



Doing business with the University of the West of England, Bristol

A Guide for Suppliers and Contractors

Revised January 2021

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About UWE Bristol

With over 30,000 students and 3,500 staff, UWE Bristol is one of the UK's most popular universities. We're firmly focused on solving future global challenges through real-world learning experiences, world-leading research and a culture of enterprise. As an ambitious organisation, we're not afraid to challenge the big issues. We empower our students to break new boundaries, to lead the way, so they leave us as adaptable, enterprising and career-ready graduates. Each of our pioneering courses has been created in partnership with industry professionals, to equip our students with the most in-demand skills and the mindset employers need.

The University consists of four faculties spread across our campuses, including:

- Arts, Creative Industries and Education
- Environment and Technology
- Health and Applied Sciences
- Business and Law.

Additionally, we have many support services including:

- Facilities (including Estates, Security, Catering and Centre for Sport)
- Finance Services
- Future Students
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- IT Services
- Planning and Business Intelligence
- Research and Business Innovation
- Strategic Communications and Marketing
- Student Success (including Library, Widening Participation and Employability)
- Student and Academic Services

Our teaching

With over 600 courses on offer at undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and short course level, our courses span a broad range of subjects across the arts, creative industries, health, science, business, law, environment and technology.

We've built strong links with leading-industry organisations and businesses across the globe – names like CERN, Rolls-Royce, the NHS, Lloyds Banking Group, Airbus, Aardman Animations and the BBC - to create industry-relevant courses and build real world opportunities into our courses.

We were awarded 'Gold' in the Government's 2018 Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework, TEF. This is the best rating possible, and was awarded for our outstanding quality of teaching, alongside the exceptional performance of our graduates.

Our campuses and facilities

Spread over three well connected campuses in Bristol, each of our sites offers something unique.

Doing business with the University of the West of England, Bristol

Over the last five years, we've invested £300 million into our state-of-the-art facilities to create the most effective setting for our students to discover their potential. We also offer many courses through local study partners and global partner institutions.

We have invested heavily in our infrastructure with developments at Bower Ashton as part of our City Campus, simulation suites on our Glenside Campus, a £55 million, world-class Bristol Business School, a new state-of-the-art Engineering building, new accommodation, and one of the UK's first University Enterprise Zones, sitting alongside the UK's largest robotics lab on our Frenchay Campus.

Our research and wider impact

Many of our academics are globally recognised for their ground-breaking research in a wide range of fields, including robotics and body image. They're the ones on the front line, solving global challenges and transforming lives. Not only is their research fed into our teaching to keep our courses up-to-the-minute, but we also make sure it contributes to society and the economy through knowledge exchange, science communication, partnerships and supporting business innovation and growth.

We also play a key role in Bristol and the wider region, and many employers and organisations consider us as the 'go to university' for graduate recruitment.

Our achievements

We have much to celebrate at UWE Bristol, and our ambitious 2030 strategy has us all set to achieve even more. Our strategy is focused on transforming futures – from powering the future workforce and helping the local economy, to shaping the health and sustainability of communities as well as finding solutions to global challenges. It has mapped out our future to enhance learning and teaching, employability, campus developments and research with impact to 2030 and beyond.

Sustainability

Climate change is big on our agenda at UWE Bristol, so we're helping to build a more sustainable future by working towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals – with the aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. From establishing our campuses as clean air and smoke free zones to eliminating single-use plastics.

Inclusivity

We understand the power of a diverse university community, and that's exactly why we celebrate individuality and are passionate about creating a supportive and inspiring place for our students and staff. We're proud to have welcomed students from over 166 countries, each bringing with them different ideas, perspectives and beliefs that help shape our community.

Health and wellbeing

At UWE Bristol, we believe a healthy community is a happy one, and that's why supporting the health and wellbeing of every student and member of staff is a strategic priority here. We work hard to create an environment where our students and staff can thrive and have many support options available to them.

Careers and enterprise

We make sure our graduates stand out with all the skills employers want and need. We have built enterprise into our teaching, and our links with other 7,000 employers helps shape many of our courses. So it's no surprise we're in the top 10% of UK institutions for employment three years after graduating.

[More on UWE Bristol.](#)

About this Guide

Naturally many organisations will want to sell their services and supplies to the University, so we have put together this guide to assist suppliers and contractors who wish to supply UWE Bristol with goods and services, by:

- Outlining the rules that UWE Bristol must follow
- Explaining where to find details of opportunities to supply the University
- Explaining how to tender for the University's business
- Explaining what is expected of you when undertaking work for us

How is procurement organised?

