

Guide to Submitting a Tender

Introduction

1. The General Medical Council (GMC) work with doctors, physician associates (PAs), anaesthesia associates (AAs), those they care for and other stakeholders to support good, safe patient care across the UK. We set the standards doctors, PAs, AAs and their educators need to meet, and help them achieve them. If there are concerns these standards may not be met or that public confidence in doctors, PAs, or AAs may be at risk, we can investigate and take action if needed.
2. The GMC is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089278) and Scotland (SC037750).
3. The GMC is subject to The Procurement Act 2023 and therefore has a public duty to ensure fair, transparent and open competition in its tendering processes.

This document is intended as a guide to give advice on issues that suppliers should consider when completing tender documentation. It is not intended as a definitive tool and suppliers should not see it as a 'one size fits all'. It is important to bear in mind that all tender opportunities are different and as such need to be treated completely separately. However, this document gives an idea of what to include when responding to a tender to give suppliers the best possible chance of being considered for the award of the contract.

Notification of Tender Opportunities

4. Information on GMC tender opportunities can be found in the following places:
 - All tenders for GMC work are published on <http://www.mytenders.co.uk> and it is from this site that the tender documentation can be accessed. Suppliers are strongly advised to register with this site, which is free and immediate.
 - Any tenders that are above the relevant Find a Tender Service (FTS) threshold will be published on <https://www.gov.uk/find-tender>. This is in addition to publication on <http://www.mytenders.co.uk>.
 - The GMC may use government frameworks where they deliver the required services. These are maintained by the Crown Commercial Service who have also published the following document which you may find useful.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/become-a-crown-commercial-service->

[supplier/becoming-a-supplier-through-the-crown-commercial-service- what-you-need-to-know](#)

- The GMC also uses other public sector framework awarding organisations on occasion including Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO), NHS Supply Chain and ESPO.
 - Contract opportunities from across the UK public sector can be found on the Contracts Finder website (<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>).
5. As stated above, <http://www.mytenders.co.uk> is the main site for GMC tenders. As a supplier if you register with some of the other sites you will get information on GMC and other public sector requirements, but to be able to get the actual GMC tender documents and submit a response you will need to be registered with <http://www.mytenders.co.uk>.

How to Respond to a Tender

6. The GMC needs assurance from suppliers regarding Information Security before entering into a contract. Most tenders will have an IS Security Questionnaire issued within the tender documents. Suppliers should ensure that they meet the minimum requirements outlined in the Security Questionnaire before choosing to submit a bid as this could preclude them.
7. A tender itself can be compared to a CV or an exam where you clearly set out, with evidence, why you should be awarded the contract. It is an opportunity to be innovative and promote why you are different from other organisations.
8. It is important to include your experience but if you do not have the actual experience you can still demonstrate what you would do to run the contract and why you should be awarded the contract.
9. You need to give yourself sufficient time to prepare your tender response. Therefore, after registering with the site(s) above it is your responsibility to set up notifications or check on a regular basis for any suitable opportunities.
10. When an opportunity arises, you should download the tender documents and read them as soon as possible. You should read the tender thoroughly prior to starting to plan and draft your response.

Deadlines

11. Tenders will state a response deadline and late responses are normally disqualified, so ensure that you know when your bid must be submitted by.

12. Similarly, most tenders allow a period for asking clarification questions. This is your opportunity to ask questions about anything you do not understand or would like further information on.

13. Note that the clarification period will also have a fixed end date. This is to allow GMC time to collate all clarification questions, produce and then publish the responses. The clarification responses are published to all bidders and the timetable is set so that bidders can reflect on the questions and answers with enough time to revise their bid, if necessary, prior to the submission deadline.

Evaluation Criteria

14. Public sector organisations must publish their evaluation criteria in the tender documents, so take careful note of these.

15. As with an exam, this provides an indication of where you may best direct your efforts.

16. Tenders do vary, but it is common practice to split tender evaluation into high level criteria of Quality and Commercial for sub-FTS tenders and Quality, Commercial and Social Value for FTS tenders. Each high level criteria will then have sub-criteria, for example:

Criteria	Weighting	Sub-Criteria	Criteria Weighting	Overall Weighting
Quality	65%	Operational solution	50%	32.5%
		Skills and experience	30%	19.5%
		Account Management	20%	13%
Commercial	25%	Price	90%	22.5%
		T&Cs	10%	2.5%
Social Value	10%	Equality and Diversity	100%	10%

17. In the above example, the first quality requirement is the most important and scoring low here would seriously impact your chances of winning the tender.

