INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT)

Accompanying Document

Review of research literature and case studies

REF: AdvHE002

Contract Period: October 2021 to January 2022

ITT return/deadline:
12:00 Monday 18th October 2021
1 Timescales

The below table is an outline of the timescales. Advance HE reserve the right to amend these dates if required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitation to tender Issued</td>
<td>Friday 17\textsuperscript{th} September 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for receipt of questions relating to the tender</td>
<td>Monday 27\textsuperscript{th} September 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers to questions issued</td>
<td>Friday 1\textsuperscript{st} October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tender submission deadline</td>
<td>Monday 18\textsuperscript{th} October 2021 (12:00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams informed of outcomes</td>
<td>w/c 25\textsuperscript{th} October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement commencement date</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial advisory group meeting</td>
<td>w/c 1\textsuperscript{st} November 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Procedure For Submitting Tenders

All correspondence, including questions and answers, tender responses and any supporting documentation must be submitted via email to tenders@advance-he.ac.uk

The Tender reference AdvHE002 should be quoted in full on all documentation including additional papers.

Via this email you are able to replace submitted documents at any stage prior to the tender return deadline.

Your return must answer all of the evaluation criteria and any other requests for confirmation or supporting documents as detailed in the Specification of Requirements.

It is not acceptable to submit a generic policy in response to any question. If you do submit a generic policy you must indicate the page and paragraph reference to the appropriate content in your response.

The Closing Time / Date for this tender is as per tender timetable: 12:00 Monday 18\textsuperscript{th} October. There can be no deviation from this date under any circumstances. Advance HE may at its own absolute discretion extend the closing date and the time in advance for receipt of Tenders specified. Any extension will apply to and be informed to all Bidders.

3 Notice to Bidders

The contents of this ITT and any other documentation sent to you in respect of this tender process are provided on the basis that they remain the property of Advance HE and must be treated as confidential.

No Bidder will undertake any publicity activities with any part of the media in relation to this ITT process without prior written agreement of Advance HE, including agreement on the format and content of any publicity.

This ITT is made available in good faith. No warranty is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in it and any liability or any inaccuracy or incompleteness is therefore expressly disclaimed by Advance HE and its advisers.

Advance HE reserves the right to cancel the tender process at any time. Advance HE is not liable for any costs resulting from any cancellation of this tender process nor for any other costs incurred by those tendering.

4 Clarification Process
All communication associated with this Invitation to Tender must be raised via email. If you have any clarifications, notifications of inconsistency or ambiguity regarding this tender, they must be submitted by the deadline as per the Tender timetable. Direct emails will receive a direct response regarding your specific query after 1st October 2021.

All questions, notifications of inconsistency or ambiguity raised by any Bidder will be collated into one document and answers / clarifications will be available on request after 1st October by emailing tenders@advance-he.ac.uk

The questions and answers issued will remain anonymous so as not to identify any organisations that have submitted questions.

5  Making amendments to the ITT

Advance HE reserves the right to issue supplementary documentation at any time during the tendering process prior to the tender deadline to clarify any issue or amend any aspect of the ITT. All such further documentation that may be issued shall be deemed to form part of the ITT and shall supplement and/or supersede any part of the ITT to the extent indicated. In order to allow Bidders reasonable time to take amendments into account, Advance HE may, at its discretion, extend the deadline for the receipt of tenders.

6  Grounds for Disqualification

Advance HE reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Bidder where:

- The Bidder fails to comply fully with the requirements of this ITT and any associated documentation
- Makes amendments to any text, format or layout within this ITT and any other associated Tender documentation without express written permission from Advance HE
- Fails to identify in the Appendix provided any requirements the Bidder is unable or unwilling to meet
- Is guilty of a misrepresentation in supplying or in relation to any information required in this document or its Tender or the procurement exercise; and/or
- There is a change in identity, control, financial standing or other factor impacting on the selection and/or evaluation process affecting the Bidder

Any Bidder responsible for the following shall (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to Advance HE and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a Bidder may attract) be disqualified:

- Fixes or adjusts the amount of its Tender by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other party;
- Communicates to any party other than Advance HE or, as applicable, relevant other contracting body the amount or approximate amount of its proposed Tender or information which would enable the amount or approximate amount to be calculated (except where such disclosure is made in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the Tender or insurance or any necessary security);
- Enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party that such other party shall refrain from submitting a Tender;
- Enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party as to the amount of any Tender submitted;
- Offers or agrees to pay or give or does pay or give any sum or sums of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any party for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any other Tender or proposed Tender, any act or omission.

The Bidder shall not make contact with any other employee, agent or consultant of Advance HE or any relevant other contracting body who are in any way connected with this Tender during the period of this procurement exercise, unless
instructed otherwise by Advance HE or acting purely as an incumbent supplier as part of their day to day business operations.

