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| **Number** | **Description** |
| STA-0229 | Provision of Quality Assurance Resource ITT |

**ITT Clarifications - Questions and Responses**

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Notes** |
| 1 | 10/04/2019 | Enquiries 1 – 15 |
| 2 | 30/04/2019 | Enquiries 16 – 20 |
| 3 | 21/05/2019 | Enquiries 21 – 23 |

| **#** | **Tenderer Question** | **STA Response** |
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| 1 | I am unable to access the embedded PDF on page 21 of the Invitation to Tender, Provision of Quality Assurance resource for the Standards and Testing Agency, Contract Ref: STA-0229.  When I click on the embedded PDF, I receive a message saying: “Word cannot locate the server location for object objects”. Would you be able to supply me with a copy of it or help me with troubleshooting the problem, please? | Please ensure that you have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your device in order to access the pdf proofing exercise document.  The proofing exercise and draft contract documents are now provided separately alongside the ITT document on the gov.uk website for those unable to access the version embedded within the ITT document. These can be accessed via the following link:  <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/383049d1-9bf1-421c-b23b-8c58cb9aff03> |
| 2 | Having reviewed the ITT document, I do not appear to be able to see the embedded PDF document for proofreading in Part A, question 2. When trying to view this file, I simply get the following message: 'The server application, source file, or item cannot be found. Make sure the application is properly installed, and that it has not been deleted, moved, or renamed.'  Do I need to install something to view this file? | Please see response to Q1. |
| 3 | I have attempted to complete the application in respect of the ITT above but am unable to access the proofing exercise embedded in the application form (Part A: Quality Assurance (Mandatory Section) - Q. 2).  Would you be able to send the proofing exercise as a separate document? | Please see response to Q1. |
| 4 | I cannot access the proofing exercise and draft contract documents. Would you please be able to provide these separately? | Please see response to Q1. |
| 5 | I am one of the proofers on the existing Quality Assurance (QA) Framework. Do I need to reapply? | Yes. The existing QA framework expires on 31 July 2019 and this procurement is for a new framework for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2021. Those wishing to be considered for the new QA Framework are required to submit an application. |
| 6 | I am based in Scotland and I am able and willing to travel from time to time, but I thought I should check with you before applying: would my distance from Coventry and London be a barrier to my application?  Alternatively, would the STA perhaps consider sending out some of the work, either on paper or digitally, rather than having it completed on-site? | Due to STA security protocols, it will not be permissible to fulfil the quality assurance roles from home. Majority of the proofing activity will take place at STA offices in London or Coventry as stated in the ITT document. For on-screen assessments, some activity will occur at any of our contractors’ workplaces.  Those residing in the UK can apply to be on the QA Framework provided that they are able to travel to STA offices in Coventry or London to carry out the proofing activity. |
| 7 | We are a small editorial firm based in South India, and I wanted to check with you whether our bid would be considered (or is it meant only for those based in England?) Though we do not specifically have experience working on testing material in the UK, we have worked with US and Indian clients on similar educational material. | Please see response to Q6. |
| 8 | While the proposal is very interesting, and I do have qualifications and experience that are commensurate with it, I work from home [in Scotland], and travelling to London/Coventry on any kind of regular basis wouldn’t be an option for me. Does this exclude me from applying for the proofing roles? | Please see response to Q6. |
| 9 | I live in Ireland. Will every type of proofing role require some travel to an STA office in England, or can any of the roles be carried out remotely in their entirety? | Please see response to Q6. |
| 10 | Am I right in thinking this would mean travel to London/Coventry each time and not being able to do the work from home. | Please see response to Q6. |
| 11 | In Part C (editorial proofers), it states:  “Your response should demonstrate familiarity with the style guides for tests.”  Does this mean the DfE's style guides for National Curriculum tests, or general style guides by other clients? I would be grateful for clarification. | This means the style guides for the National Curriculum tests, though a familiarity with the style and format (ie not necessarily the guide) would be sufficient if you can demonstrate this familiarity. |
| 12 | The tender lists “Familiarity with the style guides for the tests” as one of the essential qualities of a proofer, and asks for applicants to “demonstrate familiarity with the style guides for tests”.  Does this mean that only those who have already worked with STA’s style guidelines for tests need apply, or would it be possible for you to send me a copy of the style guides so that I can familiarise myself with them? | Please see response to Q10.  Style guides are not publicly available. These are made available to appointed proofers when they undertake work for us. |
| 13 | What is the scope of work? How many hours a week, starting when and finishing when? | Please refer to section 2.4 of the ITT document for indicative figures regarding number of proofers and the number of days they are required over the two-year lifecycle of the QA framework. Work will be awarded subject to availability and number of proofers on the framework. |
| 14 | I am interested in, and have the relevant experience for, a number of the proofing roles that are available.  Do I need to complete separate application forms/bids for each of these roles, or a single application form/bid for all of these roles by completing the relevant parts of the Invitation to Tender (ITT). | You do not need to submit separate applications for each of the proofing roles you are applying for. Please complete Part A of the Bidder’s Response section (to note, Part A is mandatory) and then complete the relevant sections for the proofing roles for which you are applying. |
| 15 | What is the earliest time period for this work? As I am currently a part-time Teacher, I would be able to consider taking on these roles before August 2019. | Please see section 2.5 (Timescales) for details. As contracts for successful applicants will not commence until 1 August 2019, successful proofers on the 2019-2021 QA Framework will not be carrying out any proofing work for STA before August 2019. |
