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How to do business with Northumbria University



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Introduction

This guide has been produced to assist suppliers who wish to supply Northumbria University with goods, materials, services or works and includes:

- Responsibilities for procurement within the University
- The rules that the University must comply with
- How to bid for business
- Appropriate contacts

Expenditure on goods, services and works is a significant part of the University's overall budget. It is important that procurement is undertaken effectively and efficiently. The University encourages competition and welcomes bids from new and established suppliers. Contracts are awarded on the basis of value for money and although the University cannot discriminate in favour of local companies, it is committed to encouraging and supporting local suppliers to compete for business.

About Northumbria University

Northumbria University was inaugurated in September 1992 and has quickly become one of the UK's leading learning and teaching universities. With over 30,000 students, it is one of the 20 largest universities in the UK and the largest in the North East. The University provides learning, teaching and professional development to undergraduate and postgraduate students, lifelong learners, large corporate clients and the major public services as well as to smaller organisations through 10 academic Schools.

Spend

The University has a recurrent annual expenditure of £45.5 million on supplies, works and services and has a duty to ensure that value for money is obtained through efficient and effective procurement practices.

In addition, the University has a capital programme which includes building schemes, specialist equipment, communications and related equipment. The capital budget varies each year according to available resources.

Contracts can vary from one-off purchases to periodic contracts for supplies and services that are let for a specified duration. Details of the University's current contracts can be found on our website.

Responsibilities for Procurement

The Finance Department, Procurement Services is responsible for advising on purchasing matters. It provides guidance and assistance to Schools and Services on specific purchases and arranges contracts on behalf of the University (generally in excess of £50,000). Suppliers interested in pursuing business opportunities with the University should visit the University's' electronic tendering system at www.northumbriaunitenders.org.

Further information regarding Procurement Services can be found on our website at www.northumbria.ac.uk.

Suppliers should also visit the supplier area of the NEUPC website at <http://neupc.procureweb.ac.uk/suppliers.php> where they can register and find out more information about tender opportunities with the University and the other member universities.

Advertisements

All contract opportunities in excess of £100,000 will be advertised via the University's e-tendering system located at www.northumbriaunitenders.org

Goods and service contracts valued in excess of £156,442 and works contracts over £3,927,260 are advertised in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (OJEU). These advertisements can be viewed at <http://ted.publications.eu.int>

Responding to a Tender Advertisement

In nearly all cases tenders are issued electronically via the University's e-tendering system (www.northumbriaunitenders.org). Suppliers are informed of the procedures for completing the tender and returning it. The tender document will contain the following:

- Form of Tender
- Instructions on how to complete and return the document
- Special conditions
- Specification or scope of requirements
- General terms and conditions of contract.

As the cost of administering and evaluating tenders is significant, suppliers may be required to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire to determine their suitability to be invited to tender before it is issued and the University may request information about the supplier's financial position and technical abilities. This can include information about when the company was formed, experience of providing similar goods or services, reference contact details and information regarding the supplier's finances.

Contract Award

Tenders are evaluated using pre-determined criteria. The criteria usually cover areas such as whole life costs, commercial awareness and ability to meet the requirements of the contract, etc. The full criteria will be listed in the tender document.

All tenderers are notified whether they have been successful or unsuccessful. The University always endeavours to offer unsuccessful suppliers feedback on why their tender has failed to assist them to submit improved bids next time.

Contract Compliance

All awarded contracts are monitored by the University in order to:

- Ensure satisfactory performance of the contracted supplier (Contractor) and compliance with the contract.
- Ensure resolution of any disputes arising during the contract.
- Develop relationships with suppliers with the objective of producing continual improvement of contracts.

Collaborative Procurement

As part of the Government's aim to increase efficiency across the public sector, the University collaborates with other organisations across a number of local, regional and national agreements. Best value for money can be obtained by combining requirements for goods and services and sharing professional procurement best practice.

The University is a member of the North Eastern Universities Purchasing Consortium (NEUPC). NEUPC is a Higher Education purchasing group consisting of 23 Universities who collaborate in order to combine requirements and produce regional and national contracts for goods and services.

Further information is available at

<http://neupc.procureweb.ac.uk/suppliers.php>

E-Procurement

The University is keen to encourage the development of e-procurement in order to increase efficiency, streamline procedures and reduce transaction costs for both the University and its suppliers. Purchase cards are used for low value expenditure wherever possible and suppliers are encouraged to work in partnership with the University to take full advantage of the benefits associated with the automation of the 'procure to pay' process.

The University has an electronic tendering system which enables suppliers to view contract opportunities, register an interest in a contract and receive and submit tenders online. Further information is available at www.northumbriaunitedtenders.org

Registration is FREE and only takes a couple of minutes.

Sustainability

The University spends approximately £45.5 million on external goods, works and services from a diverse range of service providers having a major impact on the community at large. A key objective of the University is to continually improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the community through its procurement activities.

Equalities and Diversity

The University strongly supports equality and diversity and actively encourages all types of businesses, including ethnic minority and small/medium enterprises (SME's) to compete for business whilst complying with the requirements of the EU Regulations, Financial Regulations and best practice guidance.

The University aims to ensure that suppliers which provide services on its behalf comply with equalities legislation and promote equality of opportunity. A questionnaire is included in all tenders requesting details on how equality and diversity issues are included in the supplier's employment practices. It also encourages contractors to observe and adhere to the principles contained within the University's Equal Opportunities Policy which can be viewed at <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/hr/policies/?view=Standard>

Ethical Procurement

In recognition of the impact the University's procurement activity has on the local, national and global economy, the University assigns great importance to corporate social responsibility and to improving the social and economic welfare of providers within its supply chains. The University achieved Fairtrade accreditation in 2009 and has developed a policy to demonstrate this commitment. This policy can be viewed at <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/estates/waste/pols/?view=Standard>

Environment

The University recognises that its activities and wider influences impact upon the environment. It is committed to full compliance with environmental legislation and strives to continuously improve its environmental performance. The University expects its suppliers to meet similar levels of environmental care and commitment and will therefore be required to provide information relating to their own environmental management particularly in relation to carbon emissions management within tender documentation.

The University's Environmental Policy can be viewed at <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/estates/waste/pols/ep/?view=Standard>

Health and Safety

Suppliers that employ five or more people must have a written safety policy. The safety policy should:

- Set out the supplier's commitment to managing risks and meeting legal duties for safety.
- Tell people in the business what their duties are for health and safety.
- Explain the steps that staff need to take to meet their duties.

Suppliers who will be directly working on the University's property will be required to provide copies of this documentation with their tender application along with supporting documentary evidence of safe working practices.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 aims to make public sector organisations, such as the University more accountable to the public, to give a better understanding of how public organisations carry out their duties and how they spend their money. The University has a duty to disclose certain information upon request held in relation to contracts unless it is considered to be exempt under the Act. Exemptions may relate to confidential information and protection of an organisation's commercial interests.

Details of the procedures for applying for an exemption from disclosure under the Act are included within individual tenders and contracts.

For more information on the Freedom of Information Act visit the Office of the Information Commissioner website at <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Complaints

The University adopts a variety of contract monitoring arrangements appropriate to the value and nature of each contract. It is hoped that complaints will be discussed and resolved through these arrangements, however, if any supplier has a complaint about unfair treatment or discrimination that cannot be resolved through normal arrangements, the complaint can be made in writing to the Procurement Manager, Finance, Procurement Services, Sutherland Building, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST

Contact Us

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