18. Commercially, price will usually be the most important criteria, so the majority of tender awards will be relatively price sensitive.

Structure

19. The tender will generally provide information on how the response should be structured and formatted. Stick to this and note any size limits (pages, files sizes, etc) that you have to adhere to.

20. If you need to provide additional information that won't easily fit into the response structure then provide these in additional sections or as separate documents but in both cases ensure that you provide a specific reference to them within your response.

Content

21. GMC tenders always ask for responses of the highest quality, based on the following criteria:

- clear answers, that focus only on the specific requirement being addressed
- a sufficiently detailed level of information to demonstrate how the requirements would be delivered
- honest answers
- a well-structured response that is easy for evaluators to navigate, with accurate references to additional information provided in separate sections or included as annexes
- answers that are clearly tailored to meet the GMC's specific needs
- clear indication of experience
- responses that suggest that the supplier will deliver above the organisation's requirements and expectations

22. Read and answer each requirement/question carefully. You must provide details of how your proposal will meet the specific requirement. Your response needs to be concise whilst also providing sufficient relevant detail. Generic responses that are no more than 'sales puff' are unlikely to score well, so you need to ensure that you tailor your response to the requirement. Similarly, if you find that you keep repeating the same information in answer to multiple requirements, think again as it is likely that you are not being specific enough.

23. As an example:

Criteria: Please describe how you will meet GMCs operational requirements.
Three bidders provide the following answers:

- a) “We confirm that we will meet your operational requirements”.
- b) “We have x years experience of delivering a similar service to numerous clients, meeting the agreed service levels and performance indicators and have y staff who are fully qualified in this area – a case study is attached as annex z”.
- c) “Delivery of x, your operational requirements, is our core service. We have won y awards (references/case studies) for this over the last 3 years. We propose to deliver the service by and have identified the following personnel for this (CV’s are attached as <file refs>). We would look to work with GMC to improve the service and have identified z as an area where we believe this is possible based upon our experience of”

These responses would be scored with c) highest, b) in the middle, and a) with a very low score.

24. GMC tenders are scored using the following standard methodology:

0	Failure to respond or irrelevant information provided
1	Response is poor and fails to meet the requirement(s)
2	Response is unsatisfactory and partially meets the requirement(s)
3	Response is acceptable and meets the minimum requirement(s)
4	Response is good – better than merely acceptable
5	Response is excellent, exceeds the requirement and gives added value

Social Value or Equality and Diversity

25. The GMC has a commitment to fostering a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do as a regulator and employer. As such, generally GMC tenders will have an evaluation factor for Social Value (for FTS tenders) or Equality and Diversity (for non-FTS tenders). The purpose of the evaluation of such factor is to show that the GMC encourages suppliers that embrace similar culture within their own organisations and with other parties they interact with.

26. The GMC evaluate Social Value in line with the “**Government Social Value model (PPN06/20)**” and will pose questions on themes that are considered by the GMC as most meaningful to the specific requirement. In responding to the Social Value questions, you should consider:

- Clear evidence of how your organisation demonstrates that it aligns with the Social Value question
- Consideration of what additional Social Value benefit will be derived from your organisation winning this specific contract
- Clear plans for delivering the committed Social Value

27. When Equality and Diversity is evaluated the following factors are what the GMC is considering:

- **Historical data or interventions performed** – Evidence that your organisation considers Equality and Diversity issues in its ways of working and has clear plans to continue doing so.
- **Training provided** – Evidence that you seek to train staff in understanding Equality and Diversity issues
- **Standards adhered to** - Evidence of an Equality and Diversity policy covering all protected characteristics, with proof of appropriate monitoring and interventions
- Any relevant policies/guidance – Evidence of policies / guidance regarding Equality and Diversity in topics such as recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal of staff.

Terms and Conditions

28. All tenders will include the GMC’s intended terms and conditions, and as part of your tender submission you are asked to provide a mark-up of these highlighting any areas of suggested change.

29. Note that your response forms part of the tender evaluation, consequently no changes outside your submitted mark-up can be considered if you are awarded the contract.

Remember:

- Evaluation of tender submissions is done purely on what you write and submit. Evaluators cannot make assumptions, even if they know your company well, so if you do not state it, you will not get credit for it.
- If someone reads your response and they are left with questions of the How/Why/Who variety, then you have not provided a full answer.
- It is a good idea to get someone within your organisation who is unconnected with your bid to review it prior to submission so that you pick up and rectify any areas of confusion or lack of clarity, errors, omissions, assumptions or inconsistencies.
- Spell check.
- Ensure that any acronyms are explained.