

How to Bid for Public Sector Contracts

T-Levels Wave 4 Readiness

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Please note that the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education does not guarantee that any organisation represented at this workshop will be awarded any contract for services by the Institute, and attendance is not a prerequisite for a successful application. The content covered is intended to provide attendees with general advice and guidance on how to submit an application, and is for information purposes only. The Institute does not accept any liability for any reliance upon, or application of, the advice and guidance provided.

Introductions and what are you hoping to get out of the session?



**PLEASE RESPOND IN THE
COMMENTS FIELD**

Getting the most from today!



Share your own
experiences



Ask questions in the
comments field
or use the raise hand function



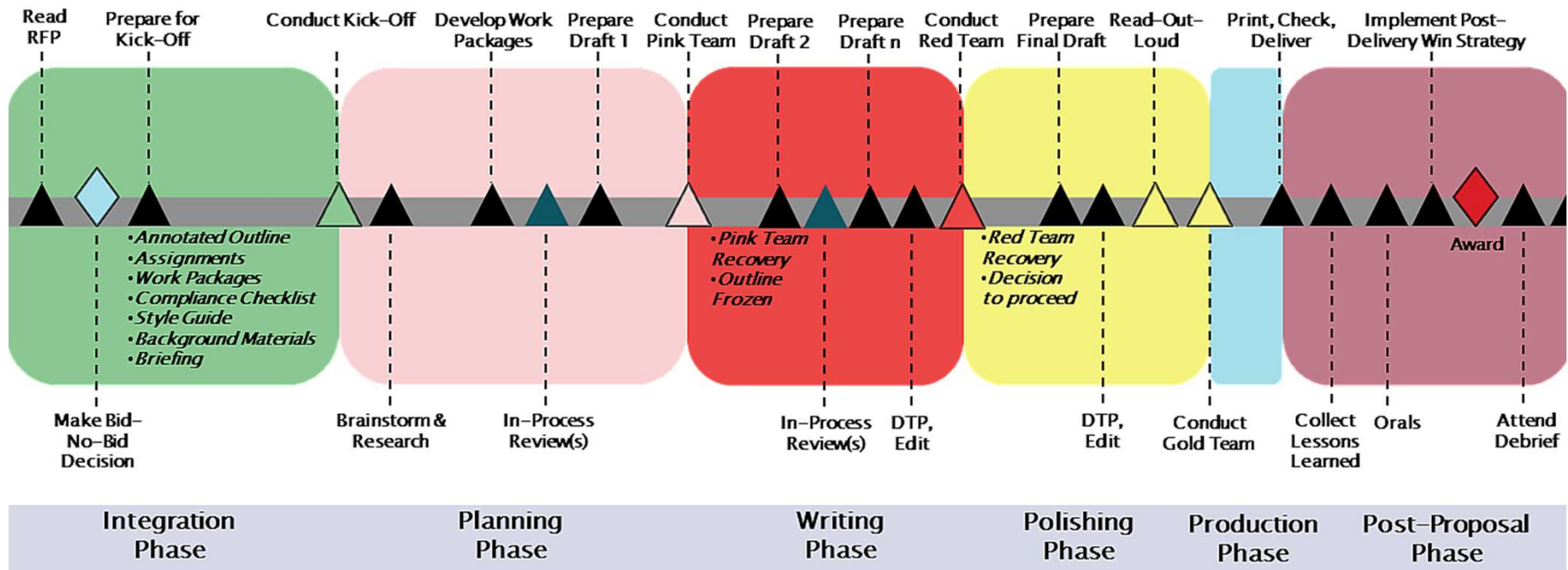
Take positive
actions away



What are the Key Elements of the Bidding Process?



A Standard Bid Process



Why Tenders Don't Win!



1. Failing to answer the specific questions
2. Failing to address the full specification
3. An insufficient level of detail
4. Inability to evidence the required competencies
5. Poor planning / last minute rush jobs
6. The right people are not involved
7. Predictability and a lack of new ideas
8. Unattractive pricing
9. Non-compliance with eligibility criteria
10. Copy / Paste or a standard response

T-Levels Procurement

- Geared to develop and deliver each of the new T Level qualifications, across 4 “waves” of competition.
- T Levels is a Concession Contract
 - i.e. contract to act as an exclusive Awarding Body, primarily earning entry and additional service fees from colleges/providers.
- Quality v Cost (for T Levels it is an 80:20 split)
 - Quality is paramount, though it is also Government policy to award contracts on the basis of Value for Money (VfM).
 - VfM is defined as securing the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of use of the goods/services bought. *It is not about minimising up front costs.*

