

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE 32

Supplier Selection and Oversight for Research Projects

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE 32

Supplier Selection and Oversight for Research Projects

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to outline procedures for selecting suppliers when purchasing goods or services for research projects or activities, or for selecting, approving and monitoring of sub-contractors.

It is applicable to all University of Warwick staff involved in the procurement of goods and/or services to be used in a research project in line with university financial procedures.

2. Definitions

Supplier	A person or organisation that provides something needed such as a product or service
Tendering	The process by which an organisation who need goods/services invites other parties to submit a proposal or bid to provide these goods/services
Procurement	The process by which an organisation buys the products or services it needs from another organisation

3. Background

The University is responsible for ensuring consistency and quality of any goods and/or services provided by suppliers. It has procedures in place to ensure that any goods and/or services are purchased in accordance with University Financial Regulations and [anti-bribery policy](#), UK legislation and the Bribery Act 2010.

Any purchases must ensure sound business practice and value for money, whilst adhering to regulations applicable to the goods and/or service(s) to be purchased.

All staff involved in purchasing goods and/or services must familiarise themselves with and comply with the requirements of the [University's Finance Procedure 15](#) (FP15):

Examples of the types of goods and/or services which may be purchased for a research project include, but are not limited to, purchasing of equipment, courier services, software, drug supply, packaging, labelling and distribution services, off-site archiving, sub-contractor services.

4. Procedure

4.1 Responsibilities

Chief Investigator (CI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify services and /or goods required to deliver the study
Research Manager/Senior Manager Lead/Trial Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Liaising with suppliers to define requirements and obtain quotesEnsure adherence to University Financial RegulationsOngoing review/monitoring of supplier activities

Procurement & Insurance Services (PIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of contracts in accordance with University Financial Regulations (when involved in the process of selecting and approving external suppliers)
Research & Impact Services (R&IS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice on Funder requirements to assist the PIS where they are dealing with contracts Produce contracts for all other research related contracts (if no PIS involvement)
Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have oversight of goods and/or services procured Verify the suitability of vendors selected by the Chief Investigator (CI) prior to their use

4.2 When?

The need for a product or service should be identified and appropriate quotations obtained at the costings stage of a project to ensure sufficient funds are provided for within a grant application (see 4.3.1 below).

Selection of a supplier is likely to take place after the grant is awarded, but as the processes involved may take several weeks/months (particularly if tendering is required), it is essential that sufficient time is factored into the project plan to select suppliers and set up the necessary contracts. Supplier selection would normally take place during the set-up phase of a project, although as need and resources change during a project, this may be done as necessary at any time point. The sponsor should verify the suitability of vendors selected prior to their use.

The study team should carry out a process of ongoing review of the supplier's activities throughout their involvement in a project.

4.3 How?

The University's Financial Regulations provide details of the process to be followed when purchasing goods or services, and staff involved in purchasing goods or services should ensure that they are adhered to.

[Financial Procedure 15 - Purchasing](#)

4.3.1 Identify the specific need for the product or service

The following must be clearly identified and considered when looking for a supplier:

- Availability and allocation of funds in the grant (including considerations around the potential for extra costs e.g., if recruitment target is not reached and existing stock has expired)
- Specific procurement requirements made by the funding body (e.g., number of quotes required, threshold for tendering) to ensure contractual obligations are met
- Application of the University of Warwick Financial Regulations, particularly with respect to internal and external approved suppliers, and thresholds for tendering
- Timeframes involved
- Scope of work/goods required
- Involvement of other University Department(s), e.g., R&IS, PIS

Sufficient funding must be identified for the **total spend** before starting this process and deciding upon the most appropriate procurement route.

N.B. If you are purchasing new software or renewing existing software - e.g., Twilio or a new 3rd party App where any personal identifiable data will be processed, follow the software procurement process: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/servicessupport/software/purchasing>
Contact: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idg>

