

16/06/2025

**ROYAL CENTRAL**

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA • UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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# INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT)

**Provision of External Audit Services at  
The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama**

**INVITATION TO TENDER**

16/06/2025

Dear Potential Bidder,

**INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT) for the Provision of External Audit Services at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (Central)**

- 1) Your organisation and others are invited to bid for the provision of External Audit Services (the Services) at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (Central) to the specifications outlined in this ITT. Throughout this ITT we use 'Bidder' to mean the organisation responding to this ITT with a proposal for the Services, and 'Supplier' shall mean the organisation selected by Central to provide the Services in accordance with the provisions of this ITT.
- 2) Please read the instructions on the process carefully. Failure to comply with them may invalidate your submission, which must comply with the following timeline:

Central issues these competition documents	16 June 2025
Last date for clarifications	26 June 2025
Submission of completed tender documents	12 noon on 30 June 2025
Inform successful / unsuccessful Bidders	2 July 2025
Presentations (online via MS Teams)	7 July 2025
Formally award contract (subject to Board ratification on 14 July 2025)	11 July 2025
Contract commencement date	1 August 2025

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Chan (Chair of Audit Committee) and Kayley Darby-Philpotts (Vice Principal, Governance and Legal Services)

## PART 1: INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION ON THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

These instructions ensure that all submissions are given equal and fair consideration. Therefore, it is important that you provide all the information requested in the format and order specified.

If you have any doubts about what is required or have difficulty providing the requested information, please contact Kayley Darby-Philpotts, Vice Principal, Governance and Legal ([Kayley.darby-philpotts@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:Kayley.darby-philpotts@cssd.ac.uk)) at The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama.

Pre-submission negotiations are not allowed.

### 1. Contract Period

- 1.1. The successful supplier shall be prepared to commence the service on the **1 August 2025**, this being the commencement date referred to in the contract conditions of the contract documentation. The service contract will be granted for a term of 3 years with an annual re-appointment at each Annual General Meeting of Central held in July of each calendar year on the same terms and conditions for the contract period. For the avoidance of doubt, this re-appointment is on the basis of proper and acceptable performance of the Services in the proceeding contract year. There is an opportunity to extend for a further 2 years after the initial 3 year contract period, depending on performance and mutual agreement of the parties. Thereafter there will be a fresh tender exercise.

### 2. Incomplete submissions

- 2.1. Submissions may be rejected if the information asked for is not given in the format requested and by the published deadline.

### 3. Submissions and tender process

- 3.1. Submissions should be e-mailed to [Kayley.darby-philpotts@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:Kayley.darby-philpotts@cssd.ac.uk). Submissions must be received by **12 noon on Monday 30 June 2025**.
- 3.2. Submissions must be submitted in accordance with the following instructions [and any [CPC Framework](#) instructions]. Any submission not complying fully with any of the instructions in this document may be rejected by Central, whose decision will be final.
- 3.3. Bidders must complete a Pricing Schedule (Excel spreadsheet format), a Tender Response Form (word document format) and a Conflict of Interest Declaration Form (word document format). All prices must be stated in pounds sterling and exclusive of VAT.
- 3.4. During the tender and evaluation period, Central reserves the right to seek clarification from any or all bidders to assist in its consideration of any or all submissions. Responses to clarification requests may be circulated to all bidders.
- 3.5. Central may issue supplementary documentation at any time or amend any aspect of the ITT.
- 3.6. Responses to this tender shall be on the basis that the offer in it shall remain in force for a minimum of six months from the submission deadline.
- 3.7. When bidding, the supplier shall undertake that, in the event of the submission being accepted by Central, within fourteen days of being called upon to do so by the Vice Principal, Governance and Legal.
- 3.8. Failure by the successful supplier to execute a formal contract within the time specified above will render the contract voidable at the option of Central at any time.