T-Levels Wave 4 (from 2023)

Route	Pathways
Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care	Animal Care and Management T-Level Agriculture, Land Management and Production T-Level
Creative and Design	Craft and Design T-Level Media Broadcast and Production T-Level
Hair and Beauty	Hair, Beauty and Aesthetics T-Level
Catering and Hospitality	Catering T-Level
Legal, Finance and Accounting	Legal T-Level
Business and Administration	Human Resources T-Level

Delivery from 2023/24

- Delivery from 2023 only open to select colleges;
- New Expression of Interest open in November 2020 for further providers looking to deliver in 2023/24:
- Providers must:
 - have 10+ current learners per T-level subject
 - have satisfactory financial health.

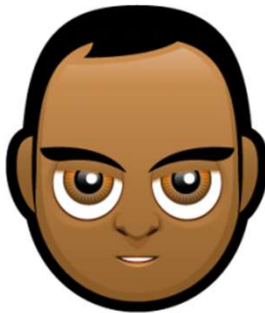
Roles and Responsibilities



Setting Responsibility from the Outset



Who makes
the Bid / No
Bid Decision?



Who is the
Project
Manager?



Who designs /
approves the
solution?



Who signs off
the final bid?



RACI Matrix

(Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed)

	Business Development Manager	Head of Operations	Head of Finance	Managing Director
Pricing Offer	R	C	A	C
Delivery Solution	R	A	I	I
Proposal Content	A	C	C	I
Bid Sign-Off	R	I	I	A

Government Funding Funnel



The IATE's e-Sourcing Portal

<https://procontract.due-north.com/>



Log In

User Name

Password

[Forgotten your username or password?](#)

Continue

Welcome to ProContract

Already registered?

Simply enter your chosen username and password and click 'Continue'

New to ProContract?

Suppliers - If you are not currently registered on the ProContract procurement portal, you can complete a simple registration process by clicking the following link - [Register](#)

[free](#)

Migrated from ProContract Version 2?

If you are currently registered with a ProContract Version 2 procurement portal and the procurement portal has migrated to Version 3 your details have been automatically transferred, however for security and account validation you will be required to reset your password by following the instructions outlined in the following link - [First time login following migration](#)

Still need help?

Please visit the [help center](#) where you can access an extensive help library, FAQ's, videos and guides





Contracts Finder

<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>

Contracts Finder lets you search for information about contracts worth over £10,000 with the government and its agencies.

You can use Contracts Finder to:

- search for contract opportunities in different sectors
- find out what's coming up in the future
- look up details of previous tenders and contracts

You can create an account to get email updates and save your searches. You can still search and apply for contracts without an account.

Common Contracting Procedures

Open Procedure	A single response is required, and any interested company may submit such a response.	Effort applied needs to take account of a potentially high number of competitors.	Example: IfATE T-Levels Wave 1
Restricted Procedure	A PQQ/SQ exercise determines a short list of bidders who are invited to submit a second stage tender.	PQQs/SQs are normally less detailed, with a minimum of 5 bidders progressing to the second more detailed stage.	Example: Similar to IfATE T-Levels Wave 3
Competitive Dialogue	A process of both written submissions and face-to-face dialogue to determine the successful contractor(s).	Can be a longer and more resource intensive process than open and restricted procedures.	Example: DWP Work & Health Programme
Framework / DPS	A process to select to a pre-approved group of suppliers, who are then invited to bid for mini-competitions	Can be used by multiple commissioners, albeit with no guarantee of business volume	Example: MoJ Prison Education DPS

Bid Or No Bid?



Decision Tree – Commercial Factors



1. Do you have the commercial capability to achieve the specified performance requirement?
 2. How much emphasis is placed on price?
 3. Does the likely return justify the cost of bidding?
 4. Will the opportunity deliver an acceptable return?
 5. Is contract value proportionate to your turnover?
 6. Is full cost recovery realistic?
 7. Is revenue contingent on performance results (e.g. service credit regime or Payment by Results)?
 8. How much working capital might be required?
 9. Can we use existing staff and resources?
-

Payment Model Type

Payment Model	Description
Fixed Price	The contract is based on a fixed value for completion of all outputs – usually paid on contract completion.
Service Fee	The contract involves regular instalment payments over a period of time – not normally linked to outputs.
Staged Payments	Payment is linked to completing specific milestone deliverables, often by a specified date. This can involve penalties.
Payment by Results (PbR)	Part of the contract value is linked to outcomes (tangible or social) – typically with a payment per outcome.
Licence	The contract empowers the contractor to collect fees or payments directly from service users.
Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	Contractor pays up-front costs. The project is then leased to the Government who make annual service payments (e.g. construction.)