7 Cost of Tendering

Bidders must obtain for themselves at their own expense all information necessary for the preparation of their Tenders. Advance HE is not liable for any costs resulting from this tender process.
The Tender is for a fixed sum of £5,000 (Five thousand pounds). Bidders will be evaluated on the following basis:

**Evaluation Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 1.10</td>
<td>Supplier Details &amp; Sub-Contractors</td>
<td>For info only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Financial &amp; Economic Capacity</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Grounds for Mandatory exclusion</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grounds for Discretionary exclusion</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Equality &amp; Diversity</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Environmental Management</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Technical &amp; Professional Ability – Compliance with specification, including relevancy and appropriateness of proposed research methods</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Technical &amp; Professional Ability – Project management</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Technical &amp; Professional Ability – Team experience and substantive knowledge of existing research and policy</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>References</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pricing Schedule</td>
<td>For info only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Form of Tender</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tender responses to the questions shall be evaluated in accordance with the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Response is generally poor with little or no relevance. The response addresses few elements of the requirement and contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Response is mostly relevant but elements of the response are poor. The response addresses most elements of the requirement but contains limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how some of the requirement will be fulfilled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>Response is relevant and acceptable. The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but lacks details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Response is relevant and good. The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 Final Score

The total scores awarded for each question of the Award Questionnaire will be added together to give a total weighted quality score that in turn will give the overall final Tender score.

The successful applicant will be notified by email within week commencing 25th October. Advance HE will not be providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
Advance HE invites individuals or teams to conduct reviews of literature and empirical evidence initially in the two following areas:

**Aims and scope of the reviews**

Part of the mission of Advance HE is to improve learning outcomes by raising the status and quality of teaching in higher education. To help achieve this, we keep our evidence base up to date to better understand the practices and policies that have a demonstrable impact on student outcomes.

Advance HE is currently commissioning two literature reviews on priority areas. The reviews will focus on high quality research published by Advance HE and others across the UK as well as international literature including empirical evidence and developments drawing on research and evaluation and policy documents. The aim of these reviews is to identify and summarise the trends, issues and demonstrable impacts within these areas since 2015/16, paying particular attention to identifying what works (i.e. evidence-informed policy and practice) in each priority area.

The reviews intend to help practitioners, policy makers and researchers to focus more effectively on relevant questions, issues or sources of evidence to inform their own research or practice. Individuals or groups are invited to submit expressions of interest to conduct one or more of the literature reviews as described below.

It is expected that, in addition to the literature review, the successful bidder will engage in a range of dissemination activities during or following the review, in collaboration with Advance HE, including but not limited to a blog(s)/vlog(s), podcasts, a screencast and/or webinar.

It is also anticipated that Advance HE will facilitate a range of summits following the dissemination of the literature review(s). These summits will be essential activities leading to an update and potential redesign of the Advance HE Framework in the given area. The successful bidder will be invited to be part of this process and be invited to engage with Advance HE through the development of the new Framework.

**Review topics**

Currently we intend to commission two literature reviews, one for each of the topics listed below:

**Assessment and Feedback:**

The review aims to identify recent literature (and case studies) in relation to assessment and feedback, aligned with the Advance HE framework in this area. This should highlight evidence-based policy or practice that has had a demonstrable impact on student outcomes including student performance, progression, engagement, satisfaction, skill acquisition and/or self-confidence. The review should help practitioners, policy makers and researchers to focus more effectively on relevant questions, issues or sources of evidence to inform their own research or practice. This review intends to show sector developments and/or changes in these areas, bringing together and updating evidence since the 2017 review. Additional areas that can help shape and inform any further updates to Framework should be highlighted for inclusion/further consideration.

**Flexible Learning:**
The literature review aims to identify specific impact and evidence in relation to Flexible Learning within Higher Education (HE). The review will focus on literature since 2016 – 2021, providing a concise period from which to draw from. As is typical of Advance HE reviews, the paper should highlight evidence-based policy and/or practice that have had a demonstrable impact on student outcomes including student performance, progression, engagement, satisfaction, skill acquisition and/or self-confidence. The inclusion of case studies is also seen as favourable. This approach intends to show sector developments and/or changes, bringing together and summarising the latest available evidence. Areas that align with the Advance HE framework should be identified, similarly additional areas that can help shape and inform any future update to the Framework should be highlighted for inclusion/further consideration.

Approach

Each literature review should focus on high quality research published by Advance HE, seminal literature from both the UK and internationally, with particular acknowledgement of literature beyond Western domains that challenge Eurocentric models.

- The reviews should focus on high quality research published:
  - by Advance HE
  - across the UK and
  - seminal international literature.

