

Invitation to Tender

External Audit

Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Date of approval:	26 th February 2021



Harper Adams Students' Union is a registered charity (charity number 1157391). It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales (company number CE002077), whose registered office is at TF10 8NB, Harper Adams University, Edgmond, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

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INSTRUCTIONS TO TENDERER

You are invited by Harper Adams University Students' Union to submit a tender for our external audit contract.

Please read all documentation carefully.

Please note the following specific instructions to Tenderers:

1. The objective of this tender is to identify the most economically advantageous offer: The criteria by which this tender will be evaluated are detailed within this document.
2. This contract is for the provision of external auditors for audit related services for the period of three years commencing including the current financial year which ends on the 31st July 2021.
3. The content of this document are for supplier information only: they outline our requirements and the background. The partnering documentations referenced 'Instructions for Tenderers' are for tenderers to complete. The Tenderer should quote their name on any supplementary papers submitted with the tender.
4. We would usually ask that all tenders must be submitted in hard copy, under plain cover, signed by the relevant authorities. Due to COVID-19 and the entire HASU team working from home. We are asking that all tenders are submitted via email to aburr@harper-adams.ac.uk with the subject line – 'COMMERCIAL AND IN CONFIDENCE – HASU EXTERNAL AUDIT TENDER'
5. Tenders must reach us by 16:00 - 26th March 2021. Late tender bids will not be considered.
6. No costs will be paid by the Students' Union in connection with you preparing your tender, whether successful or not.

1) Introduction

The Trustee Board for Harper Adams Students' Union (HASU) is seeking to appoint external auditors for the provision of Audit related services for the period of three years commencing with the current financial year which ends on the 31st July 2021, with an option for a further 2 x one year extensions subject to an annual review of performance and costs.

2) Background

Harper Adams Students' Union is a Company Limited by Guarantee (company number CE002077) and not having a Share Capital as defined by the Companies Act 2006. Furthermore, HASU registered as a Charity (charity number 1157391) in June 2013. HASU is a Students' Union within the meaning of the Education Act 1994 and is devoted to the educational interests and welfare of its Members.

In the pursuit of our aims for the public benefit, Harper Adams Students' Union seeks to achieve its charitable objectives in the following ways:

- Promoting the interest and welfare of Students at Harper Adams University during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising Members.
- Being the recognised representative channel between Students and Harper Adams University and any other external bodies.
- Providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussion and debate for the personal development of its Members.

HASU principle governing documents is its Articles of Association and Memorandum, agreed by the members of the Students' Union in a General Meeting and reviewed on an annual basis. Copies of the Memorandum and Articles are available from the offices of HASU and also via the Policies and Documents part of our website.

(<https://www.harpersu.com/yoursu/trusteeboard/officialdocuments/>)

HASU receives a block grant from Harper Adams University and occupies offices and commercial space owned by the University. This support is intrinsic to the relationship between the University and HASU. Although HASU runs various trading activities, it will always be dependent on the support of the University. There is no reason to believe that this support will not continue for the foreseeable future.

Information about the Students' Union Strategic Plans, Policies, Trustees, Accounts and other documents can be viewed on our website. (www.harpersu.com)

3) Organisational Structure

Members

On registering at Harper Adams University, all students automatically become members of Harper Adams Students' Union. This entitles them to vote in elections, put forward their ideas to make changes through our democratic process and vote at Referenda.

Board of Trustees

The Students' Union is headed by a Board of Trustees which is comprised of four external Trustees, two student Trustees, and two Sabbatical Officer Trustees.

Sub-Committees

The Trustee Board are in the process of developing further sub-committees to support the wider Board of Trustees. The following boards are being considered with their membership

- Finance Committee
- HR & Remunerations Committee

Staff

There is a staff team lead by the Union Director. Our staff team is made up of permanent members of staff, term time only staff and student staff.

4) External Audit Tender Process

4.1) Purpose of this Invitation to Tender

The purpose of this Invitation to Tender is to invite proposals for the provision of Audit and related services for the Students' Union and with any subsidiary companies that may be established.

The Students' Union will ensure that all information required to enable you to present a detailed and considered response will be made available.

4.2) Instructions to Tenderers.

Tender submissions should be completed in full and returned by 16:00 Friday 26th March.

All prices should be quoted in Pounds Sterling. Prices quoted should exclude VAT but must indicate clearly where VAT is applicable and where items might be zero-rated.

You should submit your offer based on the specifications and service requirements detailed in this document.

Should you believe that an offer based on an alternative specification would meet the Students' Union requirements and offer greater value for money, this alternative should be detailed separately and returned with the completed tender document.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have all the information required for the preparation of your tender and that you are satisfied with the interpretation of terminology used in this documentation. You must also ensure that you are fully conversant with the nature and extent of the obligations to be accepted by you if the tender is successful.

The Students' Union is seeking to ensure that its audit arrangements are maintained at the best

possible standards whilst achieving good value.

You will be required to report on the financial statements of the Students' Union in accordance with the United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practices and the requirements of the Charities Commission.

