

Invitation to Tender: Review of the Higher Education Performance Indicators

Background

1. Following the publication of the report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing report) in 1997, the Government set up the Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) to develop a set of performance indicators for higher education institutions in the UK. This group produced a report at the beginning of 1999 (HEFCE 99/11), and the first set of performance indicators (PIs) were published towards the end of that year. They have been published annually since then¹.

2. The steering group still exists to oversee the production of the indicators, the development of new indicators, and to agree amendments required to existing indicators, for example where there are changes to data availability.

3. The indicators were originally designed to provide reliable information on the nature and performance of some aspects of the higher education sector in the UK, using consistent definitions. They were intended to contribute to a greater public accountability by the sector, as well as to help inform policy decisions.

4. In 2011, the steering group discussed the role, relevance and potential future discussions of the PISG. At that time the group recognised the value of the Performance Indicators (PIs), but noted that in the context of recent changes to the HE sector, it was important that the PIs continued to be meaningful measures and that a process for reviewing the different sets of PIs would need to be established.

5. However the group felt that there were unanswered overarching, fundamental questions that applied across all indicators, and therefore felt that the first review process should ask fundamental questions about how meaningful the indicators were to different users; consider changes, or potential changes, to the context and the data underlying the PIs; and seek to develop the indicators in alignment with the characteristics of Official Statistics.

6. Therefore the PISG are now seeking to carry out a fundamental review of the performance indicators.

Purpose of the review

7. This is a fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. Therefore this review should not therefore cover issues associated with particular sets of indicators.

8. The review should provide information to the steering group on a number of areas of the PIs including policy drivers for the indicators, usage and users. This will enable the group to make informed decisions on the future direction of the PIs.

¹ For further information on the Performance Indicators, see www.hesa.ac.uk -> Products and Statistics -> Performance Indicators

Scope and Methodology

9. The group particularly wish the review to explore a number of fundamental issues/questions:
- a. What is the purpose of the Performance Indicators?
 - b. Understanding who are the audience and how do they use them?
 - c. Do different audiences have competing needs and how might these be addressed?
 - d. What issues do the PIs particularly seek to address?
 - e. What influence do the PIs have over behaviour?
 - f. Are the PIs still fit for purpose?
 - g. How do the PIs complement (or otherwise) other UK-wide approaches to the measurement of institutional performance or profile?
 - h. Are there any gaps or perceived gaps in the coverage of the PIs?
10. These questions should not be considered as an exhaustive list and the review methodology should identify and explore other key fundamental issues relating to the indicators. The development of the review would need to be alert to the Official Statistics requirements: in particular the users and usages of the PIs should be as fully understood as possible.
11. Tenderers should be aware of the changing nature of HE in the UK, including HE operating in Further Education Colleges and alternative providers with designated courses. The review should maintain a UK-wide perspective, rather than address particular policy concerns of individual nations, but should seek to understand the recent changes to the higher education sector which differed across the four UK nations.
12. The review methodology is for the tenderer to determine. However, it is expected that information relating to approaches used elsewhere within the sector for performance measurement would be sourced from desk based research. Beyond this, it is expected that some combination of direct (such as face-to-face interviews or focus groups with stakeholders) and indirect (such as a web-based survey or call for responses) methods should be used to engage stakeholders.

Objectives

13. The objectives of the review are listed below.
- ⇒ Engage with as broad a set of existing and new stakeholders for the Performance Indicators as possible, including stakeholders in all four UK nations;

- ⇒ Re-assess the needs of existing stakeholders and how these are being met, and set out a priority list of requirements;
- ⇒ Identify new stakeholders, along with their requirements;
- ⇒ Re-affirm, or where necessary re-define, the rationale and purpose behind the indicators and benchmarks, taking into account both the changes that have already taken place in higher education;
- ⇒ Identify areas of improvement;
- ⇒ Put forward proposals for the better communication and dissemination of the indicators.

