# Financial Services

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Responsible Position: Manager, Financial Operations  
Approved by: Chief Financial Officer  

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Overview

Purpose

This guideline covers the process for the various types of Expression of Interest (EOI) that may be sought from the marketplace.

Due to the variety of types of EOI, and their potential complexity, this document provides only broad guidelines regarding the process. Many details require consultation with the University Legal Office or reference to the Tendering Guidelines.

This guideline also needs to be considered in conjunction with other University policies, procedures and guidelines.

All references to monetary amounts in this guideline are on a GST inclusive basis.

Coverage

This Guideline applies to all University budget centres, including Institutes, Centres, Divisions and the Foundation.

Exclusions

This guideline does not include information on:

- General Purchasing - refer to the General Purchasing Guidelines
- Tendering - refer to the Tendering Guidelines
- Contracts - refer to the University Legal Office

Guideline Objectives

Whether an Expression of Interest (EOI) or other form of communication is to be used, a formal process must be adhered to. A record of the decisions made must be kept for reasons of probity, and to ensure that the University is not exposed to unnecessary litigation.

It is important to note that vendors may invest time and money into the response to an EOI, and therefore the process must be conducted with a similar level of probity and accountability to that of a formal Tender process.
Key Considerations

EOI Process

An Expression of Interest (EOI) is an invitation process involving the marketplace, to provide information to the University. This process may in turn lead to a tender process or directly to a negotiation with one or several preferred suppliers.

The actual EOI is submitted from the marketplace to the University in response to the invitation. There are various types of communication that may occur and definitions for each are supplied below.

Scoping Document

The key document involved in an EOI is a scoping document. This outlines the type of information the University is seeking form the marketplace. As with a Tender Specification, the scoping document must be:

- in writing
- clear and unambiguous
- prepared by persons with sufficient expertise to prepare the scoping specifications, or in consultation with expert advice.
- address evaluation criteria that may be used should a formal Tender process follow the EOI.

The Tendering Guidelines refer to documents that may be of assistance in the preparation of a scoping document.

Legal Advice

It is strongly advised that the Legal Office be consulted in any EOI process. In particular, the Legal Office must be consulted at least two months prior to communication with the marketplace, where an EOI is complex, specialised or potentially litigious.

Expression of Interest and Request for Tender

Often an EOI is prepared as a preliminary stage that may result in a Request for Tender (RFT). The information gained through the EOI process may be used to determine the nature of the RFT, such as whether an open or closed tender process will be used. A formal process is therefore followed so that the University is not exposed to unnecessary litigation.

Where an EOI could lead directly to a negotiation with one or several preferred suppliers it is recommended that the EOI documentation indicate this.
**Terms and Definitions**

Below is a list of the various types of communication that may occur, with definitions as to their specific nature. In all cases a formal process should be followed.

| Expression of Interest (EOI) | A formal registration of interest in providing the University with goods and/or services.  
The list of potential suppliers who have submitted expressions of interest may be used as the basis for conducting a select tender process. |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Request for Information (RFI) | A business process with the purpose of collecting written information about the capabilities of various suppliers.  
The RFI is often used to clarify a particular issue, or to help determine the next step, and is the same as an EOI in practice. |
| Request for Tender (RFT)     | A formal tender process for bidding on the supply of goods and/or services.  
The University has a separate policy and guideline to direct staff through the tender process. |
| Request for Proposal (RFP)   | An invitation is presented for suppliers, often through a bidding process, to submit a proposal on a specific commodity or service.  
As the request is for a defined proposal, particular care should be taken to follow a formal process when communicating with potential suppliers, and it is likely that this will follow the steps outlined for a formal Request for Tender. |
| Request for Quotation (RFQ)  | Similar to the RFP, this is a standard business process whose purpose is to invite suppliers into a bidding process on specific products or services.  
As this is a process involving a formal quote it should be follow the guidelines for a formal Request for Tender |
| Call for Bids                | Another term for a Request for Tender |
The EOI Process

Steps in the EOI Process

The steps involved in an EOI are essentially the same as that for a formal request for Tender.

Staff involved in a complex EOI should refer to the Tendering Guidelines for guidance regarding the selection board, probity, and the various steps involved in the process.

The following table represents the various steps that should be taken in undertaking an EOI, and any specific variations or similarities with a tender process. The Tendering Guidelines should be referred to in conjunction with this table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Form an EOI Board</td>
<td>A board of at least three persons should be formed as per a formal Tender Board. The board will normally consist of a budget centre representative, a representative with expertise and independent staff member. Additional staff or experts can be added as deemed necessary.</td>
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| 2. Seek Legal Advice      | Where an EOI may be complex or potentially litigious, the Legal Office must be contacted at least two months prior to contact with the marketplace.  
It is recommended that the legal Office be consulted in any EOI, to protect the University from potential litigation. |
| 3. Probity requirements   | Members of the EOI board should read the Probity in Tendering Guidelines and excuse themselves from the process if there are any conflicts of interest. |
| 4. Prepare Scoping Document | A scoping document must be prepared. The contents of this document must be clear and specific for the EOI to be successful.  
The Tendering Guidelines have information on specifications that may assist in preparation of the scoping document |
| 5. Advertising            | Refer to Tendering Guidelines for guidance on advertising an EOI |
| 6. Receiving EOI          | EOI should be received using the same level of |
| **7. Communications with Interested parties** | All communication with interested parties should be treated as confidential. Refer to Tendering Guidelines for guidance. |
| **8. Deadlines and Late Submissions** | Late submissions may only be received where the integrity of the EOI process is not compromised. |
| **9. EOI Evaluation** | The EOIIs are evaluated and a course of action determined based on the responses. |
| **10. Request for Tender** | Based on the responses, the EOI may be used as the basis for a select or open tender process. Refer to Tendering Guidelines for further details. |
| **11. EOI documentation** | All supporting documentation must be held in accordance with the Records Management Policy. This is particularly important where an EOI gives rise to a RFT. |
Relevant Policy Document

Tendering Policy

Other Related Policy and Practice Documents

Policies

General Purchasing Policy

Procedures and Guides

General Purchasing Guidelines
Tendering Guidelines

About this Document

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Expression of Interest Guidelines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
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