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| No. | Question | Answer |
|  | Expressions of Interest – under section Submission Coverage you request us to list the Occupational Family and descriptors that we are interested in. Could you please explain what the ‘descriptors’ are? | The descriptor is the name of the Occupational Family. In the Expression of Interest form the first column will list the Occupational Family number and the second column the name of the family. |
|  | Can UKCES confirm why the occupational families in appendix 8 have been chosen? | The occupational list included in the ITT has been developed using the ONS 2010 SOC classification, primarily based at a 2 digit SOC level (rather than the 4 digit SOC codes under this). This provides the framework for us to group Standards & Framework products together. |
|  | As I understand it the Occupational Family consists of a list of 4-digit-SOC Codes and Titles and that these SOC codes cannot be used as a pick list, you simply have to select the Occupational Family as a whole (example: 8-Digital & IT). We cannot select a family and then pick individual SOC codes (example: 2133 IT Specialist managers only). Is that correct? | Applications must cover the ENTIRE Occupational Family – so if there is a SOC code that you cannot cover you will need to find a partner who you can work with to provide that cover. |
|  | Can a submission be made that excludes some of the SOC within a family? | No. only submissions that cover ALL of the SOC codes in an Occupational Family will be accepted, applications that exclude one or more SOC codes within the family will not be considered. |
|  | We are interested in submitting an Expression of Interest, however, we have noticed some anomalies in the roles allocated to Occupational Family X and that several of our existing job roles are now under other areas. | The Occupational Family list in the ITT has been developed using the ONS 2010 SOC classification primarily based at a 2 digit SOC level which brings together 4 digit SOC codes that would sit under the 2 digit SOC code umbrella. Standards and Frameworks have been commissioned based on occupations for a number of years. UKCES would recommend that if potential suppliers wish to cover SOC codes contained within various Occupational Families, that they focus on collaboration and forging effective partnership arrangements. At this stage, the SOC codes contained within various occupational families are now set. |
|  | Is one of the requirements of the tender is to get evidence of support (employers etc) for the whole of the occupational family?  Even though the products that the devolved nation may purchase will only be relevant to a few of the SOC codes within the family. | You must be able to show support across the entire Occupational Family, even though the products requested initially may not cover all SOCs. At this stage we do not have a full list of 16-17 requirements and certainly no idea about what will be needed in 17-18, so all SOCs within an Occupational Family need to be covered & support evidenced. |
|  | We are looking for be a partner – not a lead. How do we find out who any lead delivery partners may be for our Occupational Family so that we can make contact? | UKCES are developing a list of organisations who would like to partner with any organisations bidding for an entire Occupational Family, in order to foster collaboration and partnership formation. This list will contain 2 or 4 digit SOC codes with descriptors and a contact email address for the organisation wishing to partner. We would urge those organisations wishing to become a Delivery Partner for an Occupational Family to make contact with these organisations and forge partnerships to enable effective coverage of the whole family to be demonstrated. UKCES is unable to act as a broker in this, as we will not know who all the bidding organisations are until the deadline for proposals. |
|  | We have been collaborating with other organisations to ensure that the occupational families of interest to us and our employer members are represented. However, we have occupational roles within Occupational Family category 5 – and are struggling to find consortium partners that appropriately represent the breadth of this family.  Do you have any advice on how we might proceed? | We are just in the process of developing a list of people/organisations who want to partner up – or join partnerships – in order to cover particular occupations or 4-digit SOC. We will then publish this list (on Contracts Finder where the main ITT has been published), send an email to everyone who has responded with any interest in bidding to maximise the chances of them partnering up – and us getting the coverage needed. Would it be OK for me to put you on the list? It would be really useful if you could give me the specific SOCs you are needing cover in (or a description of the areas), as it will help everyone easily identify what you are looking for. |