The Contract

Timescale and Deliverables

14. The review described within this invitation to tender has been sought by the Performance Indicators Steering Group. The review is being commissioned by HEFCE on behalf of the PISG: it will report to the PISG and will be overseen by a project steering group nominated by the PISG.

15. The specified work is to be carried out in accordance with a timetable agreed between the Council and the Contractor. Work on this project would be expected to start on or around Monday 25 March 2013.

16. The following deliverables will be required:

- ⇒ Attendance at the first meeting of the project steering group in the week commencing 1 April 2013.
- ⇒ An initial report providing a detailed project plan and taking account of input received from the first project steering group meeting, by Thursday 25 April 2013
- ⇒ An interim written report by Friday 7 June 2013.
- ⇒ Presentation of recommendations and interim report to the second meeting of the project steering group in the week commencing 10 June 2013.
- ⇒ A final report by Tuesday 25 June 2013.

The deliverables detailed above will be received on behalf of the PISG and the project steering group by the PISG secretariat at HEFCE, Mark Gittoes, 0117 9317052, m.gittoes@hefce.ac.uk.

17. The report will be published alongside existing documentation relating to the governance of the Performance Indicators: potentially by HEFCE, the three other UK funding bodies and other organisations represented on the PISG. The secretariat will

therefore provide advice as required on the appropriate styling of the reports it looks to receive, and/or the suitability of proposed content, to ensure smooth handling in respect to the Council's approval processes of such reports.

18. The duration of the Contract may be extended with the written approval of the Council if a Relief Event occurs. For the purposes of this Contract Relief Events are defined as:

- fire, explosion, lightning strike, flood, storm, burst pipes, earthquake, riot, civil commotion
- failure by a statutory undertaking to provide services
- failure or shortage of fuel, power, or transport
- blockades or embargoes (short of Force Majeure events)
- strikes, lock-outs and other industrial disputes.

Tender Requirements

19. Tender responses should provide the information set out in the following paragraphs:

- ⇒ The nature and size of your organisation, and its current turnover; if the tender is submitted on behalf of a consortium, list the members of the consortium and identify the lead member and a point of contact.
- ⇒ Details or CVs of the staff who will manage and undertake this work, with clearly identified roles and levels of input.
- ⇒ A proposal, including:
 - I. a statement of the aims of the work, with specific objectives
 - II. the specific methodology you propose to use to undertake the study within the timetable outlined. This should include the overall approach and procedures for ensuring the quality of the work undertaken
 - III. an outline of your capabilities to undertake the work
 - IV. a timetable with clear milestones
 - V. a detailed breakdown of the costs and pricing structure for the project (tenderers are advised that there is a limited budget available to fund this review)

Pricing Structure

20. The Council wishes to agree a fixed price for the work. Tenderers should quote their price for the review, and indicate how they propose to charge for expenses if these are to be presented as an additional item. Please ensure your price includes VAT, you will be asked to enter a price onto the system at the time of uploading your proposal.

21. The Council will make staged payments for this work:

⇒ 33 per cent to be paid in relation to the initial report of Thursday 25 April 2013

⇒ 67 per cent to be paid upon completion of the work and submission of the final report of Tuesday 25 June 2013

22. Tenderers are invited to note that the Council require an invoice for the first 33 per cent of the agreed fixed price to be received on or before Thursday 28 March 2013, to be paid upon satisfactory completion of the initial report of Thursday 25 April 2013.

Day to Day Communications

23. For the purposes of this study, the Council would expect to have contact with a nominated member of your organisation. Indicate how you would meet these requirements.

Quality Procedures

24. Please indicate whether your organisation holds any formal quality assurance qualifications or has any set procedures to enhance quality.

Conflict of interest

25. Tenderers must advise on how they would deal with any possible conflict of interest between the interests of HEFCE and those of any other client they may have. Tenderers must state any connections between their organisation and members/officers of the HEFCE.