- This should include empirical evidence and developments, drawing on research and evaluation and policy documents. The review methodology, search and inclusion parameters and approach to quality assurance should be clearly defined in any tender submission.
- The review should be conducted by an individual or by a team advised by a small advisory group led by Advance HE.
- Successful tenderers will be expected to attend an initial meeting held virtually in week commencing 1st November. Further online advisory group meetings will be held as appropriate.

Outcomes of the research

Each review should include the following outputs:

1. A searchable, user-friendly dataset including all literature analysed and sorted into agreed categories;
2. Mapping of the key concepts arising from the literature and showing the relationships between them;
3. A research report, to contain an executive summary, methodology, identification, selection and analysis of the literature, findings and mapping, conclusions, implications and recommendations, references (a proposed template for the review is included in Appendix A below);
4. Engagement in a range of dissemination activities during or following the review, in collaboration with the Advance HE, such as contributing to a blog/vlog, briefing, podcasts, screencast and/or webinar.

Proposals

- Proposals must arrive by **12:00 on 18th October 2021** at the following email address tenders@advance-he.ac.uk
  Proposals sent after this time are automatically disregarded.

- Your proposal should include:
  - a statement of the review area which the tender addresses;
  - a statement of the review objectives, outcomes and key associated issues;
an outline of proposed review methodology and proposed search criteria;

a statement of the scope of material to be included;

an indication of how you will ensure the project is managed, staffed, quality assured, and conducted in an ethical manner;

an outline of how you will ensure tangible outcomes, offering clear implications for policy and practice, to inform the work of Advance HE and colleagues across the sector;

detail of any possible challenges and limitations, with a clear indication of how these risks will be minimised, including any sub-contracting proposed and how this will be quality assured;

an outline timetable for the work;

summary CVs and references to previous relevant published work detailing the expertise and experience of the staff involved in the project;

applicants need to be in a position to start the proposed work no later than November 2021 and to complete by 21 January 2022;

applicants may bid for all or a single part of this tender, it is advised to submit two separate applications should applicants wish to bid for both reviews;

There is a fixed sum of £5,000 (five thousand pounds) per literature review, inclusive of VAT (if applicable).

Each part will be individually assessed on its own merit against the evaluation criteria.

Evaluation of bids

In evaluating the bids, Advance HE will pay particular attention to the following criteria (not listed in order of priority):

- Appropriateness of the proposed methods to be adopted for achieving the review. This should include the overall approach and procedures for ensuring the quality of the work undertaken;
- Relevant experience and expertise in relation to the topic area and literature reviewing;
- An understanding of the conceptual issues relating to the review topic;
- An understanding of Advance HE’s needs in relation to the literature review and the review topic;
- A clear focus on practical relevance of the research linked to proposed project outputs;
- Quality control mechanisms;
- Degree of risk attached;
- Ability to complete a high quality review within the specified timetable;
- Value for money;
- Case studies;
- Literature beyond Western domains that challenge Eurocentric models.

Interviews may be required if further information or discussion is deemed necessary.
Further details

1. Queries regarding this research should be emailed to tenders@advance-he.ac.uk The deadline for submitting queries is Monday 27th September. Advance HE will post responses to all queries by 1st October 2021.

2. Any research undertaken on behalf of Advance HE must consider any ethical issues and abide by a relevant ethical framework including, if required, undertaking a full ethical review of the proposed research.

3. Advance HE will collaborate in refining the research design and decision making processes through establishing an advisory group for the project, which will expect to meet with the project team at key project milestones. It is anticipated that all meetings will be conducted via videoconference. This does not preclude suggestions of a further advisory group/reference group as part of your proposal.

4. All contracts will be in accordance with Advance HE standard terms and conditions. Please ensure that you have read and can agree to these terms and conditions before submitting your tender.
Appendix A

Literature Review Report Template

Your report should include the following:

Executive Summary

Introduction

• Aims and objectives of the review;
• Background to the review topic.

Methodology

• Methodological approach including:
  o Method of selection for inclusion;
  o Method of analysis;
  o Overview of included literature, e.g. numbers, categories;
  o Explanation for excluded literature;
• Reflections on the methodology (e.g. effectiveness, strengths and limitations of the methodology).

Findings

This section will be influenced by methodology used, but might include:

• Mapping of key concepts and relationships embodied in the analysed literature and case studies;
• Assessment of evidence, identifying what works i.e. evidence informed policy and practice that have had a demonstrable impact on student outcomes, aligned to Advance HE frameworks;
• Gaps in the literature.

Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations

• For policy, practice and research.

References

• List of cited material.

Technical Issues

• Suggested word length: 35,000 words
• Written in plain English
• Written for an external sector-wide audience
• Accessible to non-specialist audiences.