|  | We have noticed that X have been included in the X Occupational family. Would it be possible to move them into Occupational family X?  Also we have noticed that some of the job roles that would normally sit within our footprint are included within different SOC codes and have therefore been placed within a different occupational family. Where we have job roles that only sit within certain SOC codes but do not cover the whole of the code would it be possible to be listed as a ‘sub partner’ and not have to provide so much information? This would make it easier for those putting in the bid. Letters of support and other key information could be provided. | I am sorry but, at this stage, we cannot change the content of the Occupational Families without invalidating the entire tender process.  As bidding organisations are required to demonstrate support across the ***whole*** Occupational Family, I would suggest that you partner with these organisations in order to provide cover for the particular areas that are within your footprint. This means that you should be making contact with them and develop partnerships to ensure cover is provided. This would mean that, contractually, the main Delivery Partner would be the contract holder and ultimately responsible for delivery across that Occupational Family. Letters of support and other key information would need to be provided to whichever organisation would be leading the bid. |
|  | If UKCES are able to make changes to the SOC included under the Occupational Families at this stage would you consider… | Unfortunately, we are unable to make any changes to the Occupational Families at this stage without invalidating the entire commissioning process. You need to demonstrate that you can cover the ***whole*** Occupational Family and this means that where there is something in a family that is not currently within your footprint, you will need to go into partnership with organisations who can provide the employer support to cover this area. |
|  | Can either a specific occupational family be created for X sector or can a delivery partner make a bid to deliver specific SOC codes across a number of the occupational families which have been created for this process. | Thanks for your query. As you have noted bidders are required to submit tenders for a ***whole*** Occupational Family. Whilst we appreciate that, as listed below, some roles within a sector will fit into different occupational families, it would not be economically efficient or effective to issue contracts for very small groups of SOCs at either the four digit or 2 digit level. We cannot, nor would we want to, create new occupational families at this point in the process and indeed many industries could potentially put the case for them to have their own family, resulting in huge cost in managing very large numbers of contracts – with no guaranteed spend under any of them. Unfortunately, this means that you will need to form partnerships with other organisations in the Occupational Family groupings in order to provide coverage for your industry. To assist in this, we are currently developing a Collaboration list for organisations wishing to work together to form a Partnership which is able to bid for a whole Occupational Family. If you wish me to put you on this, I would be happy to do so and will need the following   1. List of SOCs (preferably at 2 digit level – but 4 digit if not) with brief coverage description, that you (and employers in your industry) would be interested in representing 2. Contact email for other organisations to reach you should they be thinking of bidding for that Occupational Family |
|  | We can’t identify a family that our 4-digit SOC comes under – can you confirm that it would be included in xxx Family.  Can you advise me where our suites sit, as I am not sure which SOC code is applicable? | The SOC codes for occupations are listed in the SOC classification 2010 volume 2, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/soc2010-volume-2-the-structure-and-index.html>  You can search for SOC codes for occupations using this publication.  Please note that you cannot apply to develop NOS etc for only 1 or 2 SOC codes, you must be able to cover the entire Occupational Family.  PS We are developing a list of organisations who would wish to partner with any organisations bidding for an entire Occupational Family – would you be interested in having your interest in working with any partners put on this list (it will be in the public domain), so that any organisations thinking of bidding for a Family can make contact with you? |
|  | The list of occupational families included in the tender appears to have quite a lot of SOC codes missing which we would expect to see in a complete list. Can UKCES confirm why some SOC codes are not included in the list?  Why does appendix 8 not include all the SOC codes?  We have a large number of SOC codes that are not listed, we need to provide provision for these SOC codes. | Some SOCs are owned by statute – and therefore these would not be part of the tender – Construction & Care are 2 of the areas where this occurs. If you can send me a list, we can review it to make sure everything is in that should be. |
|  | How does this link with\ fit with the Trailblazers? | Trailblazers focus on developing Apprenticeships for England and the tender sent to you is to become a Delivery Partner for NOS and Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Apprenticeship development in England e.g. trailblazer activity is out of scope. |