Decision Tree – Market Factors



1. Does the opportunity fit with our long term corporate strategy?
2. Do we have transferable competency?
3. Do we have a competitive record of success?
4. Can we deliver the full specification?
5. Is there an incumbent supplier?
6. How much competition could there be?
7. Would they prefer a locally based supplier?
8. Do we hold all the required accreditations?
9. Have we delivered for this funder before?

Key ITT Documents



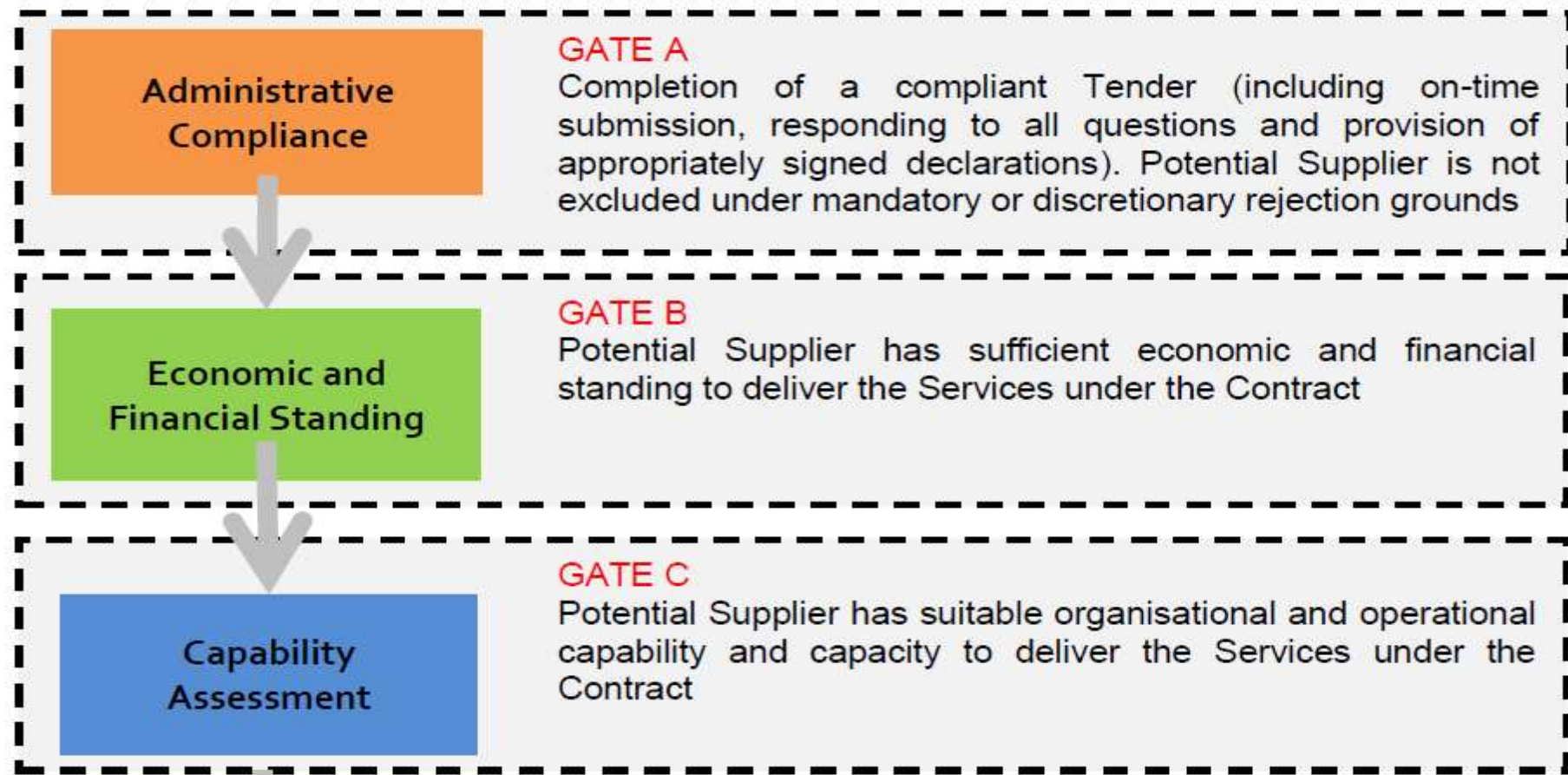
- **Instructions to Bidders:** A document which explains the competition (e.g. timescales, submission requirements, etc.);
- **The Specification / Service Requirement:** This provides a breakdown of what it is that the purchaser wants to buy;
- **The Tender Response Document (Technical Response):** Questions to be answered which determine your bid score;
- **The Pricing Response Document:** Typically a spreadsheet breaking down your costs and proposed payment profile;
- **The Standard Contract:** The standard agreement the purchaser will require you to sign if you are the winning bidder;