UWE Bristol has a Procurement Team responsible for developing the University's procurement strategy, policy, good practice and procedures to secure best value-for-money procurement. It is also responsible for contracts for the majority of supplies¹, which are commonly used across the University.

Contracts let by the University take a number of forms, including:

One-off Contracts: These contracts meet specific needs/individual requirements.

Term Tenders: These are tenders accepted from a contractor, to carry out repetitive tasks for a period of time. Work is then issued to these contractors as and when it is available. Any amount or value of work cannot be guaranteed. These are usually for planned and reactive maintenance works.

Framework Agreements: An agreement where terms and conditions are agreed with the provider for certain services, supplies or works which allows call-offs to be made without obligation to the supplier.

Consortiums: Different procurement authorities can join together to form a Consortium to create tenders as a group. This can provide better value for money as larger quantities can be purchased. UWE Bristol is a member of the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) and also, as a public body, has access to contracts arranged by the Crown Commercial Services.

Concessions: An arrangement whereby the University grants the contractor the right to operate a contract, within stipulated parameters and to benefit from the profit made from the operation, for example laundry equipment.

These tenders will be advertised via the following means as appropriate:

- In-Tend (<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/he.aspx/Home>)
- Contracts Finder (<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>)
- Find a Tender Service (<https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Search>) for supply of goods and services expected to exceed the Public Contract Regulation thresholds

¹ Contracts for the purchase of goods, e.g. office stationery, furniture, laboratory supplies - often from SUPC or sector frameworks.

What Rules & Regulations must be followed?

As a public body, there are regulations which the University has to follow when procuring supplies, works and services. It is vital that if you wish to contract with UWE Bristol you are fully aware of the rules and regulations, which govern the way we operate.

The following table summarises the rules that must be followed, depending on the value of the purchase:

Value of supply	Process	Advertising
£10,000 - £30,000 (Goods & Services) £10,000 - £50,000 (Works)	A minimum of 3 quotations / tenders will be invited	
£30,000 - £189,330 (Goods & Services) £50,000 - £4,733,252 (Works)	Requirement is advertised and tender process carried out	Adverts are published on, In-Tend and Contracts Finder. They may also be placed in other appropriate media, which may include local and national newspapers and relevant trade journals.
Above £189,330	Public Contract Regulations (PCR) apply (See the following section: 'What are PCR?')	Adverts will be placed in the Find a Tender Service (FTS), and any other appropriate media to ensure competition and sufficient coverage, including Contracts Finder and In-Tend.
Above £663,540 "Light Touch" regime	PCR apply (See the following section: 'What are PCR?')	The light-touch regime (LTR) is a specific set of rules for certain service contracts that tend to be of lower interest to cross-border competition. Those service contracts include certain social, health and education services, defined by Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes. The list of services to which the Light-Touch Regime applies is set out in Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (Annex A). Procurements for LTR services exceeding £663,540 should be advertised on FTS.

What are Public Contract Regulations?

We have a legal requirement to comply with the Public Contract Regulations, which govern the way in which public sector procurement is conducted for contracts over certain specified thresholds. The regulations require the University to follow detailed procedures for all procurements above these financial thresholds.

The thresholds that apply to UWE from January 2020 are:

Services	Supplies	Works	Light Touch Regime
£189,330	£189,330	£4,733,252	£663,540

Note: the thresholds are reviewed every 2 years. The next review is due in January 2022. The regulations are also being reviewed as part of the public procurement reform following the UK's exit from the European Union.

Under the current regime (PCR 2015), UWE Bristol can conduct its procurement using one of five processes: Open, Restricted, Competitive Procedure with Negotiation, Competitive Dialogue and Innovation Partnership. The two most commonly used are:

Open – any organisation can express an interest and submit a tender response.

Restricted – a two-stage process. Organisations expressing an interest undergo an initial supplier selection (shortlisting) assessment. Only the most suitable applicants are invited to tender.

Where procurements exceed the above thresholds and therefore come within the scope of the PCR, we must follow these basic requirements:

- Publish a Prior Information Notice (PIN)²: this stage is optional;
- Decide which of the processes needs to be used;
- Publish a Tender Notice in the Find a Tender Service (FTS) to give all suppliers an equal opportunity to tender; a contract notice will also be published on Contracts Finder.
- Invite tenders according to the procedure being used (open, restricted, etc.), taking account of the minimum timescales imposed, to ensure that reasonable time is given to respond to adverts and prepare submissions;
- Select a suitable contractor using the criteria published in the Tender Notice;
- Place a Contract Award Notice in FTS and on Contracts Finder.

