



University of the
West of England

Selling to the University of the West of England, Bristol

A Guide for Suppliers and Contractors

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Selling to Bristol UWE

A Guide for Suppliers and Contractors

About Bristol UWE

University of the West of England, Bristol (“Bristol UWE”) is one of the largest and most popular universities in the UK, employing over 3,000 staff and is now entering a most exciting phase of development. Vice-Chancellor Steve West and the Board of Governors have adopted the following vision for UWE:

'We are keen to see the University develop into a new kind of university for the 21st century, one which constantly strives for excellence in learning and teaching, [knowledge transfer](#) and the extension of educational opportunities to all who can benefit from it. The University is in good shape and has invested a massive £200m in new facilities including a [new student village and sports hall](#). However, the landscape of higher education is changing rapidly and we must be increasingly adaptable and innovative to flourish in a very competitive environment. Our focus will be on the region we serve, but our horizons and our standards of excellence will be global. We share the ambitions of our region and we want to play a strong role in the region's economic and cultural success.'

Bristol UWE has a wide range of academically rigorous and mainly vocationally-oriented taught and research degrees with around 27,000 full and part-time students. UWE's overall research income has more than doubled in recent years, much of this research activity taking place in 33 research centres and conducted in liaison with external agencies, companies, organisations and other academic institutions. UWE's history goes back as far as 1595. The University itself was formed in 1992 when Bristol Polytechnic was given university status.

In a bold step the University has secured its long term development and purchased from its neighbour HP the majority of their adjoining land interests – some 70 acres including the South-West's largest exhibition and conference centre. The purchase will nearly double the size of its main Frenchay Campus, and allow the creation of one of the largest modern University Campuses in the UK. The move will enable UWE Bristol to enhance the student experience and provide an enterprise hub for employers in the region.

Whether you call it procurement, purchasing, contracting, tendering or buying we spend approximately £53 million a year on obtaining a vast range of suppliers, works and services from the external market.

About this Guide

Naturally many organisations will want to sell their services and supplies to the University, so we have put together this guide to assist suppliers and contractors who wish to supply Bristol UWE with goods and services, by:

- Outlining the rules that Bristol UWE must follow
- Explaining where to find details of opportunities to supply the University
- Explaining how to tender for the University's business
- Explaining what is expected of you when undertaking work for us

How is procurement organised?

Bristol UWE has a Purchasing Team responsible for developing the University's procurement strategy, policy, good practice and procedures to secure best value-for-money procurement. It is also responsible for framework contracts for the majority of supplies¹, which are commonly used across the University.

Responsibility for more specialist service² and work³ procurements rests with individual service departments and faculties that have specific knowledge regarding the requirements.

These departments are:

- Human Resources
- Finance
- IT Services
- Student Services
- Academic Registry
- Admissions & International Recruitment
- Library Services
- Facilities including Estates, Security, Catering, Timetabling, Centre for Sport, Cleaning and Student Accommodation
- Chaplaincy
- Marketing and Communications
- Centre of Performing Arts
- Research, Business & Innovation

The University is made up of four Faculties spread between four main campus sites. These are the Faculties of Arts, Creative Industries and Education, Environment and Technology, Health and Applied Sciences and Business and Law.

¹ *Contracts for the purchase of goods, e.g. office stationery, furniture, laboratory supplies- often from SUPC or sector contracts.*

² *Includes nearly all services which could be commissioned by public sector organisations, e.g. window cleaning, catering, grounds maintenance, etc.*

³ *Contracts involving building and civil engineering works, e.g. housing repairs, highways maintenance, etc.*

Contracts let by the University take a number of forms, including:

Framework Agreements: An agreement where terms and conditions are agreed with the provider for certain services, supplies or works which allows call-offs to be made without obligation to the supplier.

One-off Contracts: These contracts meet specific needs/individual requirements.

Approved Supplier Lists: Some departments maintain approved lists of suppliers who are considered able to carry out the work to the necessary standards and may be invited to tender for specific work or services. The standing lists are used to draw up shortlists of suppliers to be invited to tender for specific contracts as and when they arise. Being accepted on a standing list does not guarantee the award of contracts. Standing Lists are only used below the EU threshold, and in the main, are for works contracts.

Term Tenders: These are tenders accepted from a contractor, to carry out repetitive tasks for a period of time. Work is then issued to these contractors as and when it is available. Any amount or value of work cannot be guaranteed. These are usually for planned and reactive maintenance works.