Clarification Questions

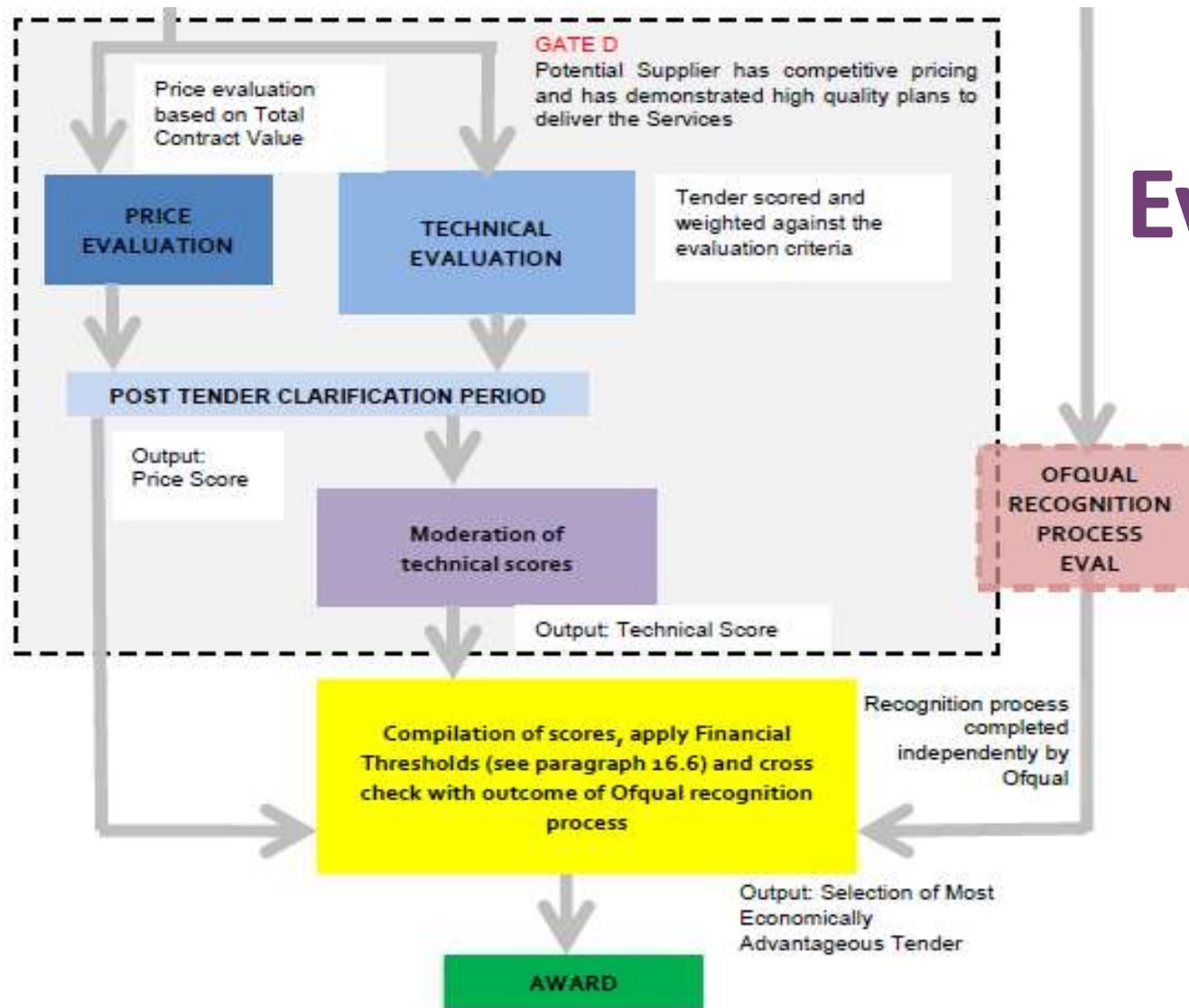


- It is not uncommon for there to be a need to clarify aspects of the ITT;
- ...but, double check that the information is not already detailed in the ITT;
- The Instructions to Bidders will ordinarily tell you how to do this, or there may be a portal message facility;
- Your question and answer will typically be published by the purchaser, so accessible to all other bidders;
- The exception would be anything that is genuinely commercially sensitive.