² Advises potential contractors of any forthcoming contracts so that they have the opportunity to prepare resources and tenders. This may be optional depending on the value of the contract.

Procurement Process: Shortlist Stage

How do I find out about opportunities?

Details of forthcoming contracts will appear on In-Tend (<https://intendhost.co.uk/he.aspx/Home>). Contact can be made with the Procurement Team to obtain more specific details of the contract. We also use Contracts Finder: [Contracts Finder - GOV.UK](#).

Contracts over PCR thresholds are advertised in the FTS. Potential contractors/suppliers should review the official website, <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Search>) regularly to obtain details of potential forthcoming opportunities.

How do I apply for contracts?

The contract notice or advertisement will advise contractors/suppliers of the procedure to be followed for that particular contract. In some cases a supplier selection stage, will be used to assess a supplier's suitability to supply the University and their ability to satisfy the contract. It is essential that you supply all of the information requested and respond by the due date.

What information do I need to provide?

In a supplier selection questionnaire you will be asked to provide basic details about your organisation to verify that it can be identified as a legitimate trading organisation, that it has acceptable levels of economic and financial standing, and that it promotes good practice in areas of equal opportunities, protecting the environment and health and safety.

Financial Information - suppliers will be asked for certain financial information as we need to be sure that you can meet the requirement for the life of the contract.

Experience and Technical Ability - We will ask for further information to assess whether a supplier has the relevant experience, resources and technical ability to carry out the categories of work and to provide the type and quality of service required. In most cases it is necessary to provide details of similar contracts held over recent years and to provide contact details of referees. Some further questions may be asked tailored to the needs of the individual contracts.

Equal Opportunities – UWE Bristol is committed to eliminating inequalities in all functions, including procurement. The University strives to ensure that its services are equally accessible and appropriate to the differing needs of all community sectors, regardless of race, gender, marital status, disability, age or sexuality. This section will ask how your company includes equality provisions in its employment and service provision. UWE participates in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index scheme.

Organisation - We will ask about your organisational structure to establish whether you have the appropriate resources to fulfil the contract.

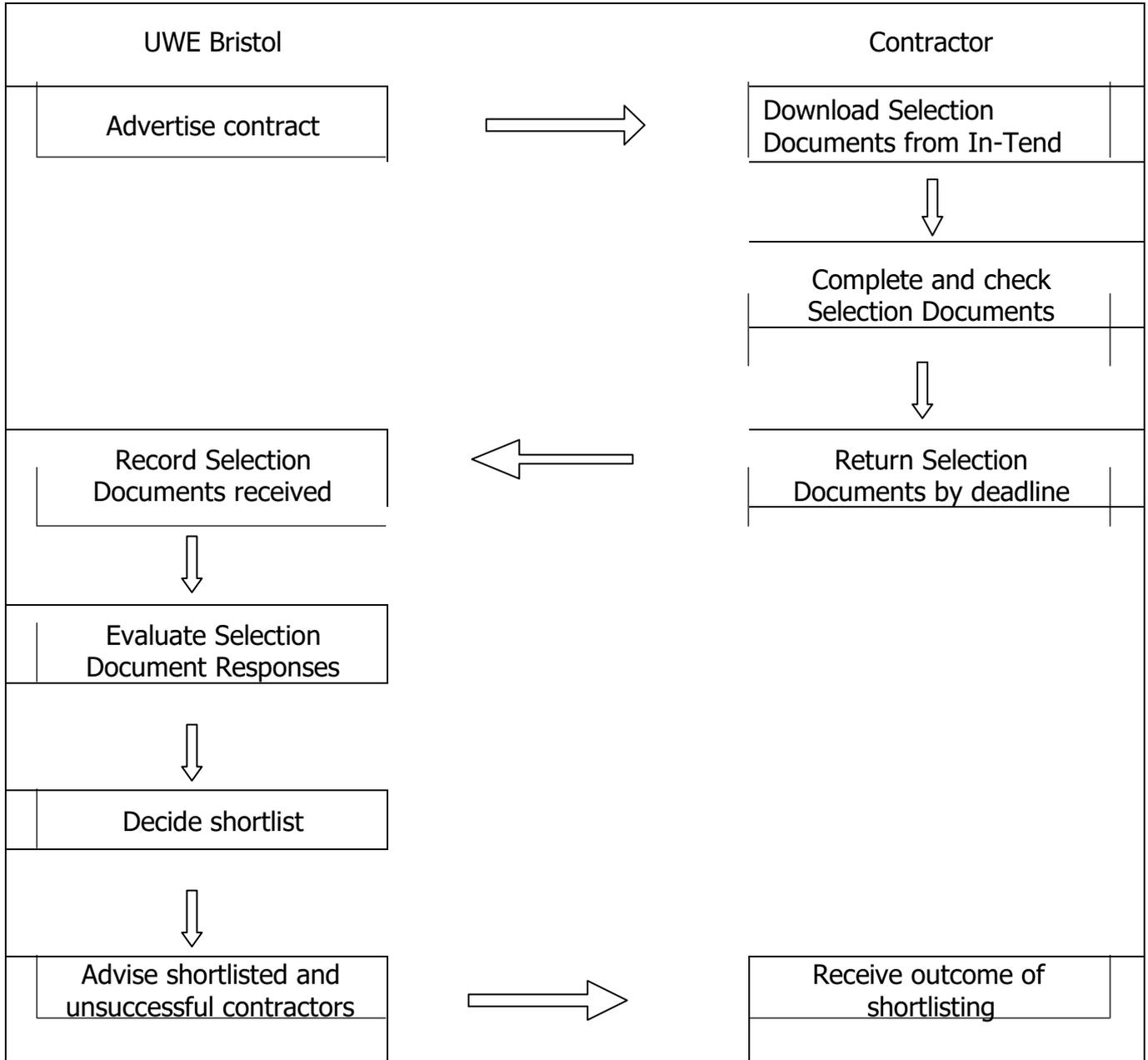
Sustainability – As a buyer of over £100 million worth of goods and services each year, our purchasing decisions may have a substantial impact on the environment and the local economy. UWE Bristol is committed to sustainability and has corporately adopted a number of action plans and policy to address the issues surrounding sustainable procurement, particularly in the areas of environmental and resource protection, ethical and fairly traded supply chains and SME and local economic development. The University expects its contractors and suppliers to meet a similar level of commitment where appropriate and will seek information to determine that commitment from potential suppliers.

Insurance - You are also asked to provide assurances regarding insurance cover, as UWE Bristol has a responsibility to ensure that organisations with which it contracts carry any statutory insurance cover. The minimum requirement is normally £5,000,000 public / employers liability insurance although this may be reviewed for certain tenders.

Health and Safety – UWE Bristol is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees, service users and those affected by its operations. Suppliers and contractors can play a key role in achieving this. Before carrying out work for the University information will be sought concerning tenderers' safety policies and operational safety procedures. You will be expected to know how to manage health and safety in your area of work and to accept responsibility for it.

It is essential that pre-tender documentation is returned by the date and time stipulated. Documentation received after the deadline will remain unopened.

Shortlist Stage



Procurement Process: Tender Stage

What if I am invited to tender?

Suppliers who have been shortlisted after evaluation of the selection stage will receive correspondence advising that they are invited to tender and how to download the tender documents from In-Tend. The tender documents will include the following:

Instructions to tenderers – provides guidance for completing tender documentation, and when and where tenders should be submitted.

Specification – sets out what needs to be achieved and includes policies, procedures and guidelines that need to be followed as well as the tender evaluation criteria, which advises how the tender submission will be evaluated and the contract awarded. Tenderers are expected to tender on the basis of this specification, which will include performance targets or criteria to be met in delivering the services, supplies or works.

Pricing Schedule – the document where you enter all your prices.

Form of Tender – the form declares that the submitted tender has followed the legal guidelines.

Certificate of Bona Fide Tendering – the form states that the submission is a bona fide tender.

Alternative Proposals – this is where you can record any proposal you wish to make that differs from the specification.

Non-compliance/qualification statement – a form to record any areas in which the tender is not compliant with the instructions, specification or terms and conditions.

Supplier Appraisal questionnaire – When a Supplier Selection Stage has not been completed a supplier appraisal form will be required. It requests details about the company to give Bristol UWE more background information.

Equality and Diversity Questionnaire – determines if suppliers meet the requirements of the University's Equality policies.

Terms & Conditions – defines how Bristol UWE will let the contract, the rules tenderers must comply with and the relationship between the University and the selected contractor.

Any additional supporting information – such as Bristol UWE's policies that tenderers are expected to follow.

Tenders must be returned by the date given as any tenders received after the deadline will be remain unopened in order to ensure a fair process.

What are the University's expectations of suppliers and contractors?

UWE Bristol needs to ensure that it offers value-for-money procurement. We therefore expect excellent performance from contractors/suppliers, demonstrated through:

Value for money - not only best price, but also best administration costs and best costs related to quality. Suppliers should consider the total, whole life costs of supply when putting together their tenders.

Quality - contractors/suppliers are expected to provide services, supplies and works to an appropriate standard of quality, to meet the needs set out in the specification.

Adherence to University policies and protocols - we are committed to delivering our services, with consideration for a number of issues including sustainability, equalities, health and safety, and look for suppliers/contractors who are committed to helping us achieve our aims in these respects. Suppliers must also comply with the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#).

Integrity - honesty is expected in all dealings between the University and its contractors in addition to other relevant parties. Under the [Bribery Act](#), in addition to being a criminal offence to give or offer any gift, inducement or reward to an employee of a public body there will also be a new corporate offence of failing to prevent bribery. To that end, it is UWE Bristol's policy not to accept inducements, gifts or hospitality. Tenderers should note that they risk being excluded from the procurement process for failing to observe this requirement.

Innovation - suppliers are encouraged to be innovative and suggest new ideas to add value, continuously striving to improve their performance.

Communication - suppliers are expected to maintain good communications with the University throughout the contract and will be expected to attend regular contract review meetings.

How else might I be evaluated?

The tender documents may include Method Statements, Risk Assessments and/or Case Studies, which are used to determine how suppliers would manage the service or deal with particular issues. In responding to method statements, risk assessments and case studies suppliers are expected to show what methods and procedures they propose to use in undertaking the work, showing initiative and innovation in delivering the service.

At any time during the tender process you may be invited to give a presentation or attend an interview as part of your submission. The University will often conduct site visits to see first-hand how tenderers organise their work.

In many cases a pre-tender meeting will also be held to discuss the tender and clarify any issues raised from the tender documents.

How is the contract awarded?

Tender evaluation is always carried out in a comprehensive, equitable, auditable and transparent manner. To ensure fairness the evaluation criteria and method will be clearly defined in the tender documents.

