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Planning

Research Ethics Management System

ASTON UNIVERSITY

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-025538

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-051ff4 ([view related notices](#))

Published 23 May 2025, 9:13am

Scope

Reference

1109

Description

Aston University is seeking proposals to provide a Research Ethics Management System.

The Research Integrity Office (RIO) are responsible for ethics evaluation of research projects across the following stakeholder groups:

- Research active staff.
- Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs).
- UG/PG taught students.

Ethics management consists of entirely manual processes involving email, MS Word, and MS Excel, delivered by three people.

The RIO is a small team for the workload, smaller than equivalent teams at other institutions. Whilst the team has grown, so has the complexity and volume of their workload. With the workload demand of the current process, there are not enough reviewers in the Colleges.

Total value (estimated)

- £215,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 31 July 2025 to 30 July 2028
- Possible extension to 30 July 2030
- 5 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 72260000 - Software-related services

Contract locations

- UKG31 - Birmingham
-

Engagement

Engagement deadline

31 March 2025

The engagement was carried out before this notice was published.

Engagement process description

As part of the Discovery Phase for this project, the Research Integrity Office (RIO) conducted a series of informal market engagement discussions with several prospective suppliers. These conversations were instrumental in shaping the project's scope, refining requirements, and informing the budget for the next stages of work.

This early engagement supported the development of the internal business case by:

Enhancing understanding of the supplier landscape;

Gaining insight into indicative pricing models; and

Identifying potential delivery approaches aligned with sector best practices.

In addition to supplier engagement, the RIO undertook desktop research and consulted with peer institutions in the Higher Education sector that currently use research ethics management systems. These activities provided valuable context on system capabilities, implementation challenges, and user experiences.

The primary objectives of this engagement were to:

Assess the feasibility of Aston University's requirements;

Identify potential constraints and opportunities in the market; and

Establish a realistic understanding of the investment required for a fit-for-purpose system that aligns with the University's strategic objectives.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Contracting authority

ASTON UNIVERSITY

- Companies House: RC000904
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PTLB-7496-TPTR

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Region: UKG31 - Birmingham

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government