Wave 4 Evaluation Process Stage 1



Wave 4 Evaluation Stage 2



Scoring Rationale

Scores for each response will range from 0 to 5

The rationale for scores from 3 to 5 are as follows:

3 Point Score (Satisfactory)

In the opinion of the evaluator the response is of a quality and level of detail that provides a reasonable level of confidence that the Potential Supplier has the capacity and capability in the areas described in the response requirements against the question. The response to the question is reasonably clear and detailed (with only minor omissions) and demonstrates a good understanding of the requirements and what is being asked for

4 Point Score (Good)

In the opinion of the evaluator the response is of a quality and level of detail that provides a high level of confidence that the Potential Supplier has the capacity and capability in the areas described in the response requirements against the question. The response to the question contains detail relevant to the question and response requirements and responds to it clearly and unambiguously but contains limited (or no) material going over and above the extent of the response requirement and does not demonstrate any (or any significant) additional value or innovation.

5 Point Score (Excellent)

In the opinion of the evaluator the response is of an **excellent quality** and of a level of detail that provides a **very high level of confidence** that the Potential Supplier has the capacity and capability in the areas described in the response requirements against the question. The response to the question is **highly detailed and extremely clear, with no perceived omissions** and contains **very significant detail** relevant to the question and response requirements, but also **goes over and above the extent of the response requirement** and demonstrates **significant additional value** and/or **an innovative approach** to meeting the relevant response requirements which would either **enhance the Student experience** or **contribute to the overall efficiency** of the T Levels Programme.



Cross Referral & Duplication

Be mindful that the same evaluators may not score every question – so some repetition of core content may be required.

At the same time, be mindful that each question is unique, so don't copy, paste and repeat the same answer.

Model answers that do not address the specifics will most likely score lower.

Responding to Questions and Scoring

- If you reference existing processes, systems or products in your explanations, you need to explain what they are, how they work and, where appropriate, how they will be adapted to accommodate the needs of T Levels whilst at the same time continuing to perform their existing roles.
 - Wherever possible, explain how you would provide additional value to the Student experience
 - Wherever possible, explain how you would contribute to the overall efficiency of the T Levels programme.
-

Responding to Questions and Scoring

- Explain **how** you will meet Service Requirements, including any evidence of when you have performed a similar role. It is unlikely to be sufficient to simply state **what** you will do.
- Do not assume that the evaluator knows all about your organisation and that, as a result, you do not need to explain or evidence your knowledge and experience. If you want your knowledge and experience to be assessed as part of your bid, include the information in your bid

Responding to Questions and Scoring

- The questions are weighted, please bear this in mind when answering as some will be worth more than others
 - Some questions will carry a “minimum” score, any bids that do not reach these minimum scores will automatically fail.
 - You are likely to be asked about examples of similar projects that you have delivered in the past and the relevant experiences – be explicit, do not assume the evaluator will know details
-

Pricing Evaluation (Wave 4)

$$\text{Price Score} = (A / B) \times 20$$

- **A** = Lowest Total Contract Value submitted for the Lot by any Potential Supplier; and
- **B** = Total Contract Value of Potential Supplier being evaluated for the Lot.

Worked Example (from ITT)

	Total Contract Value	Price Score
Lowest Total Contract Value	£87	
Alpha	£100	17.4000000000
Bravo	£123	14.1463414634
Charlie	£87	20.0000000000

Remember that a Tender is a sales document.



It's goal and purpose is to convince a decision maker that they should buy your solution.

It has more in common with a Business Case than a University Dissertation or Research Report.

Top Tips



- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Ensure a logical flow and transition from one sentence to the next – tell the story!
- Don't assume prior knowledge – ensure that key concepts are explained.
- Use grabbers and clinchers to focus readers attention.
- Use spacing, headings, and bullets to guide evaluators.
- Avoid jargon and minimise and explain acronyms.



