

**Request for Quotations (RFQ)**

**Creation and Management of Advertorials in Print and Online Media across the West Midlands**

**August 2015**

**RFQ closing date:** Wednesday 12th August 2015 at 10am

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Aston Business School, Aston Programme for Small Business Growth**

Aston University was founded in 1966 and is located in the centre of Birmingham. It is home to approximately 9,500 students and encompasses four schools of study; Life and Health Sciences; Languages and Social Sciences; Engineering and Applied Sciences and finally, Aston Business School. Within Aston Business School, there are currently several programmes running which are devoted to small business support and the improvement of small business performance. This new Aston Programme for Small Business Growth is part funded by the Government-led European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Designed specifically for small businesses leaders, the Aston Programme for Small Business Growth is a free programme for businesses in the West Midlands. The Aston Programme for Small Business Growth provides leadership and management education for small business leaders wanting to grow their businesses. In a series of workshops supplemented by one-to-one support the programme addresses a comprehensive range of issues faced by growing SMEs and culminates in the development of a Plan for Growth for the business.

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*Programme Eligibility*

The Aston Programme is for leaders of small businesses or social enterprises with the desire and drive to grow their businesses. The business needs to:

* Be scalable and have the ambition and opportunities for growth
* Be a registered business located in the West Midlands
* Be trading and be able to provide evidence of trading revenue (not a start-up)
* Have at least one FTE employee
* Meet the De Minimis State Aid criteria (no more than 200,000 Euro State Aid in the last 3 years)

Further info:

* Aston Centre for Growth: [www.aston.ac.uk/astoncentreforgrowth](http://www.aston.ac.uk/astoncentreforgrowth)
* ERDF Programme: [www.aston.ac.uk/smallbusinessgrowth](http://www.aston.ac.uk/smallbusinessgrowth)

### GENERAL CONDITIONS OF REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)

1. **RFQ Instructions**

Responses to the RFQ must be submitted in accordance with the following instructions. These instructions are designed to ensure that all providers are given equal and fair consideration. It is important that you provide all the information requested in the format and order specified.

* 1. Your RFQ document and quotation will be treated as part of your expression of interest. In order for your application to be considered, you must return all required documents by the due date and time as indicated.

1.2 All details within the RFQ must be treated as private and confidential and thus shall not be disclosed to any party, whether your RFQ submission is successful or not.

1.3 Where Aston Business School, Aston Programme for Small Business Growth team discovers any errors or omissions in your RFQ, this will be pointed out and you will be given the opportunity confirm the tender sum. We reserve the right to reject any incomplete RFQ.

1.4 The provider warrants that the prices in your submission have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, agreement or understanding, either for the purpose of restricting competition or on any matter relating to such prices, with any other PROVIDER or with any competitor and prices are fully inclusive to meet the requirements of the RFQ.

1.5 Aston Business School, Aston Programme for Small Business Growth team reserves the right, unless the provider expressly stipulates to the contrary in the RFQ, to accept all or part of the RFQ without being bound to accept the whole tender.

1. Contract Award Criteria

There will be a two-stage selection process. Qualifying submissions will be evaluated against the criteria below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pricing | 40% |
| Supplier Capability | 20% |
| Service Provision and Relevant Experience | 20% |
| Creativity and Innovation | 20% |
| Total | 100% |

* 1. Aston University does not bind itself to accept the lowest price. The contract will be awarded on the basis of the RFQ that is most economically advantageous to Aston Business School, Aston Programme for Small Business Growth team. Account will be taken of any factors which impact on the provider’s suitability that emerge from the tendering process and relate to information previously provided by the provider.
	2. Unsuccessful providers will be notified about why they have been unsuccessful.
1. Award of contract

3.1 The preferred provider will be recommended by the project team based on the results of the evaluations. The successful provider will be notified by email.

1. Scope of Contract

This is an exciting opportunity to provide a quote to create and manage a series of Advertorials in both print and online media across the West Midlands to showcase 30 SME businesses who have just completed the Aston Programme for Small Business Growth. The Advertorials should explore the impact of the programme on each business as well as advertising the business across their local areas.