Consortiums: Different procurement authorities can join together to form a Consortium to create tenders as a group. This can provide better value for money as larger quantities can be purchased. Bristol UWE is a member of the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) and also, as a public body, has access to contracts arranged by the Government Procurement Service (formerly Buying Solutions and the Office of Government Commerce).

Concessions: An arrangement whereby the University grants the contractor the right to operate a contract, within stipulated parameters and to benefit from the profit made from the operation, for example laundry equipment.

These tenders will be advertised via the following means as appropriate:

- UWE Purchasing Web Pages (<http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/purchasing/welcome/>)
- In-Tend (<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/he.aspx/Home>)
- Contracts Finder (<http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk>)
- Tenders Electronic Daily (<http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do> - for supply of goods and services expected to exceed the EU thresholds)

What Rules & Regulations must be followed?

As a public body, there are regulations which the University has to follow when procuring supplies, works and services. It is vital that if you wish to contract with Bristol UWE you are fully aware of the rules and regulations, which govern the way we operate.

The following table summarises the rules that must be followed, depending on the value of the purchase:

Value of supply	Process	Advertising
£5,000 - £30,000	A minimum of 3 quotations/tenders will be invited	
£30,000 - £172,514	A minimum of 4 tenders will usually be invited.	Adverts are discretionary and may be published on the UWE Purchasing website, In-Tend and Contracts Finder. They may also be placed in other appropriate media, which may include local and national newspapers and relevant trade journals.
Above £172,514 Part A services	EU Procurement Directives apply (See the following section: 'What are EU Procurement Directives?')	Adverts will be placed in Official Journal of the European Union, and any other appropriate media to ensure competition and sufficient coverage, including the UWE purchasing website, Contracts Finder and In-Tend.
Above £172,514 Part B services	EU Procurement Directives apply (See the following section: 'What are EU Procurement Directives?')	Advertising is web-based with a voluntary advert that may be published on Contracts Finder and In-Tend.

The European Public Procurement Directives are currently being revised and new directives are expected to take effect in the UK by the middle of 2014.

What are EU Procurement Directives?

We have a legal requirement to comply with the EU Procurement Directives, which govern the way in which public sector procurement is conducted for contracts over certain specified thresholds. The directives and regulations require the University to follow detailed procedures for all procurements above these financial thresholds.

The thresholds that apply to UWE for 2014 / 2015 are:

Services	Supplies	Works
£172,514	£172,514	£4,322,012
€207,000	€207,000	€5,186,000

Note: the thresholds are reviewed every 2 years. The next review is due in January 2016.

A new version of the EU Public Procurement Directive is expected to be enacted into UK law in the latter half of 2014. Under the current Directive, Bristol UWE can conduct its procurement using one of three processes:

Open – any organisation can express an interest and request tender documents.

Restricted – a two-stage process. Organisations expressing an interest undergo an initial pre-qualification assessment. Only the most suitable applicants are invited to tender. This is by far the most common process.

Negotiated – organisations expressing an interest undergo an initial pre-qualification assessment. The University, under limited circumstances, will then negotiate with one or two suitable contractors.

Competitive Dialogue – if the tender is very complex or an overall pricing structure cannot be created, it may be necessary to discuss the tender bid with suppliers. All such discussions are conducted on the basis of transparency and fairness to all parties to ensure an unbiased tender response.

Where procurements exceed the above thresholds and therefore come within the scope of EU Procurement directives, we must follow these basic requirements:

- Publish a Prior Information Notice (PIN)⁴: this stage is optional;
- Decide which of the processes needs to be used;
- Publish a Tender Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) to give all EU suppliers an equal opportunity to tender;
- Invite tenders according to the procedure being used (open, restricted, negotiated etc.), taking account of the minimum timescales imposed, to ensure that reasonable time is given to respond to adverts and prepare submissions;
- Select a suitable contractor using the criteria published in the Tender Notice;
- Place a Contract Award Notice in OJEU.

⁴ Advises potential contractors of any forthcoming contracts so that they have the opportunity to prepare resources and tenders. This may be optional depending on the value of the contract.

Procurement Process: Shortlist Stage

How do I find out about opportunities?

Potential suppliers should check local and national newspapers and trade journals for advertisements of contracts and tenders on a regular basis. Details of forthcoming contracts will also appear on In-Tend (<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/he/asp/Home>) and on our website www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/purchasing along with a tender plan. Contact can then be made with the Purchasing team to obtain more specific details of the contract. We may also use Contracts Finder: www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk.