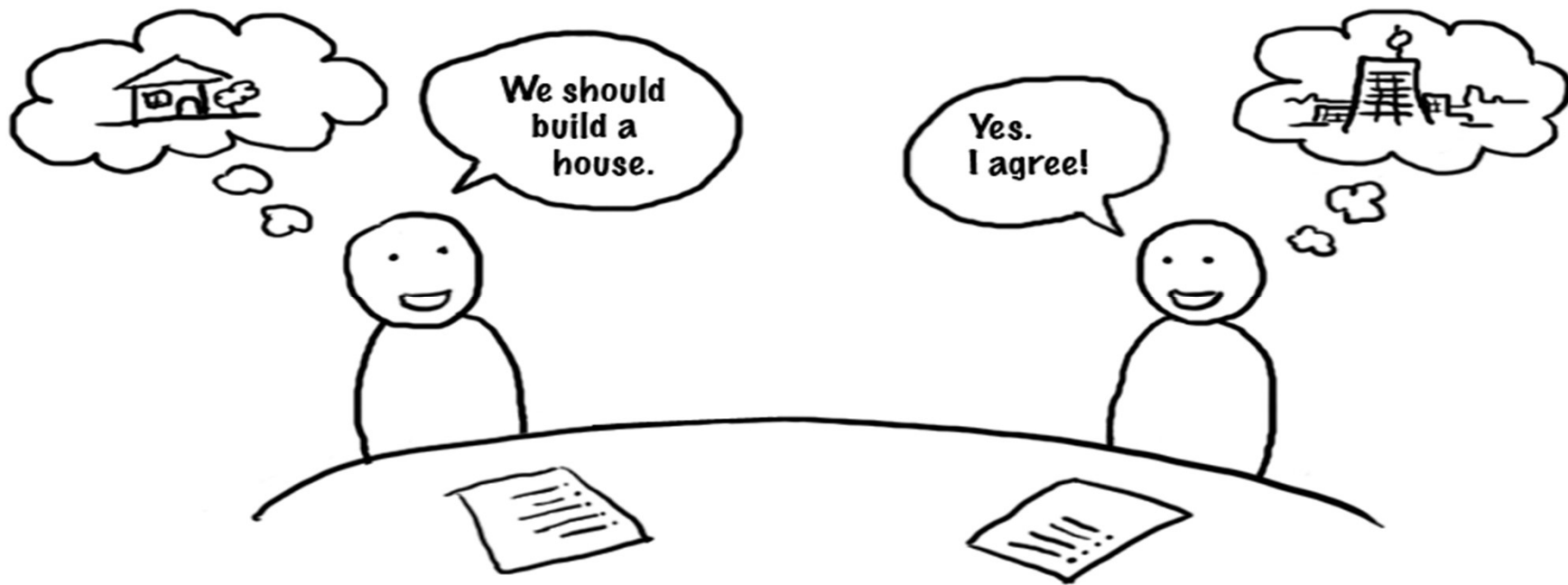
Some people prefer to write a lot, then edit down.

This can work, but time is lost in writing material which won't make the final draft.

Cutting material can be as time consuming as adding more.

Aiming to get the structure right first time is usually more productive.

Agree on your interpretation of the question ..and what you think evaluators are looking for



Breaking The Question Down

An Example Question: *“Please provide your strategy for sourcing and recruiting subcontractors and for ensuring that you can effectively monitor, measure and exercise executive control”*

You should respond by providing your:

1. Strategy for **sourcing** subcontractors
2. Strategy for **recruiting** subcontractors
3. Strategy for ensuring **effective monitoring**
4. Strategy for ensuring **effective measuring**
5. Strategy for exercising **executive control**



MoJ Prison Education – Common Awarding Organisations ITT

Example Question: Indicate the **nature *and* extent** of resources to support the use of the qualifications which will be made available for **learners *and* their teaching staff**, including how these will be made accessible in a **secure environment**, with sometimes **limited Internet access**, at **each qualification level** of Cleaning and Facilities Management.

Answer Structure



- If the question includes bullet points, adopt these as sub-headings, with equal space allocated to each.
- If there are no bullets, break down the different elements of the question to determine the best answer structure.
- Address each point in the same order as they appear sequentially within the question.
- Don't add in extra sub-headings which digress away from the core wording of the question.