| 16 | would the work be on consecutive days, and how much notice would be given for the day(s)? | Details of specific times when the proofing takes place will be outlined closer to the to the times proofing work is required. The periods when most proofing is likely to take place is between October and May of each year.  In most situations, we would give approximately two to four weeks’ notice.  However, it is possible that you may be called upon at short notice, if there are more proofing rounds required than anticipated. |
| 17 | What are the government guidelines for travel expenses referred to in the ITT? | Government guidelines for travel expenses are set out in the draft contract document. Please refer to the appendix for the contract document. |
| 18 | I understand that you want the tender document returned in word format; I usually convert documents that need to be signed into pdfs as it isn't possible to sign with a digital signature in a word file. Is it okay to send the document in word format (unsigned) and in pdf format (signed)? Otherwise, how should we manage the signing? | Applications need to be submitted in Microsoft Word format as per the instructions contained in the ITT document. Please do not submit your application in pdf format.  A digital signature can be inserted into a Microsoft Word document by copying and pasting the digital signature into the signature box in the application.  Although we would prefer to receive signed applications, if you are unable to submit a signed copy, then please print your name in the space provided for the signature in the declaration section prior to submitting your application. |
| 19 | We wish to apply for the editorial proofers section only. We're looking at the two sections that should be completed, i.e. 'Part A: Quality Assurance (Mandatory Section)' and 'Part C: Editorial proofer'. Other than our 'familiarity with the style guides for tests' in Part C, could you provide more information about what you're looking for in each section, as both ask for details of our proofreading experience? Should we give details of our proofreading experience in Part A, and focus on our familiarity with style guides in Part C? | For section A we are looking for experience in general proof reading of final documents: work you have completed, techniques you use, documents you have proof read.  For section C we are looking specifically for editorial proof reading and checking. The specific things you are looking for as an editor and the experience you have in that field.  Please refer to question 11 for information about ‘familiarity with the style guide for the tests’ |
| 20 | I am intending to apply for the ‘fresh pair of eyes’ role for the Professional Skills Tests. The PDF proofing exercise is for KS1 Mathematics. I am happy to complete this exercise but just wanted to confirm, before I start the work, that this is the correct document for me to be proofing given that I am applying to work on the Professional Skills Tests. | This is the correct exercise. It contains a number of national curriculum test questions from the English, mathematics and science tests and is intended as a general task to check for attention to detail and quality assurance considerations. |
| 21 | The ITT documentation seems to suggest that you require teachers with experience across the primary curriculum together with experience of proofing for STA.  I am an experience primary practitioner with curriculum responsibility for English, Maths and Assessment. I am an STA approved KS2 moderator of writing and have been for four years. In my previous career as a solicitor, attention to detail and precision of documents were my stock in trade. However, I do not have previous experience of proof reading for STA only assessing STA documentation as part of the writing moderation process.  Could you confirm whether an application would be considered in such circumstances. | We do not require previous experience of proofing specific to STA. In relation to proofing, we have set out the ‘must have’ skills/experiences on page 5 of the ITT (copied and pasted below) for convenience. Some of the roles (e.g. marker proofer) do require specific prior experience with STA materials, but the vast majority do not. The first criterion about ‘experience of proof-reading’ could have been gained in a number of ways, including working on school documentation or in other professions. We have asked for expertise in reviewing assessment materials in the second bullet, but this does not have to be gained through working with our organisation.  “The successful candidates for all roles must:   * Have experience of proof reading paper-based materials and / or on-screen materials; * Have expertise in reviewing assessment materials; * Be available to review materials in various locations when required, subject to agreement with the relevant project team; * Have the capacity to meet the requirements set out in this ITT; and * Confirm that they are not working on the tests in any other capacity or if they are, they must provide additional information in the Further Information Section of this ITT.   The successful candidates for subject specialist, marker, grammar and fresh pair of eyes proofer roles must:   * Have knowledge and experience of at least one of English reading / literacy, grammar, punctuation and spelling, science and mathematics / numeracy; and * Have experience as a key stage 1 and / or key stage 2 marker in the subject of expertise, if applying as a marker proofer.”   Therefore, you can apply to be on the Quality Assurance Framework and your application would be considered. |
| 22 | In the ITT document, it states in the description of the roles, that the Fresh Pair of Eyes proofer now needs to have relevant teaching experience, which is different from previous years. I applied for and was accepted in the 2017 round as a Fresh Pair of Eyes proofer but I have editorial rather than teaching experience. Does that mean I can no longer put myself forward for the fresh pair of eyes role? | You are correct, this is a new requirement.  It is important that the Fresh Pair of Eyes proof-readers have teaching experience so that they can pick up potential issues the children could face, based on classroom practice and their understanding of how children approach the questions. The Fresh Pair of Eyes proof-readers should not have seen the test materials under review in any iteration before. |
| 23 | I was hoping you could clarify how you want the proof reading exercise sent to you? I've printed it and then hand written my comments / edits directly onto it. Is it best to then scan it in and return it attached as a PDF? | Yes, please. The PDF exercise, once completed can either be embedded back into the application itself or sent to us as a separate attachment along with your application. |