|  | On page 5 point 3 first and second paragraph it refers to ‘across the UK’ and yet in the 3rd bullet in point 3 on the same page it states ‘not England’ and on page 8 first paragraph it states ‘expectations of Scotland , Wales and Northern Ireland’ – please can you clarify how England sits in all of this and if this tender is not including England, how England will be supported and how it will be organised so that all 4 countries in the UK are provided for with the same standards and apprenticeships etc rather than two distinct yet potentially repetitive sets of standards etc? | The products in scope of the ITT are Nation specific products in NI, Scotland and Wales. However, particularly for NOS consultation activity, you will need to considers English employers as many employers work across borders. There will not be two separate sets of NOS standards. |
|  | Can UKCES confirm how the prices in appendix 6 were arrived at? These are less than the previous prices paid for NOS, SVQ, apprenticeship and MA development and review, and there appear to be no maximum and minimum prices reflecting the potential size, complexity or volume of units in each suite/qualification. Can UKCES confirm why prices have changed and why there are no maximum and minimum prices?  On Page 22 it indicates that prices can be negotiated ‘under exceptional circumstances’. Can UKCES confirm what these circumstances are? Can UKCES confirm if they know the size of the products or suite for 2016/17 and if prices will be adjusted to accommodate varying volumes? | A number of pricing scenarios were drafted and presented to the NOS Governance Group for consideration. Following discussion on each pricing scenario the NOS Governance Group decided upon a fixed price approach. As stated in the ITT, exceptional circumstances would include 'where individual products require additional/resource/ time due to size'. A list of products for development during 16/17 is still being agreed with the DA's. |
|  | The ITT relates to solely becoming a delivery partner, can UKCES confirm that standards and frameworks outputs/work which will form the delivery partner agreement have already been planned/agreed for 2016/17 and, if relevant for 2017/18?  If so, which occupational families/SOC codes do they relate to? If not, will there be a separate process in either or both of the 2 years for approved delivery partners to submit outputs/priorities for funding based on rationale, evidence of demand, employer support, changes to legislation, timescales etc in line with the requirements of appendix 7 section 1 (as has been done in the previous 5 years)? | A list of products for development during 16/17 is still being agreed by the DA's, based on their requirements only. For this year, we do not intend to enter negotiations for qualifications development based on submissions from successful Delivery Partners.  It has not yet been agreed how products for development in 2017/18 this will be determined at this stage. A decision will be made, when it is agreed whether the contracts will be extended. |
|  | Is there an issue with Awarding Bodies tendering for this? | We see no issue with Awarding Bodies applying for this tender. We would just need to look at governance arrangements, should you be successful. |
|  | SOC 3233 – Child & early years office | Please note that this has recently been deemed to be a statutory code, therefore please exclude it from any bid for Childcare and Education Occupational Family. |
|  | Are we able to discuss the requirements of this tender with UKCES prior to submitting our proposal? | UKCES will not discuss forthcoming or live tenders with individual suppliers as this could result in unintentionally giving them an unfair advantage. We would be pleased to receive, in writing, any questions which you may have. |
|  | When will you be circulating the Framework Agreement (Contract) for suppliers to review? | As soon as the draft agreement has been signed off we will share it with anyone who has expressed any kind of interest in this tender. |
|  | Can we be placed on a list to be notified of future opportunities of this type? | To be notified of new tenders posted please register on Contracts Finder and subscribe to the RSS / data feed. All suppliers are welcome to bid for our work but we do not operate any kind of preferred supplier list. Each tender is open to all who can fulfil the requirements; simply read the tender documents for any opportunity and respond with the information requested, details of the evaluation criteria and scoring systems are included with each Invitation to Tender. |
|  | Will UKCES pay for the preparation of our proposal and for expenses for attending an interview? | No – UKCES will not reimburse any costs of preparing any application or for attending an interview. |
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|  | What is the deadline for questions about this tender? | The deadline for questions is Noon on 04 May 2016 (with answers by 06 May, once this deadline has passed no further questions will be answered. |