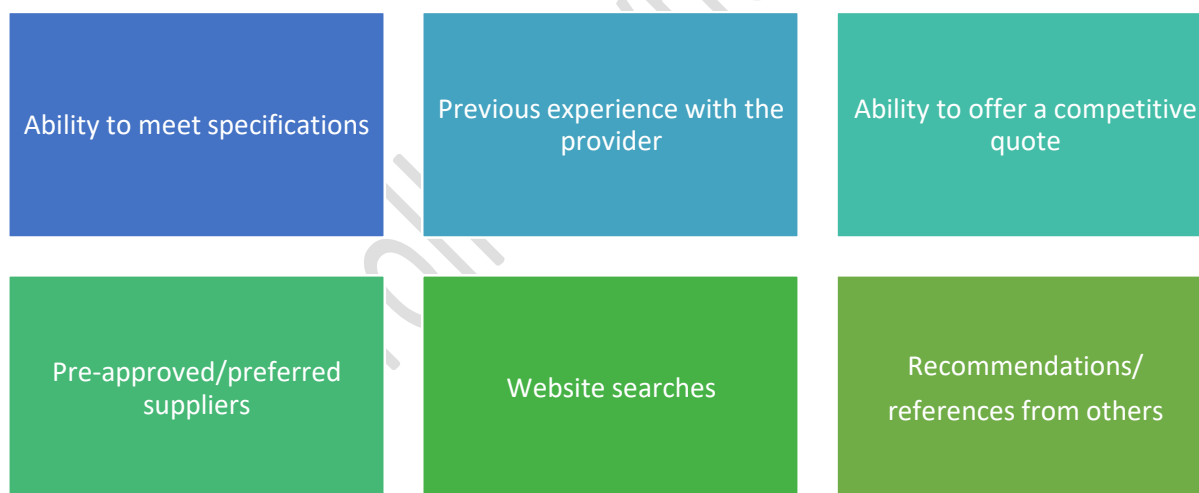
Or visit the [self-service portal](#)

The Information Digital Group (IDG) will triage this to determine if further security or financial checks need to be undertaken before the procurement process is completed. They will work with the potential provider to determine if they have appropriate organisational, technical and security measures to be able to undertake this processing activity in line with data protection regulations. This process may be time consuming and so should be started as early as possible.

4.3.2 Identify potential providers

FP15 requires that where an internal provider exists they must be used unless express approval is provided by finregs@warwick.ac.uk. Where a university approved supplier already exists, they should be used. Where an internal provider or approved supplier does not already exist, the quotation and tender thresholds laid out in FP15 should be followed.

Whether you are purchasing from an internal or external supplier, identify which providers will most likely meet the operational need, taking the following into consideration:



4.3.3 Evaluate potential providers

Where tenders and quotations are required by FP15 (section 15.7), tendering and supplier evaluation would be undertaken. If a formal tender procedure is required, contact the [Procurement and Insurance Office](#) for further tailored guidance.

https://warwick.ac.uk/services/finance/procurement_and_insurance/docsandforms/quotes

Where a managed tender process is not required the suitability of potential providers should be assessed by using the Vendor Assessment questionnaire ([T59](#)) and any one or a combination of the following methods, as appropriate:



The trial sponsor should also be made aware of and provide approval of the supplier(s) selected by the trial team/CI by reviewing and signing off the questionnaire.

4.3.4 Obtain required contracts

Where the PIS have been engaged in the process of selecting and approving external suppliers for goods and/or services for research related projects, the contracts will be dealt with by the PIS in accordance with Financial Regulation 15. R&IS will, where necessary, advise on any appropriate funder requirements which may need to be incorporated into any such agreements. All other research related contracts will be dealt with by R&IS in accordance with Financial Regulation 14.

4.3.5 Conflict of interest

Where any goods and/or services are to be purchased from a company in which a university employee (who is involved in making that purchasing decision) has any financial interest, the interest must be declared to the Head of Department and must also be disclosed to the University Finance Director. The individual involved will not be able to take part in the procurement procedure for these goods and/or services. See the University's Financial Procedure 1 ([FP1](#)) for further information on conflicts of interest.

4.3.6 Oversight of vendors

It is important to have processes in place to ensure that external suppliers are providing the contracted service within the appropriate timeframes and to the appropriate regulatory standards specified. To maintain oversight of contracted vendors, regular meetings and documentation of key decisions is recommended. Consideration should be given to how vendors will be monitored on a project-by-project basis and visits to conduct independent audits may be considered if required. Any site visits or audits should be documented, and the report filed in the Trial Master File (TMF) or equivalent.

An end of project review should take place to assess the supplier and determine if they are suitable to work with in the future. Feedback to interested parties e.g., Trial Steering Committee (TSC) should be provided.

List of abbreviations

CI	Chief Investigator
FP	Finance Procedure
IDG	Information Digital Group
PIS	Procurement and Insurance Services
QA	Quality Assurance
R&IS	Research & Impact Services
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TMF	Trial Master File
TSC	Trial Steering Committee
WCTU	Warwick Clinical Trials Unit

Templates

WCTU_T59_VendorQuestionnaire