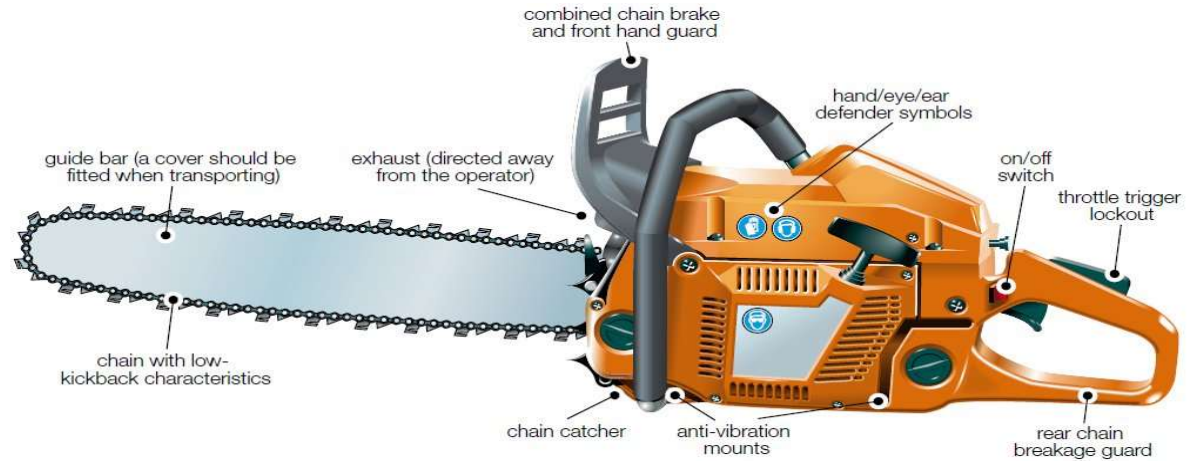
Types of Proposal Evidence

Type	Example	Advantages	Disadvantages
Statistics	Actual performance against target for a similar contract	Short, sharp, specific and objective	Range of available data can often be limited.
Testimonial	A positive quotation attributed to a similar customer.	Builds trust, confidence and endorsement	Can be potentially lengthy and unspecific.
Case Study	A synopsis of how you supported a specific service user.	Brings an element of storytelling	Only evidences a single specific instance.
List	A list of prior similar clients or contracts held.	Can show a breadth of experience	Harder to show underlying detail and relevance.
CV / Pen Picture	Details of proposed skills and expertise of proposed team	Shows clear staff competency	Can be lengthy, and skims over greater detail.

An Example: A Stakeholder Event

- **Feature:** We will deliver 3 events for Institute stakeholders, in the north, the midlands and the south.
- **Method:** Suitable venues will be hired and the necessary catering works subcontracted.
- **Value:** Our solution exceeds the specification because we will also provide refreshments to all attendees
- **Evidence:** Last year our team arranged such events for over 25 public sector organisations with a 98% satisfaction rate.
- **Advantage:** Our experience ensures a high quality event, achieved within challenging turnaround times.

Jargon, Acronyms & Technical Language



Evaluators need context to understand why a feature may be beneficial.

Our hand-held petrol chainsaw has a 50cc engine, operating at 9000 RPMs, with an 18 inch bar, and a power output of 3.4kw.

Our chain saw is easy to start, has great safety features, an easy to replace chain, and is ideal for cutting large trees with a diameter of 10 to 20 inches.

A Real Example (of what not to do)

Multi-layered authentication will be enabled; all supplied devices will be configured to only run whitelist applications, and all content is routed through enterprise-wide security services with web and email filtering and enterprise content scanning. We do not allow end-user devices to connect through captive portals. There is secure Virtual Private Network (VPN) access with enterprise web content filtering for data in transit. It is a well-designed and implemented VPN gateway with Cisco AnyConnect Secure Mobility Client – secure endpoint access, which prevents non-compliant devices from accessing the network; best in class protection, policy compliance enforcement, web inspection, Malware protection, on/off premise visibility and streamlined secure access for ease of management. We have security threat containment with the Cisco VPN that assess vulnerabilities, applies threat intelligence, containment of suspicious device for remediation. Our current encryption method used is RSA_AES 256_SHA1.

Use firm, positive language that clearly shows your commitment to your proposition.

Instead of this...	Replace with this...
We could / We intend	We will
We believe	We know
We aspire to	We have / We are
We will meet	We will exceed

Writing Concisely

Question	Area of Requirement	Max Score	Character Count
9.1	Reporting of Students Registration, Entry and Results	N/A	N/A
9.2	Provider Approval and Monitoring	2	5000
9.3	Post Results Service	2	5000
9.4	Provider Support Services	7	10000
9.5	Design, Delivery and Managing Content	6	20000
9.6	Social Value	2	20000
9.7	Grading and Awarding	12	20000
9.8	Assessment Design and Delivery	12	20000
10.1	Key Risks and Dependencies	5	10000
10.2	Management and Governance	2	7500
10.3	Reporting	2	5000
10.4	Internal Quality Assurance	2	5000
10.5	Exit and Transition	2	5000
10.6	Financial Capacity	6	10000
10.7	Implementation Plan	6	10000
10.8	Resource Plan	12	10000



