centred on revenue, secured investment, secured

partners and the creation of employment. Whereas the impact of research on ‘public policy and parliamentary debate’ typically centred on academic input to Select Committees, for example where researchers provided written evidence, acted as an advisor, or were cited in select committee reports.

The [analysis of impact in REF 2014](#), however, also found that the approach to data reporting was inconsistent and not sufficiently standardised, and recommended the introduction of standardised definitions for numeric data (e.g. currencies, methods and metrics to show financial impact). [The initial decisions](#) on REF 2021 have been published following a sector-wide [consultation on the second research excellence framework](#) which set out that: “We will develop guidelines for the use and standard of quantitative data as evidence for impact, with a working group of the [Forum for Responsible Research Metrics](#). We will ensure this work takes due account of concerns raised about the uneven applicability of such guidelines across types of impact and discipline areas, and the potential to create hierarchies of evidence inadvertently.”

Scope

The overarching aim of the project is to develop recommendations for the standardised use of quantitative evidence of impact, drawing on the quantitative indicators used as evidence of impact in REF 2014 submissions. These recommendations will be presented to the REF’s expert panels in order to inform their development of guidelines and criteria.

The successful contractor will carry out a review and analysis of the data provided to them and identify those instances that were used as evidence of impact, and that can be standardised to inform use in future.

The output(s) will be a presentation of initial findings and a final report setting out types of impact indicators identified, a list of standardised entities, the methodologies for defining this list and the resulting standardisation approaches, and details of the benefits and potential challenges around these standardisations.

[Nb. recommendations on the following areas are out of scope:

- the use of indicators to assess impact, including judgement on the relative value of any indicator for this purpose;
- the standardised use of qualitative data;
- the standardised use of standard fields and/or drop-down boxes.]

Requirement

- 1) The successful contractor will be expected to deliver the following mandatory key deliverables:
 - a) An oral presentation of draft methodologies and findings,
 - b) A final report.
- 2) The successful contractor will be expected to provide regular updates, including in advance of key meetings and deadlines as set out in the timetable and during preliminary meeting.
- 3) That the successful contractor supply the following supplementary information:

a) The cleaned and categorised data (as a .csv or .xls file type).

Timetable

Preliminary meeting with contractor and project lead	Week of 18 th – 22 nd December 2017
Oral presentation to the Forum for Responsible Metrics	5 th February 2018 – <i>fixed date</i>
The final report	1 March 2018 – <i>fixed date</i>
Project work concludes when the final report is signed off by HEFCE	July 2018

Terms and Conditions

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to the Contracting Authority Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

Section 5 – Evaluation model

The evaluation model below shall be used for this ITQ, which will be determined to two decimal places.

Where a question is 'for information only' it will not be scored.

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS, and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation the scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 ($5+5+6 = 16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Commercial	SEL3.11	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria			
Evaluation Justification Statement			
In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. The Contracting Authority considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.			
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding	25%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Project Team and Risk Management	25%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Methodology	30%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

Each question will be judged on a score from 0 to 100, which shall be subjected to a multiplier to reflect the percentage of the evaluation criteria allocated to that question.

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 20% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 20%.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 12% by using the following calculation:

$$\text{Score} = \{\text{weighting percentage}\} \times \{\text{bidder's score}\} = 20\% \times 60 = 12$$

The same logic will be applied to groups of questions which equate to a single evaluation criterion.

The 0-100 score shall be based on (unless otherwise stated within the question):

0	The Question is not answered or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the selection question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.
100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.

All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that the final score returned may be different as there may be multiple evaluators and their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score.

Example

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40

Your final score will $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100.

All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.

Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80

Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.

Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.

Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points multiplied by 50 ($80/100 \times 50 = 40$)

The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

Bidders should note that the evaluation questionnaire is located within the **e-sourcing questionnaire**.

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at <http://www.ukpbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General Information

What makes a good bid – some simple do's 😊

DO:

- 7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- 7.2 Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions. Unless formally requested to do so by UK SBS e.g. Emptoris system failure
- 7.3 Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.
- 7.4 Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission we may reject your Bid.
- 7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution
- 7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.
- 7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.
- 7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.
- 7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.
- 7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.11 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

What makes a good bid – some simple do not's Ⓜ

DO NOT

- 7.12 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.13 Do not attach 'glossy' brochures that have not been requested, they will not be read unless we have asked for them. Only send what has been requested and only send supplementary information if we have offered the opportunity so to do.
- 7.14 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.15 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.16 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.17 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.20 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.21 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.

Some additional guidance notes

- 7.23 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.24 Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. Where they are not permissible any attachments submitted will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.
- 7.25 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.26 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.27 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.28 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority. / UKSBS.
- 7.29 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.30 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.31 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.32 Bidders should note the Government's transparency agenda requires your Bid and any Contract entered into to be published on a designated, publicly searchable web site. By submitting a response to this ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public
- 7.33 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified we may reject your Bid.
- 7.35 We will let you know the outcome of your Bid evaluation and where requested will provide a written debrief of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your Bid.
- 7.36 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.37 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Emptoris e-sourcing tool.
- 7.38 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal the Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of

any Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks the Contracting Authority may decline to proceed with the award of the Contract to the successful Bidder.

- 7.39 All timescales are set using a 24 hour clock and are based on British Summer Time or Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which applies at the point when Date and Time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.40 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, the Contracting Authority may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.41 The Government is introducing its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC . The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

- [Emptoris Training Guide](#)
- [Emptoris e-sourcing tool](#)
- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)