We are seeking a supplier with the facility and capability to manage the entire Advertorial process from purchasing space in appropriate media (both print and online) to interviewing each business owner and creating the copy for each Advertorial.

Advertorials will need to be at least a quarter page in size and may need to be as much as a double page spread if we choose to group businesses together by geographical area. Therefore, we are looking for a full range of pricing so we can make an informed decision on style and content.

Agencies are invited to apply if they meet the following criteria:

* Knowledge of local West Midlands print and online media
* Ability to purchase advertising space in the chosen media outlets
* Previous experience of managing an Advertorial process from start to finish for a similar target audience
* Previous experience of completing corporate Advertorials and knowledge of the styles and requirements associated with these
1. **Price**

Please provide and attach detailed costs on an official quote (letter headed paper).

All prices quoted should **exclude** Value Added Tax (VAT). A payment schedule will be agreed with the successful supplier on award of contract.

As this programme is majority funded by ERDF, the budget for all procured services and items needs to be itemised as well as both competitive and justifiable.

1. **Submission of RFQ**

All RFQs should be received by Wednesday 12th August 2015 at 10am

1. Timetable

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Procurement Process | Date |
| Invitation to Quote | Monday 3rd August |
| Closing date for receipt of RFQs  | Wednesday 12th August at 10am |
| RfQ Evaluation | Wednesday 12th – Friday 14th August |
| Suppliers notified of Outcome | Friday 14th August |
| Publishing of Advertorials | W/C Monday 7th September |

Contact Information

If you have any queries please contact Fiona Barnes on 0121 204 4911 or f.barnes@aston.ac.uk or Kate Angel on 0121 204 4523 or k.angel@aston.ac.uk

**SPECIFICATION**

The initial tender should include the following:

1. Background information on the agency and a portfolio of previous similar work
2. Prices to include:
* A range of advertising space options
* Print media publications targeted at each region of the West Midlands
* Online media publications targeted at the business sector
* Interview costs for 20-30 participants
* Copy writing costs for 20-30 Advertorials
* Full management costs for 20-30 Advertorials
1. A completed RfQ document, including ‘New Supplier Information’ details on page 7

We are looking for an exceptional agency that can provide a high-quality service throughout the process and complete a series of high quality Advertorials across the target area. The Advertorials are intended to serve a dual purpose in both showcasing the impact of the ERDF funded Aston Programme for Small Business Growth and also to showcase each business in their local area and across the West Midlands. Therefore, we are looking for a supplier that can provide this service with suitable efficiency to the high standard we require.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Required Services | AvailableYes/No | Total cost | Please provide details |
| **Essential:** Management of the entire process |  |  |  |
| **Essential:** Capability to suggest suitable media in which to advertise |  |  |  |
| **Essential:** Capability to purchase advertising space of various sizes in print publications across the West Midlands |  |  |  |
| **Essential:** Capability to purchase advertising space of various sizes in online publications  |  |  |  |
| **Essential:** Previous experience of working on corporate Advertorials |  |  |  |
| **Essential:** Please provide a sample portfolio of previous similar work |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- |
| Please confirm that the specification above can be met. |  |
| Name of contact and details for this RFQ |  |
| Please confirm that you agree to work against Aston University's terms and conditions? Please see below. |  |

**New Supplier Information:**

The information detailed below will only be used subject to a successful award of a contract. The information is required for you to be set up on Aston University’s payment system.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Company Name:** |  |
| **Company Registration Number:** |  |
| **VAT Number:** |  |
| **Bank Name & Address:** |  |
| **Sort Code:** |  |
| **Account Number:** |  |
| **IBAN Code** |  |
| **SWIFT** |  |
| **Head Office Address** |  |
| **Head Office Contact Name and Details** |  |
| **Invoice/Accounts Payable Address** |  |
| **Invoice/Accounts Payable Contact Name and Details** |  |

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### ASTON UNIVERSITY STANDARD CONDITIONS

### OF CONTRACT FOR GOODS AND SERVICES

### <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/centralprocurement/procurement/standardtermsandconditions/>