- 3.9. Central will exclude bidders at any time throughout the process should any of the grounds of exclusion pursuant to the Procurement Act 2023 or within other applicable procurement legislation or regulation apply.
- 3.10. Responses shall only be submitted on the basis that they are bona fide competitive submissions. It is therefore agreed that Central shall have the power to cancel the contract and to recover from the bidder/supplier the amount of any loss arising from the cancellation if either the bidder/supplier:
- a) shall have offered or given or agreed to give any member of Central staff or Governing members any gift or consideration of any kind as an inducement or bribe to influence its decision in the tender process. The words “bidder” or “supplier” for these purposes shall be deemed to include any and all persons employed by the bidder or supplier or who are purporting to act on the behalf of the bidder or supplier, whether the bidder or supplier is aware of their acts or not, or
  - b) shall have communicated to any other person other than Central the amount or approximate amount of the proposed submission other than in confidence to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the submission, or for insurance purposes.
- 3.11. Central reserves the right to cancel the tender process at any point and shall not be liable to the bidder or supplier for any costs resulting from any cancellation of this tender process, nor for any other costs incurred by those tendering for the Services.
- 3.12. Central would appreciate it if prospective tenderers could acknowledge receipt of this ITT and confirm whether they intend to bid for this opportunity within five working days. Should prospective tenderers not wish to bid for the opportunity it would be helpful for Central to be provided with brief reasons why as soon as possible, confirmation or feedback can be provided to [Kayley.darby-philpotts@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:Kayley.darby-philpotts@cssd.ac.uk).

#### **4. Receipt of submissions and next steps**

- 4.1 Submissions will be received up to the time and date stated in Section 3 and confirmation of receipt will be provided within forty-eight hours. The timeline for this procurement is short and so there will be a short period of time between the closing date and notification to successful Bidders with their invitation to the presentations scheduled for 7 July 2025. Bidders should therefore be prepared to attend a presentation on 7 July 2025 when submitting their tender response, and Central will confirm by 5pm on 2 July 2025.

#### **5. Acceptance of submissions**

- 5.1. By issuing this invitation, Central is not bound in any way and does not have to accept any submission.
- 5.2. The submission must be based upon the terms, conditions and specification(s) set out in these documents; otherwise, it may be rejected based on being unsuitable and non-compliant.
- 5.3. Responders will be notified of the outcome of their submission in accordance with the timeline in section 3. Responders progressing to the presentation stage will be invited to present on their Services proposal.
- 5.4. No submission will be deemed to have been accepted unless such acceptance has been notified to the Bidder in writing.

#### **6. Amendments to documents or criteria**

- 6.1. Central reserves the right to make changes of a minor drafting nature to the contract documentation.

## 7. Inducements

- 7.1. Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this or any other contract with Central will disqualify a submission from being considered and may constitute a criminal offence.

## 8. Confidentiality

- 8.1. All information received in connection with this submission will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- 8.2. Please note the following requirements. The Bidder must not:
- Tell anyone else the price of their submission, or what it will be, before the time limit for delivery of responses.
  - Try to obtain any information about anyone else's submission or proposed submission before the time limit for delivery of responses.
  - Plan with another organisation about either party's submission price or whether they should respond.
- 8.3. Failure to comply with these conditions may result in the disqualification of one or more submissions.

## PART 2: BACKGROUND, SPECIFICATION AND PRICING

### 9. About Central

- 9.1. The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (Central) is a drama conservatoire located in Swiss Cottage, close to the heart of London's vibrant theatre district, serving the needs of both UK and international performance industries. As a specialist UK institution, Central offers everything from evening courses, diplomas and summer schools to undergraduate degrees, MA/MFAs, and research programmes.
- 9.2. Central is ranked third in the UK for performing arts in the [Complete University Guide 2026](#) and recent Financial Statements are available on the [organisation's website](#). Central's vision is to lead an innovative theatre and performing arts culture that enriches and changes our world by inspiring, educating and training the performers and change-makers of tomorrow. Central shapes the future of theatre and the performing arts.
- 9.3. Central is undergoing a transformation period and is prioritising a small number of capital projects at present. A new finance system is being implemented and is due to go live in November 2025 (Bidders should note therefore that the first year's audit will involve data processed and stored in the existing financial system (Compleat) and future audits should rely on data and controls flowing from the new financial system (Unit4). Bidders should consider whether this impacts on the pricing of Services or timelines for audit.
- 9.4. Central's current external audit services contract expires this summer and a new provider is needed to replace them on a short time scale. This has been unavoidable and is unusual, and it is hoped Bidders will be able to submit tender responses on the short timescale in such circumstances.
- 9.5. When responding to this ITT, Bidders are asked to be concise, given the timescales involved, and ensure it is emphasised what added value each Bidder will provide for Central. Especially given Central's size, the type of higher education provider it is and the fact that it is undergoing change whilst implementing a new finance system.