Contracts over EU thresholds are advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). Potential contractors/suppliers should review the official EU website, <http://ted.publications.eu.int/official>, regularly to obtain details of potential forthcoming opportunities.

How do I apply for contracts?

The contract notice or advertisement will advise contractors/suppliers of the procedure to be followed for that particular contract. In the majority of cases potential tenderers will be sent a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ), which will be used to assess their suitability to supply the University and their ability to satisfy the contract. It is essential that you supply all of the information requested and respond by the due date.

What information do I need to provide?

In a pre-qualification questionnaire you will be asked to provide basic details about your organisation to verify that it can be identified as a legitimate trading organisation, that it has acceptable levels of economic and financial standing, and that it promotes good practice in areas of equal opportunities, protecting the environment and health and safety.

Financial Information - suppliers will be asked for certain financial information as we need to be sure that you can meet the requirement for the life of the contract.

Experience and Technical Ability - We will ask for further information to assess whether a supplier has the relevant experience, resources and technical ability to carry out the categories of work and to provide the type and quality of service required. In most cases it is necessary to provide details of similar contracts held over recent years and to provide contact details of referees. Some further questions may be asked tailored to the needs of the individual contracts.

Equal Opportunities - Bristol UWE is committed to eliminating inequalities in all functions, including procurement. The University strives to ensure that its services are equally accessible and appropriate to the differing needs of all community sectors, regardless of race, gender, marital status, disability, age or sexuality. This section will ask how your company includes equality provisions in its employment and service provision. UWE participates in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index scheme.

Organisation - We will ask about your organisational structure to establish whether you have the appropriate resources to fulfil the contract.

Sustainability – As a buyer of over £53 million worth of goods and services each year, our purchasing decisions may have a substantial impact on the environment and the local economy. Bristol UWE is committed to sustainability and has corporately adopted a number of action plans and policy to address the issues surrounding sustainable procurement, particularly in the areas of environmental and resource protection, ethical and fairly traded supply chains and SME and local economic development. The University expects its contractors and suppliers to meet a similar level of commitment where appropriate and will seek information to determine that commitment from potential suppliers.

Insurance - You are also asked to provide assurances regarding insurance cover, as Bristol UWE has a responsibility to ensure that organisations with which it contracts carry any statutory insurance cover. The minimum requirement is normally £5,000,000 public / employers liability insurance although this may be reviewed for certain tenders.

