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Award

Transparency Notice for the Supply and Installation of a HIGH RESOLUTION FOURIER TRANSFORM BENCH-TOP LIQUID CHROMATROGRAPHY-ORBITRAP MASS SPECTROMETER (THERMO ORBITRAP EXPLORIS 240) to the University of Birmingham University of Birmingham Project Reference: SC10850/25

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

UK5: Transparency notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-081686

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05f32f ([view related notices](#))

Published 10 December 2025, 4:38pm

Scope

Reference

SC10850/25

Description

Total cost excluding VAT: £356,548.16

The equipment (Thermo Orbitrap Exploris 240) that we are requesting will permit us to detect changes in multiple metabolic pathways in a single analytical run as it combines the high mass resolution observed in 'multi-reflecting time of flight' instruments with increased sensitivity giving the ability to detect and gain additional molecular information on high numbers of metabolites present in low abundance as found in with 'triple

quadrupole' instruments. Importantly for us (Metabolic Tracer Analysis Core (MTAC)), the high mass resolution will also allow us to deconvolute changes in mass due to incorporation of different stable isotopes (e.g. ^{15}N , ^{13}C , ^2H), giving us the ability to examine nutrient use in more complex ways.

This model is the only such instrument - the 'Orbitrap' part of the mass spectrometer is what provides this capability highlighted above, and Thermo Electron Manufacturing Limited trading as Thermo Fisher Scientific hold the patent for this technology. It includes nitrogen generator with high purity collision gas module, biocompatible liquid chromatography system, and full system integration with proprietary Thermo software (including tracing analysis software), all required to maintain the scientific edge of our metabolic research.

Contract 1. Supply and Installation of a HIGH RESOLUTION FOURIER TRANSFORM BENCH-TOP LIQUID CHROMATOGRAPHY-ORBITRAP MASS SPECTROMETER (THERMO ORBITRAP EXPLORIS 240) to the University of Birmingham University of Birmingham Project Reference: SC10850/25

Supplier

- Thermo Electron Manufacturing Limited

Contract value

- £356,548 excluding VAT
- £477,240 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Earliest date the contract will be signed

22 December 2025

Contract dates (estimated)

- 22 December 2025 to 27 March 2026
- 3 months, 6 days

Main procurement category

Goods

CPV classifications

- 38433100 - Mass spectrometer

Other information

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Direct award

Direct award justification

Single supplier - technical reasons

This was previously Tendered and only one response was received which was from the supplier we are directly awarding to.

This procurement is being undertaken via a single-source route due to the unique technical capabilities of the Thermo Orbitrap Exploris 240 and the exclusive rights held by its manufacturer; Thermo Fisher Scientific is the only company globally that offers a fully integrated system combining:

- Sensitivity: tSIM: 200 fg Reserpine on column yields S/N 250:1 RMS or better
- Mass Resolution: 240,000 (FWHM) at m/z 200 for all scan modes and both polarities
- Mass Accuracy:
- Dynamic Range: >5,000:1 within one spectrum (single transient acquisition)
- Polarity Switching: one cycle consisting of acquiring one full scan in positive mode and one full scan in negative mode at a rate of 1.4 Hz
- Various Scan Functions: Full Scan, Data Independent Acquisition, All-Ion-Fragmentation, Multiplexed SIM (up to 20 simultaneously detected precursor ions)
- Advanced Functions: Automatic Gain Control (AGC) with predictive AGC
- Application Specific Software: Thermo Scientific TraceFinder (for quantitative tracing analysis), Thermo Scientific Compound Discoverer, and AcquireX Intelligent Data Acquisition Workflow
- General: High resolution Fourier transform bench-top liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LC-MS) system with an MS footprint of 71 x 77 x 54 cm (h x d x w).

No other commercially available instrument can provide the above whilst adhering to the small footprint (bench-top) size and the required high resolution, mass accuracy, and sensitivity.

Given the patented, proprietary nature of this technology and the absence of any technically equivalent alternative on the market, the procurement of the Thermo Orbitrap Exploris 240 from Thermo Scientific constitutes a justified sole-source purchase. The University confirms that no other supplier can meet the required functional specifications and integrated features necessary for our research objectives.

Supplier

Thermo Electron Manufacturing Limited

- Companies House: 441506
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PQNM-6125-XPWL

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WA14 2DT

United Kingdom

Email: tenders.cmd.hemel@thermofisher.com

Website: <https://corporate.thermofisher.com>

Region: UKD34 - Greater Manchester South West

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

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Birmingham Project Reference: SC10850/25

Contracting authority

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

- Companies House: RC000645
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PHCQ-3464-LVTM

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Birmingham

B15 2TT

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Region: UKG31 - Birmingham

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government