



UK Universities Purchasing Consortia

Benefits of Tender Working Party Membership: An Article for UKUPC members

A Tender Working Party (TWP) is the group that shapes and supports the delivery of the UK Universities Purchasing Consortia framework agreements. The individuals who make up the TWP are usually a mixture of consortia staff, HE procurement professionals and technical or specialist representatives. All have a key role to play in ensuring the delivery of efficient and effective contracts which meet the needs of our collective membership.

From personal development to advantages for the organisation and suppliers, this document sets out the benefits to you and explains our promise to professionally support and deliver effective working groups.

For the individual:

Sharing knowledge and working collaboratively is at the heart of the UK Universities Purchasing Consortia (UKUPC), and a common theme across the HE sector. As an individual, joining a TWP can either allow you to share your experience in an area you know a lot about, or enhance your continuous development by gaining experience in something new. Either way, by networking and sharing experiences with colleagues across the sector you will be improving your own knowledge whilst also assisting your own organisation.

Often, TWP activity can take you away from your usual desk-based work. You could participate in site visits, support bidder Q&A sessions or undertake physical product evaluations. You will be working on the project alongside a range of people who you might not normally engage with, and together you'll fully shape and understand the way the agreement works.

There are various stages to any tender project, and when you step forward, you'll have the flexibility to select your favoured activities, this could be helping form the strategy, commercial assessment or taking part in evaluation. Overall, participating in a TWP can give a real sense of achievement personally and professionally.

For the organisation:

The main driver for HE sector frameworks is to deliver agreements that meet the needs of the organisations who use them, whilst delivering efficiencies in time, resource, and money. By sharing the expertise and knowledge from your own institution you'll be ensuring that the tender meets your own needs whilst working in a joined-up way with individuals from other organisations. Connecting professionals from both procurement and technical or specialist backgrounds gives the opportunity to learn best practice to take back into your own role.

Each organisation will have their own priorities, and by participating you will ensure that wider aspects of your institutional vision are included right from the start. After the framework agreement is awarded, you'll be able to provide feedback on the agreement, making improvements and developments if needed throughout its term.



As an employer, by participating it signals that you are responsible, helping to promote positive team working and providing development for employees beyond their current experience.

For the category area:

Whichever category area you are passionate about, by supporting the TWP you will be driving forward opportunities for suppliers to engage with universities in ways that are meaningful and relevant. We don't encourage a one size fits all approach, your experience and expertise ensures that we meet the needs of both the HE sector and the suppliers we are working with.

TWP members provide invaluable feedback on local supply markets, helping us drive forward support of and for SMEs. Additionally, your participation gives you the opportunity to engage with a wider supply base during the market engagement phase. Throughout the project you will be working to ensure the latest thinking and standards are explored, we know that a wide and varied TWP contribution brings a more measured approach to documentation, and a broader sector view on the provision of goods and services.

When leading a TWP, consortia staff, nationally, commit to the following:

- Where not known, we will clearly explain what a tender working party is and how it works
- We will be transparent on timings: when the tender is planned, when we might need you and to what extent
- We will update you in advance of any key changes to the above so you can plan your work
- We will be clear on the requirements and provide you with early scope and involvement needed
- We will refer to our Terms of Reference for Tender Working Parties and share these with you
- Accountability will be made clear along with possible outcomes
- Training and information packs will be shared in advance and clarity provided where points are unclear
- We will communicate with you regularly throughout the process

If you would like to find out more about current TWP opportunities, get in touch with your regional consortium. With over 100 framework agreements available to UKUPC members, there is regular activity taking place across all category areas and your time and expertise will always be welcomed.

Version 1. November 2020