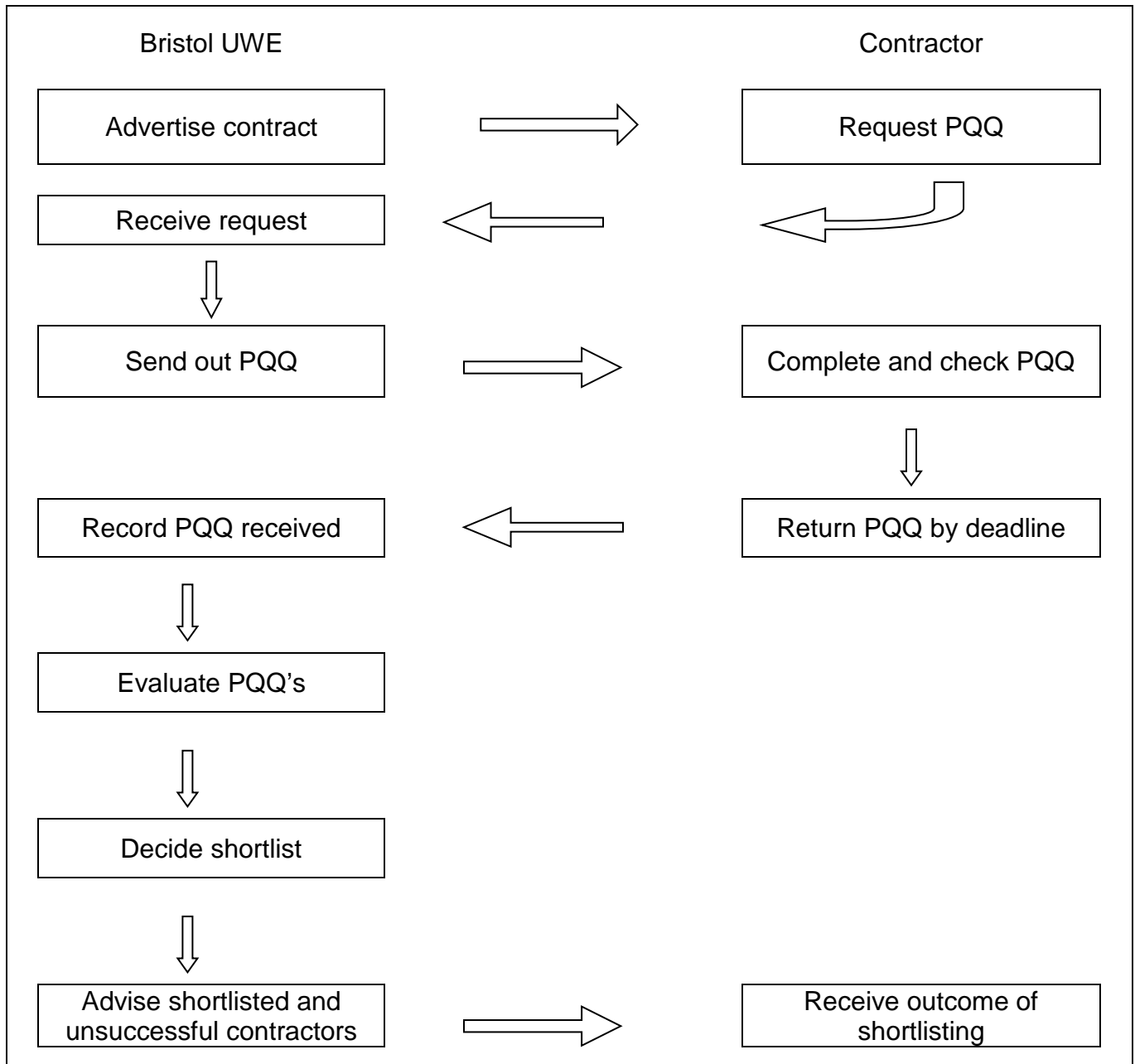
Health and Safety – Bristol UWE is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees, service users and those affected by its operations. Suppliers and contractors can play a key role in achieving this. Before carrying out work for the University information will be sought concerning tenderers' safety policies and operational safety procedures. You will be expected to know how to manage health and safety in your area of work and to accept responsibility for it.

It is essential that pre-tender documentation is returned by the date and time stipulated. Documentation received after the deadline will remain unopened.

A sample PQQ can be found on our website along with guidelines on how to complete the document.

<http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/purchasing/documents/Completing%20a%20PQQ.doc>

Shortlist Stage



Procurement Process: Tender Stage

What if I am invited to tender?

Applicants who have been shortlisted after evaluation of the PQQ will receive a set of tender documents, which will consist of all or some of the following:

Letter of invitation – this advises when and where tenders should be submitted.

Instructions to tenderers – provides guidance for completing tender documentation.

Form of Tender – the form declares that the submitted tender has followed the legal guidelines.

Instructions – informs you how the tender should be completed and the rules which the University requires its suppliers to comply with.

Specification – sets out what needs to be achieved and includes policies, procedures and guidelines that need to be followed as well as the tender evaluation criteria, which advises how the tender submission will be evaluated and the contract awarded. Tenderers are expected to tender on the basis of this specification, which will include performance targets or criteria to be met in delivering the services, supplies or works.

Pricing Schedule – the document where you enter all your prices.

Alternative Proposals – this is where you can record any proposal you wish to make that differs from the specification.

Certificate of Bona Fide Tendering – the form states that the submission is a bona fide tender.

Non-compliance/qualification statement – a form to record any areas in which the tender is not compliant with the instructions, specification or terms and conditions.

Supplier Appraisal questionnaire – When a PQQ has not been completed a supplier appraisal form will be required. It requests details about the company to give Bristol UWE more background information.

Equality and Diversity Questionnaire – determines if suppliers meet the requirements of the University's Equality policies.

Terms & Conditions – defines how Bristol UWE will let the contract, the rules tenderers must comply with and the relationship between the University and the selected contractor.

WEEE Regulations – If it is applicable to the purchase, the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations will be included.



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Tender return label – states the time and date by which tenders must be received.

Any additional supporting information – such as Bristol UWE’s policies that tenderers are expected to follow.

Tenders must be returned by the date given as any tenders received after the deadline will be remain unopened. This is because all tender documents must be opened at the same time in order to ensure a fair process.