You will be required to carry out whatever examination of the statements and supporting records and control systems that are necessary to reach an opinion on the statements.

From time to time you may be required to provide additional services beyond the scope of the annual audit.

On appointment, the external audit team will take instructions only from those authorised personnel notified as being the main point of contact for the Students' Union at the commencement of the Agreement. The main contact will be the Union Director.

The Students' Union would expect an engagement partner to be nominated to take overall responsibility whilst dealing with any Students' Union activities.

The engagement partner will be required to attend Trustee Board meetings as required.

The successful Tenderer will be expected to provide regular progress reports on work being undertaken by the Students' Union and/or any other accounting or charitable issues that may be relevant for our organisation.

All questions relating to this tender should be made in Writing to Alastair Burr, Students' Union Director by emailing aburr@harper-adams.ac.uk

A response to all technical questions will be forwarded to all interested parties.

4.3 Conditions of Tender

Your tender is to be made strictly in accordance with the requirements of this Invitation to Tender.

The Students' Union will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by you in connection with the preparation of the tenders.

For the duration of the tender period, Tenderers should abstain from contacting or having any conversations with any Students' Union employees other than those that form part of the formal process.

The Tenderer must not offer or agree to give any employees, student, Trustee or any other associated member with this process any inducement to do or not do, any action which may be considered improper conduct. If an incident occurs which the Students' Union considers to be inappropriate, we reserve the right to disregard to Tenderer's bid.

The proposal document and any information provided in relation to this exercise are to be treated in the strictest confidence by both parties.

The Students' Union will evaluate the tender against a pre-determined set of criteria and will not be awarded on price alone.

The Students' Union endeavours to undertake the evaluation in an objective, consistent manner, without bias.

4.4 Treatment of Tender

Any contract arising from this Invitation to Tender will be awarded to the Tenderer who submits the economically most advantageous offer in respect of the criteria specified.

Tenders will be evaluated against the criteria detailed within section 4.5 of this document.

Following evaluation of the tenders received, a shortlist of Tenderers may be required to attend an interview.

4.5 Tender Proposal

Your proposal should include an outline of your organisation, size and capabilities.

You will need to describe your approach to developing an audit plan the timeframe required, and your approach for the first and subsequent years.

The tenderer should identify the partner and manager who will be responsible for the external audit work together with details of their relevant experience and qualifications, and what arrangements would need to be put in place to ensure staff continuity.

The Tenderer should identify how much partner and manager time we will receive.

Your proposal should include the details of two clients from other relevant organisation so that we can take up references as required.

The Tenderer should indicate the time that will be devoted to the external audit.

Your proposal should include a clear detail of the fees and rates applicable for your service in relation to the annual audit and any other additional work that may be required.

The selection of the successful Tenderer will be based without limitation and at the sole discretion of the Students' Union, on the responses to the above points and the following criteria:-

- Organisation fit and cultural compatibility
- Understanding of the organisation, particularly auditing and Charity reporting consistent with SORP requirements.
- Demonstration of areas of expertise and experience that your company possess which may be particularly relevant to the Students' Union
- Quality of Audit Team
- Quality of Service
- Quality assurance arrangements
- Provision of any additional services which may relate to charities, and students' union in particular.
- Evidence of ethical involvement and activities e.g (Corporate Social Responsibility).
- Rates and charges
- Details of experience, ability and stability of employment of the audit team in the areas pertaining to the requirement of the Students' Union.

- Arrangements for resolution of disputes and handling of complaints
- Approach to conflicts on interests.
- The overall presentation of the Tenderers proposal.

4.6 Audit Approach

Your proposal should identify how you:

- Determine audit strategy and undertake audit planning.
- Address matters of audit scope and materiality
- Identify and respond to critical audit issues
- Control and coordinate the audit process
- Ensure appropriate responsibility for decisions on the audit.
- Conduct the reporting arrangements
- Approach the first year of audit.

Please provide any other information which you may consider helpful. Your tender documentation should be sent as Word or PDF document to aburr@harper-adams.ac.uk by 16:00 Friday 26th March.

Following evaluation of the tenders received, a shortlist of Tenderers may be required to attend an interview as indicated in the timetable below.

4.7 References

Please provide details of two clients for which you have provided external audit services, from which we can seek appropriate references.

5 Timetable

- Requests for a virtual site visit must be received by 4:00 pm Wednesday 17th March 2021.
- Site visits will be held virtually during the week commencing 22nd March 2021.
- Written proposals, submitted electronically either as a Word or PDF document, are to be received by 16:00 Friday 26th March.
- Evaluation and shortlisting will be completed by Friday 2nd April 2021.
- Presentations from the shortlisted firms will take place during the week commencing 5th April 2021 – Date and time to be confirmed.
- A report will be presented, and recommendations given at the Trustee Board meeting on April 23rd, 2021 for the appointment of the successful firm.
- The successful Tenderer will be formally notified on Monday 26th April 2021

- Standstill period of 10 working days as per the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 – 26th April 10am until 10th March 2021
- Audit planning meeting tba as soon as possible.

Alastair Burr – Union Director
Harper Adams Students' Union, February 2021.