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**TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF**

**An Events Management and Hosting Tool –**

**UPDATED on 21st July 2023**

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**Buyer name:** The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

(QAA)

**Contact details:**

Name: **Nathan Kington**

Position: **Project Manager**

Telephone: **01452 557083**

Email : [**projects@qaa.ac.uk**](mailto:projects@qaa.ac.uk)

**\*Deadline for Provider** **12pm on 9th of August 2023.**

**INVITATION TO TENDER**

**Restricted tender for the provision of An Events Management and Hosting Tool to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)**

**Background**

**About QAA:**

1. QAA is a world-leading quality agency with unmatched experience of providing impartial regulatory and collaborative quality assurance and enhancement. We support universities and colleges in working with students and learners, governments, funders and regulatory bodies to evidence and enhance the excellent quality and high standards of the education they provide.

2. We work towards a greater public understanding - domestically and internationally - of how excellent quality is demonstrated in UK higher education, and how autonomous providers both assure its delivery and address weaknesses. Our work safeguards the value of qualifications for students and learners and protects and promotes the reputation of higher education.

3. QAA’s [strategy](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/about-us/qaa-strategy-2023-27.pdf) lists four focus areas:

* Standards - Providing custodianship of sector reference points and targeting guidance to secure academic standards and the value of qualifications
* Assurance and enhancement - Delivering respected and innovative approaches to quality, enabling institutions and learners to work collaboratively to evaluate their practice and keep improving their learning experience
* International - Expanding our international activity, capitalising on the excellent global reputation of QAA and UK HE, into new areas for the benefit of UK tertiary education
* Leadership - Influencing and supporting policymakers, universities and colleges, students and learners through clearly communicated expert insight.

4. QAA was established in 1997, and is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

**Project Background:**

Events are central to the successful delivery of QAA Membership services and our other work with both UK and international higher education.

QAA recognises the importance of efficient events management and hosting to support its mission of ensuring quality in education. Our current events platforms (events management and hosting) have reached the end of their procurement cycle and we are keen to explore the latest in event technology and see if we can find a more cost-effective way to deliver our events, as the number of events and delegates is expanding. We hold in the region of 200 events a year – mostly online, but some in-person conferences/network meetings which can be delivered as hybrid events. We currently have about 10,000 delegates a year to these events but this is growing year on year.

QAA is looking to purchase, if possible, a combined events management and a virtual conference platform solution for an initial period of 2 years.

**Summary of Services required by QAA:**

The provision of a web-based events management solution that offers the following:

* the ability to setup templates and add branding for event registration and the delivery of online events
* the ability to be able to add an approval process for events-based content prior to publishing.
* the ability to provide an efficient and seamless customer experience when booking events.
* the ability to issue email to customers from the events management tool for such items as confirmation of their attendance at a QAA event.
* the ability to share a calendar of upcoming events once a user has registered for an event.
* the ability to be able to add validation to mandatory and voluntary fields as requested in the templates for events registration.
* a bi-directional data connection to Salesforce.
* the option of other language preferences/translation (particularly Welsh) when booking and on the event delivery platform.
* single-sign-on functionality.
* the option of a waiting list for a customer if an event has reached capacity.
* the ability for a customer to purchase/order event related materials/activities.
* the ability to vary prices on an event (discounts etc.).
* online payment for customers for events that they are booked onto.
* eTickets for events that customers are registered on.
* reporting capability.
* the ability to control/limit attendance at events.
* full compliance with GDPR and other UK data protection regulations.

The provision of a web-based online/hybrid events hosting system that offers:

* the hosting of online and hybrid events.
* polling for delegates within online and hybrid events.
* the ability for a user to access an online and hybrid event from a mobile device.
* the ability for an online/hybrid session to deliver simultaneous live breakout sessions for delegates.
* the option of other language preferences/translation (particularly Welsh) as closed captions within media offered within an online/hybrid event.
* an availability uptime of upwards of 99% coupled with the availability of support in real-time for online and hybrid events at no extra cost.
* the ability to record the main sessions and each of the breakout sessions in an online/hybrid event.
* the ability to be able to archive chat and Q&A data.
* a waiting room for each online/hybrid event and breakout session.
* the ability to livestream a face-to-face session at a conference or event

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| **Please note: The summarised requirements above are not exhaustive. A full and detailed list of requirements is available on request.** |

**Further Information**

Any enquiries about this tender should be addressed to **Nathan Kington, Project Manager**, [projects@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:projects@qaa.ac.uk). Answers to any queries raised by tenderers may be communicated to all companies involved in the invitation to tender if the answer contains information of material significance.