Confidentiality

26. The contractor has a duty to abide by the terms of the Data Protection Act in connection with this contract.

Use and Recovery of Data

27. The Contractor shall:

- have no rights of ownership in the Council's data
- not use the Council's data except as may be required to fulfil this Contract
- not disclose the data to any third party except with the Council's written consent
- preserve as far as possible the integrity of the data and prevent its loss.

28. On expiry of the Contract, or in the event of termination, the Contractor shall return to the Council any data or information provided by the Council or collected by the Contractor on the Council's behalf.

References

29. Indicate the names of two current or recent customers, preferably within the public sector, for whom you have conducted a similar service and to whom reference may be made.

Draft contract

30. We attach a draft contract (Appendix B) that we propose to invite the successful tenderer to sign. We do not wish to make the contract more complex than it is already. However, should tenderers consider that substantial changes to the contract are warranted they are invited to raise their concerns with the Council via the 'correspondence section' of the e-tendering system. Tenderers should specifically indicate their position on their willingness to sign the attached draft contract in their tender. They should be alert to the potential impact of their position in relation to the selection process. HEFCE will make the final decision on any changes to its contract and is not obliged to accept any proposed changes. Requests for changes to the contract made after the tender has been submitted may not be considered by HEFCE.

Selection

31. HEFCE may choose to invite selected bidders to undertake a face-to-face interview as part of the selection process. These interviews, if they take place, will be held on **Wednesday 13 March 2013** at HEFCE's offices at Northavon House, Bristol.

Bribery

32. The Contractor and the Council are aware of the Bribery Act 2010 and agree to comply with the terms and conditions. For more details see:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/bills-and-acts/acts/bribery-act-2010.htm>

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI)

33. As a Public Body the Council is now obliged to conform to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Further information on this Act can be found on

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/aboutus/foi/thefoia.htm>

Equality and Diversity

34. The Contractor should be aware that HEFCE, as a public body, is subject to the public sector duties listed within the 2010 Equality Act:

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx The nature of the services required in this contract will mean that the contractor is itself carrying out a public authority function and

the contractor is bound by the general duty in relation to carrying out the services. HEFCE will continue to monitor the contract in order to ensure it is meeting its requirements.

35. The Contractor shall notify the Council's representative forthwith in writing as soon as it becomes aware of any investigation of or proceedings brought against the Contractor under the legislation above.

36. Where in connection with this Contract the Contractor, its agents or sub-contractors, or the Contractor's staff are required to carry out work on the Council's premises or alongside the Council's employees on any other premises, the Contractor shall comply with the Council's own employment policy and codes of practice relating to discrimination and equal opportunities. The Council's Equality Scheme is a live document, and the current version can be accessed at:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/divers/scheme/>

Procedure for Tender Selection

37. We will be using an e-tendering system to manage the process. All proposals should be uploaded to the system by **12 noon on Thursday 28 February 2013**. In order to conduct an open and transparent process, all communications with regard to this tender will be conducted via the system. If you have any questions, then please post them to the 'correspondence section' and a response will be provided. Please note that tenders outside of the system will not be accepted.

38. Tenders must be accompanied by a signed certificate of non-collusion, set out in the form given in Appendix A to this ITT.

39. The contract will be awarded to the tenderer who demonstrates the most economically advantageous bid, in terms of the following criteria. These criteria are weighted using a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest:

- understanding of the review requirements 5
- effectiveness of the proposed methodology for undertaking the review 5
- relevant experience and qualifications of the project team 4
- ability to meet the required timetable 4
- value for money 4

Appendix A to Invitation to Tender

Certificate of Non-Collusion

We certify that:

- a. The prices in the Tender have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices, with any other Tenderer or with any competitor.
- b. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in the Tender have not knowingly been disclosed by the Tenderer, directly or indirectly, to any other Tenderer or competitor, nor will they be so disclosed.
- c. No attempt has been made or will be made by the Tenderer to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a Tender for the purpose of restricting competition.
- d. No attempt has been made directly or indirectly to canvasses any employee or adviser of the HEFCE concerning the award of the contract which is the subject of this invitation to tender.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

On behalf of: