

# Selecting an Academic Delivery Partner for the University of Peterborough (UoP)

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## A Introduction

The CPCA has an opportunity to be the first University to develop a “hybrid” curriculum model that sees the technical curriculum truly embedded in and emerging from both traditional and technical qualifications via a range of delivery models that are identified with the businesses in Peterborough to meet their employment skills gaps. It is envisaged that via higher level degrees/apprenticeships, two-year degree programmes and work-placed study/placements in industry (via local businesses). A blended learning approach using a plethora of teaching methods that are flexible are key to attracting all age students to the University embedding live long learning.

## B Procurement Process

The CPCA are intending to follow the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation; this enables a staged shortlisting to ensure the process is proportionate for all parties and to enable the scope of what will be delivered and how to evolve during the procurement process. As such the process will include the following stages

- 1) Stage 1 – Call for Competition and Expression of Interest – the CPCA have issued this PIN to aid in both the creation of the first draft of the ITPN specification and to enable a shortened timescale for the SSQ and ITPN1 to ensure that the CPCA can deliver this project by the agreed timescale
- 2) Stage 2 - Standard Selection Questionnaire plus Project Specific Experience requirements – the CPCA will assess this as follows
  - a) Part 1 & 2 of the Central Government Standard Questionnaire – used to assess financial suitability and to review the Mandatory and Discretionary Disqualification as set out in the Public Contract Regulations.
  - b) Part 3 to include insurance requirements and experience. Experience will be assessed through the provision of three case studies which combined can demonstrate the skills and experience required to deliver this contract’s requirements. (It being accepted that the building of new university is not a common occurrence)

Following the receipt of the SSQs the CPCA will assess Parts 1 & 2 on a pass/ fail basis and then score the case studies to identify the most experienced suppliers to short list to participate in the next stage.

The Council will shortlist up to 5 suppliers (depending on the number received that meet the minimum requirements).

- 3) Stage 3 - Invitation to Participate in Initial Negotiations – based on the specification provided at tender stage (that being the accumulation of the EOI specification and the information achieved through this PIN and EOI), tenderers will be asked to provide
  - a) An initial tender response
  - b) Feedback on the Terms & Conditions
  - c) Any initial financial/ funding information that has been required

Following the evaluation of these submissions (in accordance with the identified evaluation criteria) the CPCA will shortlist the top 3 suppliers to invite to attend a negotiation meeting to discuss their submissions, ask questions and facilitate any amendments required to the specification, T&Cs and funding strategy.

- 4) Stage 4 - Final Invitation to Tender – following the above meetings the CPCA will finalise the Specification, Terms and Conditions and any Financial considerations that will be evaluated and issue a request for the submission of the supplier's 'Best and Final Offer'. This submission must be compliant with all the process and specification requirements included in the tender documentation and will require a signed Form of Tender to that ends.

These submissions will then be evaluated against the advised Evaluation criteria and the highest scoring submission identified as the preferred tenderer.

- 5) Stage 5 – Notification of Intention to award and standstill.

The CPCA reserves the right, where only 1 suitable supplier submits an EOI to invoke Regulation 32 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and negotiate with that supplier directly without the above process being followed or any other call for competition being published based on this PIN having identified only one suitable supplier in the EU market. This will then be confirmed through the publication of a Voluntary Ex-Anti Transparency (VEAT) Notice and a 10 day standstill.

## **C Rationale for the University of Peterborough**

Peterborough has been recognised for many years as a cold spot for Higher Education. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), working with Peterborough City Council (PCC), is committed to securing a new independent University for the City in readiness for the Academic Year 2022/23. The Combined Authority anticipates that the new University of Peterborough will have:

- a substantial positive economic impact on Peterborough City and the surrounding region such that investment in the new University will generate direct, indirect and induced impacts across a wide range of industries, supply chains and the wider consumer economy;
- a positive regenerative effect to support the transformation of Peterborough itself into a regional centre improving the experience of all citizens and visitors to the area. We anticipate that this will include generating new opportunities for graduate-level employment and encouraging both local participation in HE and the local retention of graduates to benefit the wider economy;
- a transformational effect on the life-chances and well-being of its students and raise aspiration more broadly within Peterborough and the surrounding region. We anticipate that this will include:
  - Improving life-chances, health and well-being outcomes of students and, over time, the wider community;
  - Building confidence and capability among the graduates of the new university and potentially encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship;
  - Enhancing the capabilities of those graduates who continue to live and work in and around Peterborough to improve their productivity and earning potential;
  - Attracting and retaining investment locally to create more opportunities for the people of Peterborough and the surrounding region to benefit from higher education and contribute to the on-going success of the region.

A higher education experience is one of the most powerful and transformational investments which can be made both by individual students and by civic society more broadly. The Combined Authority is determined to make these investments, to encourage others to make such investments and to bring the positive benefits of higher education to the people of Peterborough and the surrounding region.

## **D Partner Selection Criteria and Requirements**

### **1. Formal definition of Academic Delivery Partner**

- 1.1. The provider must be able to demonstrate means of compliance with the full requirements of “Securing Student Success: Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England” published by the Office for Students ([www.officeforstudents.org.uk](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk)). In particular, the Combined Authority expects that its Academic Partner will be fully capable of meeting all the challenges and demands of establishing a new, fully self-sustaining higher education offer within Peterborough and will bring its full capabilities into the partnership to give the new University every chance of success;
- 1.2. The provider must be able to demonstrate a clear line of academic authority to validate and award degrees.
- 1.3. Prospective partners must be able to satisfy the Combined Authority that it is an institution in good standing within the OfS Framework and can specifically demonstrate compliance with:
  - 1.3.1. The criteria for the authorisation of degree awarding powers with respect to guardianship of academic standards, a firm and systematic approach to the assurance of quality and the capacity to contribute to the continued good standing of higher education;
  - 1.3.2. The Conditions for Registration with the Office for Students including those relating to:
    - Access and Participation;
    - Quality and Standards;
    - Financial viability and sustainability;
    - The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework;
    - Compliance with consumer protection laws;
    - The Student Complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education;
    - The provision of a Student Protection Plan;
    - Public Interest Governance and Effective Management and Governance arrangements;
    - Such other requirements that the OfS may specify in order for institutions to comply with and meet the obligations of the Framework and to appropriately administer their responsibilities.

In responding to this Expression of Interest, prospective partners are invited to demonstrate their qualifications to participate in the selection process either in their own right or via appropriate formal partnerships. For the avoidance of doubt, the Authority will only entertain proposals from established bodies which can satisfy the criteria of the OfS and can demonstrate that they have the legal capacity to enter into appropriate contractual relationships with CPCA and PCC.

### **2. Commitment to the Vision for an Independent University in Peterborough**

The working definition for the Project is as follows:

“The University of Peterborough will be a high-quality employment focused University for the city and region. It will acquire an international reputation for innovative technological approaches to face to face learning and in applied technology and science. It will be characterised by outstanding student satisfaction and response to local needs. The curriculum will be led by student and employer demand as well as developing opportunities in the technological, scientific and business areas. Its buildings will be architecturally leading, flexible and environmentally friendly. The curriculum, academic community and buildings will reflect a desire to be the greenest university possible”.

- 2.1. The working definition of the new University is set out above and it is the expectation that the Academic Partner will join with CPCA in a full commitment to deliver a new University which is consistent with the aspirations of the City and region. A further expectation is that provision

- will be made within the governance structures of the new University for both CPCA and Peterborough City Council to be represented along with the Academic Partner.
- 2.2. It is the expectation of the Combined Authority that the Academic Partner will be committed to the development of an institution which is capable of achieving complete independence within a period of 5-10 years from opening in Academic Year 2022/23.
  - 2.3. It is a further expectation of the Combined Authority that readiness for independence will be assessed by an initial formal review which should fall due no later than Academic Year 2027/28. The terms of reference and timing of the Review will be determined in conjunction with the Academic Partner and will flow from the nature and character of the relationships established via this Selection Process.
  - 2.4. The Academic Partner will be committed to ensuring that the new University will be eligible to apply for University Title as defined under “Securing Student Success: Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England” published by the Office for Students ([www.officeforstudents.org.uk](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk)).
  - 2.5. The Academic Partner will be instrumental in ensuring that the primary objectives for the new University are valid and achievable and these are expected to include:
    - 2.5.1. Recruiting a student population initially of 2,000 students and rising to 12,500 students by 2030;
    - 2.5.2. Creating a City Centre Campus in Peterborough while also extending the reach of the University to under-represented areas of the Region;
    - 2.5.3. Offering a breadth of provision and opportunities for learning including campus-based provision, in-work, life-long learning opportunities through digital, accelerated, modular degrees and higher level apprenticeships;
    - 2.5.4. Innovating and developing new methods of reaching under-represented groups and areas and addressing the needs of first generation higher education students through the provision of flexible entry routes and imaginative packages of learning to encourage participation, raise aspiration and promote progression.
  - 2.6. The primary focus of the new University will be on teaching excellence with an aspiration to achieve a TEF Gold Award at the earliest opportunity. Relevance in research and knowledge transfer capabilities are expected but the Combined Authority recognises that these will take time to foster and should be expected to develop over a medium- to long-term planning horizon of more than the initial 10 years of the life of the New University.
  - 2.7. The new University should complement rather than directly compete with, or replicate, other higher education providers around the region. It is important to recognise that the new University will be tasked with achieving a net increase in participation levels and not the cannibalisation of existing provision.
  - 2.8. The new University will also be expected to have a very strong, focused and responsive relationship with local businesses designed to enhance local industrial capabilities and capacity.

In responding to this Expression of Interest document, prospective partners are invited to comment on the Vision for the University and to identify matters of principle and practice which may bear on the feasibility, acceptability and risks associated with realising the Vision.

For the avoidance of doubt, a formal Curriculum Model is expected to be developed to underpin the creation of the new University. The prototype for this Model is being developed by CPCA and will be shared with prospective partners at the next stage of procurement. It is anticipated that CPCA, PCC and the appointed Academic Partner will agree a robust, relevant and sustainable Curriculum Model for the new University.

### **3. Commitment to develop the operational capabilities of the UoP**

- 3.1. The Academic Partner will provide the skills, knowledge, experience and resources to make a practical reality of the new University. The full scale and scope of the requirements will be shaped in discussions with the new Academic Partner but as a minimum are expected to include:

- 3.1.1. Staff recruitment – initially, a UoP Development Team should be formed by the Academic Partner to work with CPCA and key stakeholders. The Development Team should include senior leadership, academic subject specialists and professional service support. The Academic Partner will be responsible for recruiting for the new University a full complement of staff and procuring relevant services;
- 3.1.2. Curriculum design and development work including development of a learning and teaching strategy and programme validation arrangements. The Academic Provider will need to fully support the curriculum from inception to maturity and retirement/renewal of individual courses and the support required may also include learning technologists and materials production services to support blended and distance learning, enabling of virtual learning environments etc.;
- 3.1.3. Staff workload planning, resource scheduling and timetabling – linked to curriculum modelling and business model prototyping;
- 3.1.4. Student recruitment, marketing and admissions processes and systems to include UCAS support, direct entry and employer-sponsored routes to be developed. It is anticipated that the focus of these services will be positive, proactive, out-going and engaging to reach out to under-represented groups, to engage with their needs and win their active participation in the University;
- 3.1.5. Student and academic services and systems development – a full range of transactional, advisory, welfare and other student-facing services along with regulatory and academic policy support including assessment, examinations, graduation. It is anticipated that these services will be fit for purpose with respect to the diverse needs of the student population (segmentation) – the service orientation should be capable of responding to the “segment of one”;
- 3.1.6. Library and learning resources services/systems – physical and virtual resources and associated services including licensing;
- 3.1.7. Strategic planning, finance and governance services and systems development – full Head Office/VCO functions;
- 3.1.8. Operational services and support functions – IT (AV/hardware, infrastructure, software/systems, helpdesks etc.), estates, FM, catering etc.

For the avoidance of doubt, the new University is not expected to develop any commercial functions e.g. Sport, Residential, Conferencing functions. Any commercial opportunities will be offered to commercial firms and investors in order to preserve the focus of the New University on its primary mission and in order to avoid diverting capital and working capital away from supporting core business and underpinning growth initiatives.