What are the University's expectations of suppliers and contractors?

Bristol UWE needs to ensure that it offers value-for-money procurement. We therefore expect excellent performance from contractors/suppliers, demonstrated through:

Value for money - not only best price, but also best administration costs and best costs related to quality. Suppliers should consider the total, whole life costs of supply when putting together their tenders.

Quality - contractors/suppliers are expected to provide services, supplies and works to an appropriate standard of quality, to meet the needs set out in the specification.

Adherence to University policies and protocols - we are committed to delivering our services, with consideration for a number of issues including sustainability, equalities, health and safety, and look for suppliers/contractors who are committed to helping us achieve our aims in these respects.

Integrity - honesty is expected in all dealings between the University and its contractors in addition to other relevant parties. Under the [Bribery Act](#) in addition to being a criminal offence to give or offer any gift, inducement or reward to an employee of a public body there will also be a new corporate offence of failing to prevent bribery. To that end, it is UWE's policy not to accept inducements, gifts or hospitality. Tenderers should note that they risk being excluded from the procurement process for failing to observe this requirement.

Innovation - suppliers are encouraged to be innovative and suggest new ideas to add value, continuously striving to improve their performance.

Communication - suppliers are expected to maintain good communications with the University throughout the contract and will be expected to attend regular contract review meetings.

How else might I be evaluated?

The tender documents may include Method Statements, Risk Assessments and/or Case Studies, which are used to determine how suppliers would manage the service or deal with particular issues. In responding to method statements, risk assessments and case studies suppliers are expected to show what methods and procedures they propose to use in undertaking the work, showing initiative and innovation in delivering the service.

At any time during the tender process you may be invited to give a presentation or attend an interview as part of your submission. The University will often conduct site visits to see first hand how tenderers organise their work.

In many cases a pre-tender meeting will also be held to discuss the tender and clarify any issues raised from the tender documents.

How is the contract awarded?

Tender evaluation is always carried out in a comprehensive, equitable, auditable and transparent manner. To ensure fairness the evaluation criteria and method will be clearly defined in the tender documents.

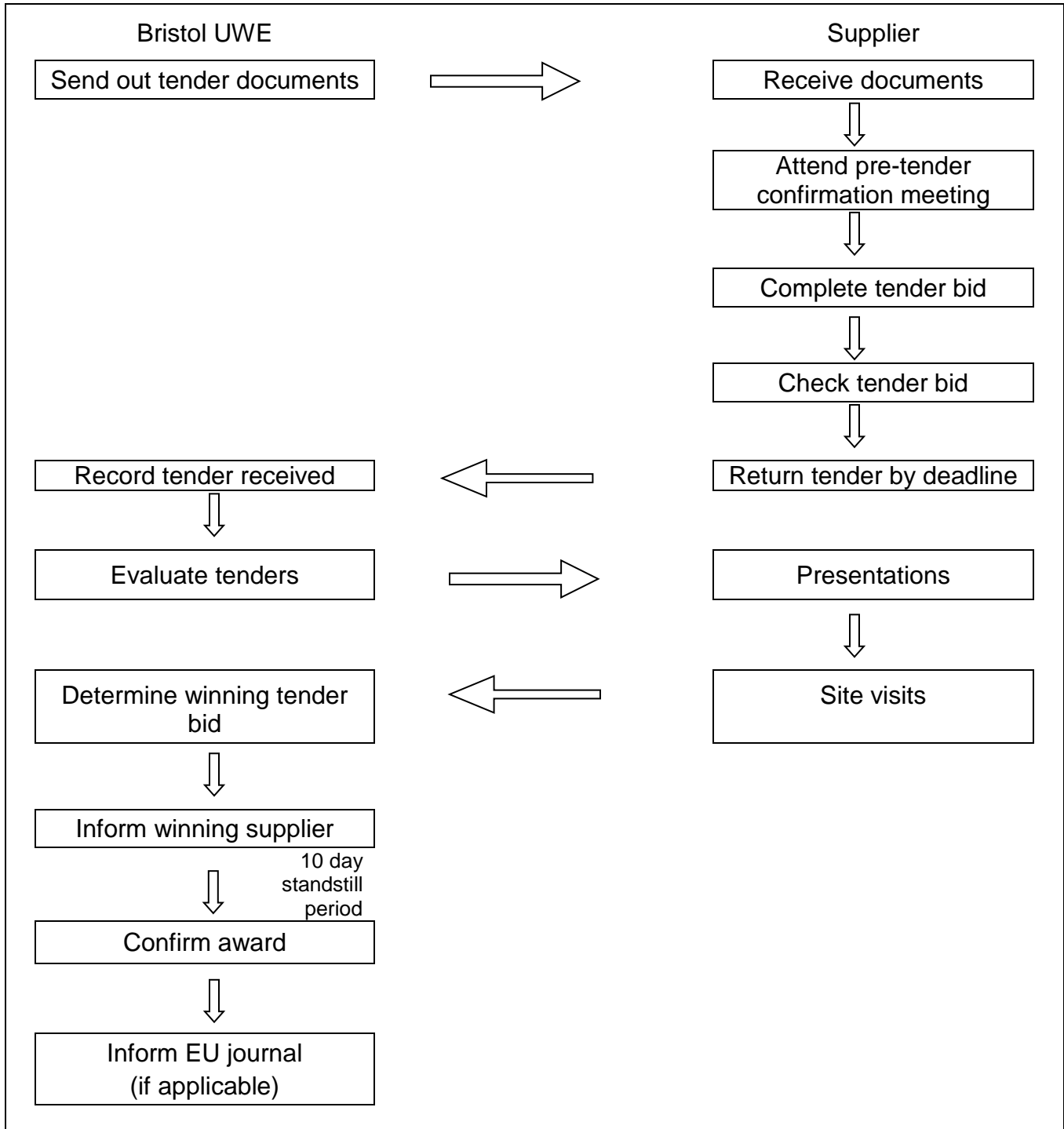
The University must be sure that in selecting a supplier/contractor it is getting value for money and the services will be delivered effectively. Evaluation is therefore based on two key criteria – how the tender proposes to deliver the contract (quality) and the cost of the contract (price). The University is looking for the best balance of quality and price, not just the lowest price. In most cases additional criteria will also be used in evaluating tenderers.

