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Tender

Embedded International Pathways College

University of Ulster

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-001716

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04d441

Published 17 January 2025, 2:06pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

University of Ulster

Block X Room X031, Cromore Road

Coleraine

BT52 1SA

Email

p.doherty@ulster.ac.uk

Telephone

+44 2870124227

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKN - Northern Ireland

Internet address(es)

Main address

www.ulster.ac.uk

I.3) Communication

The procurement documents are available for unrestricted and full direct access, free of charge, at

<https://e-sourcingni.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml>

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted electronically via

<https://e-sourcingni.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml>

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted to the above-mentioned address

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Education

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Embedded International Pathways College

Reference number

project_28458

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 80000000 - Education and training services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

Ulster University wishes to enter into a contractual arrangement with an experienced third party provider to establish an embedded International Pathway College ("IPC") on its Belfast campus to deliver educational study programmes to international students to equip them with the skills/qualifications required to enrol on an undergraduate or postgraduate course at Ulster University. This presents an exciting opportunity for a suitably experienced and innovative partner to enter into a contractual agreement with Ulster University to realise its ambitions for the IPC. The partner will be responsible for the operational running of the IPC, delivering programmes, promoting the college, recruitment of international students, administration of admissions and providing teaching services.

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £66,000,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79610000 - Placement services of personnel

- 80300000 - Higher education services
- 80400000 - Adult and other education services
- 80490000 - Operation of an educational centre
- 80500000 - Training services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN - Northern Ireland

Main site or place of performance

Ulster University's Belfast Campus

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Ulster University wishes to enter into a contractual arrangement with an experienced third party provider to establish an embedded International Pathway College ("IPC") on its Belfast campus to deliver educational study programmes to international students to equip them with the skills/qualifications required to enrol on an undergraduate or postgraduate course at Ulster University. This presents an exciting opportunity for a suitably experienced and innovative partner to enter into a contractual agreement with Ulster University to realise its ambitions for the IPC. The partner will be responsible for the operational running of the IPC, delivering programmes, promoting the college, recruitment of international students, administration of admissions and providing teaching services.

The IPC will support the University's ambition to significantly increase the number of international students. To achieve this vision, it is envisaged that the IPC will be established in partnership with a private provider; be physically embedded in Ulster University's Belfast campus; and be established such that the IPC students will have appropriate rights and access to the University's facilities such as library, laboratories, studios, classrooms and student accommodation.

It is intended that the relationship will facilitate a successful collaboration between the two entities, creating a true partnership with the shared ambition of maximising the success of the IPC. To realise this, the parties will enter into a contractual arrangement, the exact terms of which it is anticipated may form part of any negotiations undertaken during the procurement process.

The key objective of this competition is to run a competitive procurement process for the University to select a private partner with whom it can enter into the contractual arrangement to set up and run an IPC on the Belfast campus. The exact programmes to

be provided at the IPC will be developed by the successful tenderer in collaboration with the University, driven by market demand and business intelligence. It is anticipated, however, that the IPC will provide Foundation Year, International Year One and Pre-Masters programs leading to further study at the University on undergraduate degree and master's programmes in a range of disciplines across the four faculties: (a) Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; (b) Business; (c) Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment; and (d) Life and Health Sciences.

It is anticipated that the first cohort of students will be recruited for September 2026 intake.

The appointed partner will contribute expertise in successfully delivering embedded colleges for other further education institutions and the drive, determination and innovation to ensure that the IPC in Belfast is marketed and promoted successfully and effectively to the global student market, and fully aligns with Ulster University's internationalisation priorities.

The University will contribute the teaching and administrative facilities required to operate the IPC; support for the partner to maximise the IPC success; and seeking to create a true partnership to optimise benefits for both parties.

The University has estimated the potential value of the opportunity as being in the range of £58 - £66 million over the entire potential duration of the contractual arrangement. However, the University does not provide any commitment or guarantee in that regard. The potential value of the opportunity will be heavily dependent on the partner's contribution to the IPC and in particular, its recruitment efforts. A copy of the procurement pack which provides further information about this opportunity is available for download via the Portal.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Price is not the only award criterion and all criteria are stated only in the procurement documents

II.2.6) Estimated value

Value excluding VAT: £66,000,000

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

240

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.9) Information about the limits on the number of candidates to be invited

Maximum number: 3

Objective criteria for choosing the limited number of candidates:

As set out in the PQQ Documentation

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

The estimated total contract value stated above in Section II.2.6 reflects the maximum possible contract period of 240 months, but the contractual arrangement will comprise an initial term of 120 months, which period shall commence on the date on which the first cohort of students commence their courses at the College, followed by such number of extensions (of not less than 12 months' duration each) at the option of the University as the University requires, subject to the initial term and all extensions not exceeding in aggregate a period 240 months.

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

Section III. Legal, economic, financial and technical information

III.1) Conditions for participation

III.1.1) Suitability to pursue the professional activity, including requirements relating to enrolment on professional or trade registers

List and brief description of conditions

As stated in the procurement documents.

III.1.2) Economic and financial standing

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

III.1.3) Technical and professional ability

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Competitive procedure with negotiation

IV.1.4) Information about reduction of the number of solutions or tenders during negotiation or dialogue

Recourse to staged procedure to gradually reduce the number of solutions to be discussed or tenders to be negotiated

IV.1.5) Information about negotiation

The contracting authority reserves the right to award the contract on the basis of the initial tenders without conducting negotiations

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate

Date

19 February 2025

Local time

3:00pm

IV.2.4) Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted

English

IV.2.6) Minimum time frame during which the tenderer must maintain the tender

Duration in months: 9 (from the date stated for receipt of tender)

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: No

VI.3) Additional information

The University reserves the right to award the contractual arrangement following submission of initial tender responses and also reserves the right to down-select tenderers following submission of initial tenders, any refined or detailed tenders requested by the University and/or after each round of negotiations. For the avoidance of doubt, final tenders will not be subject to any negotiation with the University (however, they may be subject to clarification, if required at the University's absolute discretion). Under no circumstances will the University or its advisors be liable for any costs or expenses incurred by Economic Operators, their funders and/or their respective advisors arising directly or indirectly from the procurement process, their participation in or termination thereof, including, without limitation, preparation and submission of responses, as a result of any changes or adjustments made to the procurement documents or the exclusion/disqualification of an Economic Operator. Only the express terms of the contractual documents, if and when executed shall have any contractual effect in connection with the matters to which this procurement process relates. Neither the issue of the procurement documents, nor any of the information presented in them, should be regarded as a commitment or representation on the part of the University (or any other person) to enter into a contractual arrangement. Nothing in the procurement documents should be interpreted as a commitment by the University to award a contractual arrangement to an Economic Operator as a result of this procurement process, nor to accept any tender. No legally binding contract shall arise (and a tenderer shall have no legitimate expectation that a contract shall be entered into) until such time as entry into the contractual arrangement has been confirmed by the University. As such, the University reserves the right to cancel, withdraw or amend the procurement process at any stage.

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland

Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street

Belfast

BT1 3JY

Country

United Kingdom

VI.4.3) Review procedure

Precise information on deadline(s) for review procedures

The University will incorporate a standstill period at the point information on the award of the contract is communicated to tenderers. The standstill period, which will be for a minimum of 10 calendar days, provides time for unsuccessful tenderers to challenge the award decision before the contract is entered into. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) provide for aggrieved parties who have been harmed or are at risk of harm by a breach of the rules to take action in the High Court (Northern Ireland).