In responding to this Expression of Interest document, prospective partners are asked to identify any omissions or variations from the scope of requirements identified above. It is the expectation of the Authority that a more detailed specification will be developed between the Academic Partner and the Authority to underpin a jointly agreed operating model for the new University.

#### **4. Commitment to the Long-Term Success of the University of Peterborough**

- 4.1. The Combined Authority is determined to secure that the future of the new University is assured from the outset and that a new independent University can be established in Peterborough. This is a significant and substantial commitment which is embodied in four key tests:
  - 4.1.1. Branding – CPCA aspires to create a new entity branded as the University of Peterborough. The branding will be agreed with the Academic Partner on the basis of selecting a brand which chimes with the local population, is clearly associated with the City of Peterborough and resonates with key market segments. The brand should differentiate and distinguish the new University within increasingly competitive national and international higher education markets;
  - 4.1.2. The performance of the new University must be at least compliant with the requirements of this specification in meeting the needs of the local population. In that context, the expectation is that the institution will be a fully self-sustainable institution

- capable of standing independently and, in time being able to satisfy the requirements of the OfS Regulatory Framework and hold the right to award its own degrees;
- 4.1.3. The ownership structure of the new University should reflect the commitment of resources by the CPCA, PCC and the Academic Partner to the project;
- 4.1.4. Exit arrangements of any one partner must promote the opportunity for the remaining partner to carry on and develop the University of Peterborough in the best interests of the people of the City and Region.

Prospective partners are invited to make proposals and provide innovative and imaginative solutions to help set the foundations for the long-term success of the University and to meet the local ambitions and aspirations for the University. The Authority expects that partners may wish to examine issues of branding and governance in ways which complement their existing missions, brands and governance models.

## **5. Commitment to resourcing and addressing working capital requirements**

- 5.1. The Combined Authority recognises that the investment in the new University is a major undertaking and is seeking a prospective Academic Partner which will commit to working with the Authority to:
  - 5.1.1. Establish an investment model to meet the initial start-up costs of the new entity and fund/finance the working capital requirements;
  - 5.1.2. Establish a viable business model and financial framework for the new institution which will secure its independence;
  - 5.1.3. Create a strategy for the new University which will ensure that it is able to maintain the quality of its estate and underlying assets;
  - 5.1.4. Ensure that there is a positive return on investment to at least off-set the initial start-up funding and repay working capital;
  - 5.1.5. Ensure that the new institution is not reliant upon excessive levels of support beyond tuition fees and earned income and does not rely upon borrowing;
  - 5.1.6. Create a sustainable growth strategy based on reinvesting surpluses to identify and leverage new opportunities for taught programmes, research and knowledge transfers.

In responding to this Expression of Interest, prospective partners are invited to identify any matters of principle and risks in relation to capital and revenue financing of the new University as outlined above. It is the expectation of the Authority that the Academic Partner will agree a Funding Model for the new University which is comprehensively sustainable.

## **6. Commitment to CPCA Programme**

- 6.1. The development of the new University is a long-standing commitment of CPCA and work is already advancing to facilitate the creation of the New University. The Academic Partner will have considerable latitude to shape the new University within the framework of this specification. The Academic Partner will also be expected to work with CPCA within the following sequence:
  - 6.1.1. A Phase 1 Building for the New University on a target site is already being developed in readiness for Academic Year 2022/23 based on design work led by CPCA. It is the expectation that the new Academic Partner may influence the fit-out of this building but fundamental concepts and aspects of the design may already be determined before the Partner is formally appointed. Prospective partners will be asked to work within the constraints of the design during the early stages of planning for and forming the new University.
  - 6.1.2. Longer-term a full building programme to expand the University on the target site will be based on Masterplanning to an estimated capacity of 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Funding for these later phases is to be secured by the Academic Partner and CPCA working in partnership initially and by the independent new University after it has been formally established.

## **E      EOI Response Requirements**

Key Questions to be asked of, and information to be supplied by, prospective partners – see Expression of Interest Form for further details.