**Tender process**

To be considered for this tender, the supplier must submit responses to the following questions and provide evidence or examples as requested:

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| **Description** | **Requirements** |
| Pricing | * Provide an all-inclusive and fully transparent cost structure * Provide an example quotation |
| Specification | High-level specification of the product under consideration   * **Salesforce compatibility** – product under consideration must have the capability of a two-way dataflow between the tool and Salesforce. This is usually achieved with an API. **Must Have** * **MFA capability** – product under consideration must work with Multi-Factor-Authorisation (MFA). **Must Have** * **Ease of use** – Product under consideration must have an intuitive interface and be easy to use by someone non-technical. **Must Have** * **SSO** – Product under consideration must work with Single-Sign-on (SSO). **Must Have** |
| Certification | Provide evidence of certification for the following within the last 12-month period:   * ISO 27001 * Cyber Essentials |
| Staffing Plan | Submit a staffing plan that includes key roles, the size of the team and their qualifications/experience |
| Customer Account Management | * Detail account management processes and what QAA should expect from the designated account manager * Details of escalation procedure * Confirm that Customer Satisfaction is a KPI and detail how customer end user satisfaction is measured and reported on |
| Service Level Agreement (SLA) | * A detailed description of your SLA’s * Sample SLA KPI reports including the purpose and how measured * Detail any SLA breach refunds you offer |

This procurement will be managed electronically by QAA’s **Project Procurement Team**. To participate in this procurement, please email your tender to [projects@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:projects@qaa.ac.uk) by

**12 pm on the 9th of August 2023.**

Presentations/demonstrations will take place virtually between the **21st of August 2023 and the 25th of August 2023.**

The successful organisation will be advised by **30th August 2023.**

Any tenderer who:

1. fixes or adjusts the amount of their tender by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with another person, or
2. communicates in any way, other than to QAA, the amount or approximate amount of their proposed tender, or
3. enters into agreement with any person to refrain from tendering or as to the amount of any tender to be submitted, or
4. offers or agrees to pay or to give, or does pay or give, any sum of money, inducement or valuable consideration, directly or indirectly to any person, for doing or having done or causing to have done in relation to any other tender or proposed tender, any act or omission shall be disqualified without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to QAA and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a tenderer may attract.

The tender will be awarded using the Most Economically Advantageous Tender methodology, not lowest price. **QAA is not bound to accept the lowest, or indeed any, tender.**

**Indemnity**

The successful organisation will be required to keep QAA fully and effectively indemnified against any loss or claim arising from the provision, or failure to provide, the services outlined in this document. Tenderers are requested to outline what insurance they have in place to meet any potential liabilities under such an indemnity, including a professional liability limit of a minimum of £5 million. The successful tenderer will be required to provide evidence of such cover.

**Conflicts of interest**

Details of any known or potential conflicts of interest, including with QAA staff, QAA Board members or with any higher education institution should be stated.

**Timetable**

It is proposed that an appointment is made according to the following timetable:

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|  | 10/07/23 | Tender opportunity advertised |
|  | 09/08/2023 @ 12pm | Tender opportunity submission deadline |
|  | 21/08/23-25/08/23 | Shortlisted tenderers invited to give a presentation |
|  | 30/08/23 | Issue of award decision notice (notification will be via email) |
|  | 01/09/23-12/09/23 | Standstill period |
|  | 02/10/23 | Contract commencement date |

###### Selection criteria and acceptance of tender

Tenders will be assessed against the following evaluation criteria and weightings:

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| **Evaluation criteria** | **Weighting** |
| 1. Pricing and value for money | 30% |
| 1. Certification | 15% |
| 1. Staffing Plan | 5% |
| 1. Customer Account Management | 10% |
| 1. Service Level Agreement | 10% |
| 1. Quality of specification | 30% |

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

\*\*Please note that due to a change to the required commencement date from 1 September 2023 to 2 October 2023, we have amended the submission deadline to **9th of August at 12pm.**