## 10. About the Services

- 10.1. The purpose of this tender is to appoint a single provider to deliver external audit Services. The primary role of the external auditors will be to report on the financial statements of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and to carry out whatever examination of the statements and underlying records and control systems is necessary to reach an opinion on the statements. The scope of works also includes but is not limited to audits of Central and its subsidiary company (Central School of Speech and Drama Enterprises), annual returns for the US Federal loans and any other funding requirements, as well as individual project audits as required. There will be a requirement to report on whether recurrent and specific grants from OfS (and other bodies and restricted funds where appropriate) have been properly applied for the purposes provided, in accordance with Central's Memorandum of Assurance and Accountability with OfS and that conditions of grant have been met.
- 10.2. Audits shall be conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and applicable law and opinions on financial statements must be prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice and in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.
- 10.3. The contract with the successful bidder is intended to commence on 1 August 2025 and will be awarded for an initial period of 3 years and shall subject to annual review and reappointment by the Governing Body. At the end of the initial period the parties may agree to extend the contract for a further twelve months, thereafter a new tender exercise will normally take place in respect of the Services.

## 11. Pricing

- 11.1. The pricing Bidders submit will be scored in accordance with the following formula:  
*(Lowest Total Price Tendered/Supplier Total Price to be Evaluated) x 25%= Percentage Weighted Score*
- 11.2. In the case where a tender appears to be abnormally low in relation to the products and or Services to be provided, Central will request a clarification in writing and/or explanation concerning its elements. Central reserves the right to exclude a tender, if after a verification process based on the explanations and evidence received it concludes that the tender is abnormally low.

## 12. Quality requirements

- 12.1. Bidders must complete the Tender Response Form with their quality responses, considering all aspects of the required Services as set out in this ITT.
- 12.2. Each Bidder's response to the quality responses will be scored on the following basis:

SCORING METHODOLOGY	SCORING (MARKS)
<b>Excellent:</b> The response fully answers the question and addresses all the specification requirements, covering adequate detail and the answer is to the benefit of the institution.	3
<b>Good:</b> The response answers most of the elements in the question, partially addresses some of the specification requirements and the answer is to the benefit of the institution, but the answer lacks adequate detail.	2

<b>Marginal:</b> The response answers some of the elements in the question, partially addresses some of the specification requirements and the answer is to the benefit of the institution, but the answer lacks adequate detail.	1
<b>Poor:</b> There is no response, or the response to the question does not address the specification requirements in a meaningful or effective manner and/or the answer is not to the benefit of the institution.	0

12.3. Up to three Bidders will be invited to present to Central on [date]. Bidders should identify the most suitable staff members at their organisation to attend the presentation, which shall take place online. Representatives from Central's Executive Leadership Team (Vice Principals for Governance and Legal, and Finance and Operations) shall be in attendance in addition to the Chair of the Audit Committee and another member of the Audit Committee.

12.4. Presentations will be an opportunity to present the Service offer to Central, and for Central to clarify any aspects of the tender submissions.

### 13. Evaluation of submissions

13.1. The submitted tender shall be scored using the following award criteria:

- Pricing - 25%
- Quality requirements - 75%

13.2. The percentage weighted score for the Pricing and Quality Requirement criteria shall be added together to provide a total weighted score out of 100%.

13.3. The highest scoring supplier that has met all the requirements of the submission in this ITT shall be awarded the contract for Services.

13.4. In the event of any bidders achieving an equal score Central shall determine the winning bid by considering the bidder's track record in performing Services of a similar nature successfully previously or the bidder with the shortest lead time for audit completion.

### 14. Form of contract

14.1. It is proposed that the Bidder submit their standard terms and conditions of business which shall form the basis of the contract of Services should Central award the contract to a specific Bidder. Central reserves the right to request amendments to standard terms and conditions of business, in particular to give effect to any public sector duties Central is bound by or similar.

**DOCUMENT 1 - INVITATION TO TENDER**

**DOCUMENT 2 PRICING SCHEDULE- SEPARATE EXCEL SPREADSHEET**

**DOCUMENT 3 TENDER RESPONSE FORM - SEPARATE WORD DOCUMENT**

**DOCUMENT 4: DUE DILIGENCE FORM- SEPARATE WORD DOCUMENT**