Contracts are awarded to the provider who is considered to offer best value-for-money, having regard to price, quality and best value – sometimes referred to as “most economically advantageous tender” and to be best able to meet the University’s specification. Evaluation of the most economically advantageous tender can incorporate a number of factors including:

- Financial viability of the tender
- Quality issues
- Technical merit
- After sales service
- Delivery date
- Technical back-up
- Experience
- Competence
- Policy issues such as equality & sustainability

The criteria to be used in any particular instance will be listed in the tender documents. The weightings of the criteria may also be given. The tender stage is summarised in the flow chart on the following page.

Tender Stage



Can I get some feedback?

If your tender is unsuccessful you should ask for feedback from the Purchasing team. Within the limits of confidentiality, we can provide tenderers with feedback on which aspects of their bid were strongest and which were weakest, along with advice on improving and developing for the future.

Under the EU directives you are legally entitled to request this feedback from us. Being unsuccessful in one contract does not mean you will be unsuccessful in future. You should use the feedback to help you improve for upcoming opportunities.

How are contracts monitored?

You will be expected to provide the service in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation and your proposals to carry out the contract. In order to ensure that we are continually providing value for money services to our community, suppliers and contractors working for the University are regularly monitored to assess their compliance with predefined performance criteria. The contract conditions are strictly applied, and explanations sought if a contractor fails to perform to the levels required.

Is Bristol UWE using e-Procurement?

Bristol UWE is committed to developing e-procurement as a major tool in delivering its procurement strategy. From tendering for contracts to placing orders, the application of e-procurement can achieve efficiency savings for both the University and their suppliers. Paper transactions will, in time, be replaced by e-procurement, providing a streamlined process and reduced transaction costs.

We are actively developing e-procurement through the use of procurement cards which are used like traditional credit cards to purchase ad-hoc supplies, and have developed of an on-line order requisitioning system.

Where can I get further information?

If you are seeking information regarding a specific contract please use the contact details provided in the advert/contract notice and tendering details.

General information on the tendering process and procurement at Bristol UWE can be obtained from The Purchasing Team, University of the West of England, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QY, or by e-mail: purchasing@uwe.ac.uk. The Head of Procurement is Helen Baker, tel. 0117 328 2239, fax 0117 328 3985, e-mail Helen.baker@uwe.ac.uk .

Should you have any comments or feedback on this guide we would be happy to hear from you, as we are always looking to develop the advice, guidance and support we offer to potential contractors. Please contact us by e-mailing purchasing@uwe.ac.uk