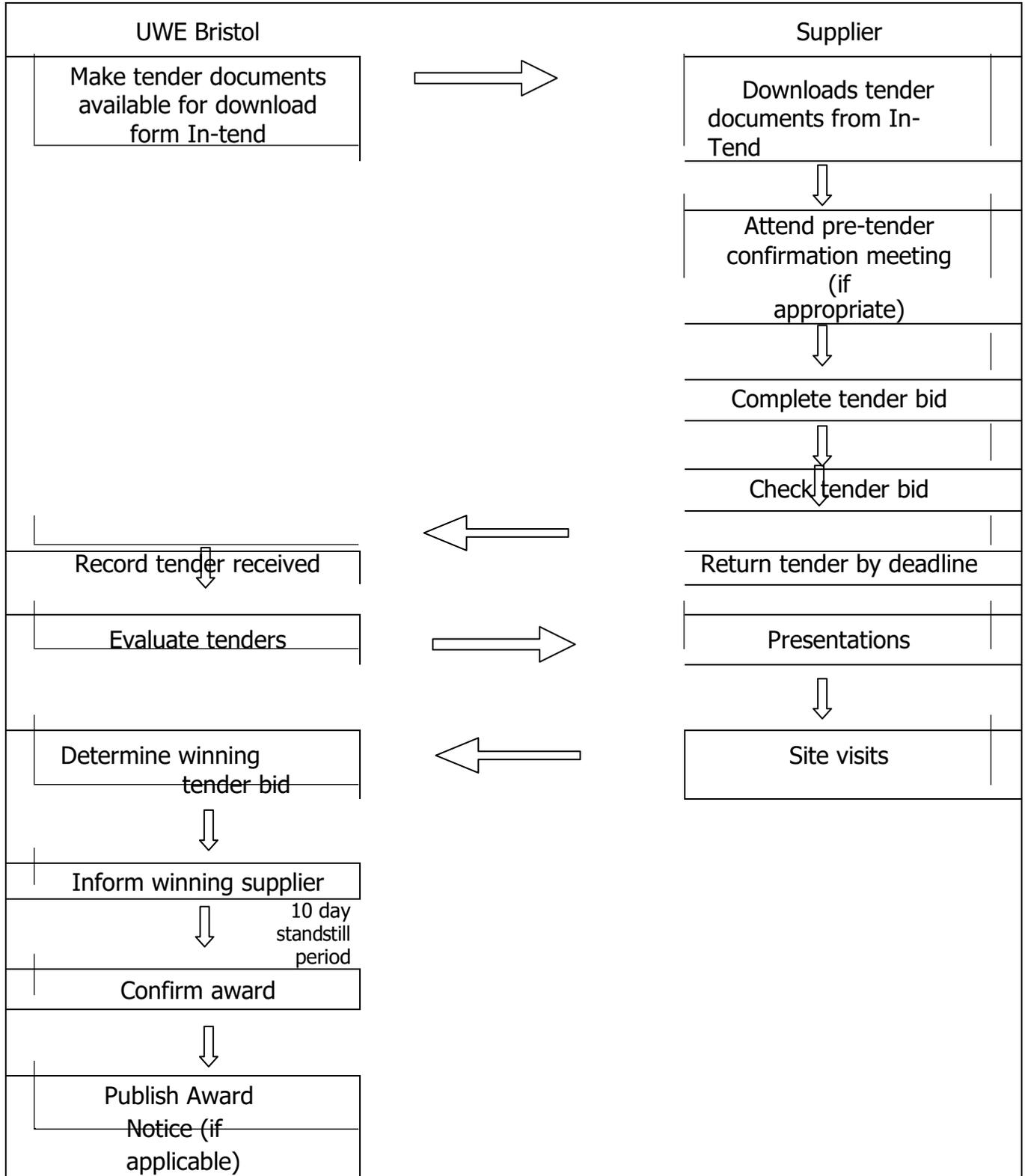
The University must be sure that in selecting a supplier/contractor it is getting value for money and the services will be delivered effectively. Evaluation is therefore based on two key criteria – how the tender proposes to deliver the contract (quality) and the cost of the contract (price). The University is looking for the best balance of quality and price, not just the lowest price. In most cases additional criteria will also be used in evaluating tenderers.

Contracts are awarded to the provider who is considered to offer best value-for-money, having regard to price, quality and best value – sometimes referred to as “most economically advantageous tender” and to be best able to meet the University’s specification. Evaluation of the most economically advantageous tender can incorporate a number of factors including:

- Financial viability of the tender
- Quality issues
- Technical merit
- After sales service
- Delivery date
- Technical back-up
- Experience
- Competence
- Policy issues such as equality & sustainability

The criteria to be used in any particular instance will be listed in the tender documents. The weightings of the criteria may also be given. The tender stage is summarised in the flow chart on the following page.

Tender Stage



Can I get some feedback?

If your tender is unsuccessful you should ask for feedback from the Procurement team. Within the limits of confidentiality, we can provide tenderers with feedback on which aspects of their bid were strongest and which were weakest, along with advice on improving and developing for the future.

Under the PCR you are legally entitled to request this feedback from us. Being unsuccessful in one contract does not mean you will be unsuccessful in future. You should use the feedback to help you improve for upcoming opportunities.

How are contracts monitored?

You will be expected to provide the service in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation and your proposals to carry out the contract. In order to ensure that we are continually providing value for money services to our community, suppliers and contractors working for the University are regularly monitored to assess their compliance with predefined performance criteria. The contract conditions are strictly applied, and explanations sought if a contractor fails to perform to the levels required.

Is UWE Bristol using e-Procurement?

The University uses Agresso Purchase to Pay (P2P) system through which purchase orders are generated and invoices paid. Purchase orders are emailed directly to suppliers. Suppliers can email invoices directly to Accounts Payable accounts.payable@uwe.ac.uk for payment. The University also uses purchasing cards which are used like traditional credit cards to purchase low value, ad-hoc supplies.

Where can I get further information?

If you are seeking information regarding a specific contract please use the contact details provided in the advert/contract notice and tendering details.

General information can be found on the [Procurement section](#) of the University's website. Further information can be obtained by e-mailing the Procurement Team at purchasing@uwe.ac.uk.

Should you have any comments or feedback on this guide we would be happy to hear from you, as we are always looking to develop the advice, guidance and support we offer to potential contractors. Please contact us by e-mailing purchasing@uwe.ac.uk