Slide 43

BK8

Need to check if there are changes to character count

BURGESS, Kevin, 01/07/2020

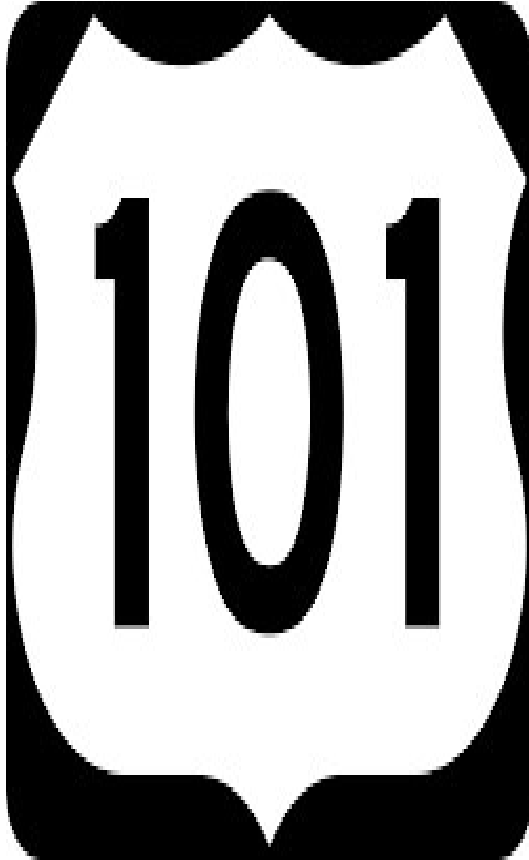
Establishing a Baseline



- The average sentence is 15 to 20 words, and around 75 to 100 characters.
- This equates to 5 to 7 sentences per 100 words (or per 400 to 500 characters).
- The average paragraph is 100 to 200 words.

Characters	400	900	1300	1800	2200	2700	3100
Words	100	200	300	400	500	600	700
Sentences	6	12	18	24	30	36	42
Paragraphs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Concise Writing 101



- Gauge how high level or detailed the answer needs to be based on the word count available.
- Allocate a specific share of words to each element of the answer from the outset.
- Determine your sales points of focus, and stick to these. Too much can be as bad as not enough!
- Scrutinise every sentence for clarity and conciseness – ensure that every word is justified.
- Use specific evidence that can ideally be articulated in a single sentence.

Concise Writing Risks



- General over wordiness, using too many words, with too much detail, to deliver the key message;
- Going off topic, putting in detail which is not an explicit requirement of the question;
- Obvious corner cutting (e.g. merging words, overuse of acronyms and ampersands) which can look messy;
- Trying to cram too many points in, without enough detail, blurring the message with poor writing;
- Over focus on what, but not enough of how.

Same Meaning, Fewer Words

Extract from a Victoria Sponge Recipe

Break the eggs into a large mixing bowl, then add the sugar, flour, baking powder as well as the baking spread. Mix everything together until well combined with an electric hand mixer (you can also use a wooden spoon) but be careful not to over mix. In addition, put a damp cloth under your bowl when you're mixing to stop it moving around. The finished mixture should fall off a spoon easily.



73 Words – 396 Characters

Step 1: Remove Superfluous Words

Extract from a Victoria Sponge Recipe

Break the eggs into a large mixing bowl, then add the sugar, flour, baking powder **as well as** the baking spread. Mix everything together until well combined with an electric hand mixer (you can also use a wooden spoon) but be careful not to over mix. **In addition**, put a damp cloth under your bowl when you're mixing to stop it moving around. The finished mixture should fall off a spoon easily.



68 Words – 372 Characters

Step 2: Remove Unnecessary Words

Extract from a Victoria Sponge Recipe

Break the eggs into a large **mixing** bowl, then add the sugar, flour, baking powder and baking spread. Mix **everything together** until well combined with an electric **hand** mixer (you can also use a wooden spoon) but be careful not to over mix. Put a damp cloth under your bowl when **you're** mixing to stop it moving **around**. The finished mixture should fall off a spoon easily.



62 Words – 326 Characters

Step 3: Remove Lengthy Phrases

Extract from a Victoria Sponge Recipe

Break the eggs into a large bowl, then add **the other ingredients**. Mix everything until well combined with an electric mixer (**or** a wooden spoon) but don't over mix. Put a damp cloth under your bowl when mixing to stop it moving. The finished mixture should fall off a spoon easily.



52 Words – 283 Characters

Step 4: Use Punctuation Effectively

Extract from a Victoria Sponge Recipe

Break the eggs into a large bowl, then add the other ingredients. Mix everything until well combined with an electric mixer **or a wooden spoon. Don't over mix.** Put a damp cloth under your bowl when mixing to stop it moving. The finished mixture should fall off a spoon easily.



51 Words – 278 Characters

Step 5: Re-order / Re-structure

Extract from a Victoria Sponge Recipe

Break the eggs into a large bowl, then add the other ingredients. Use an electric mixer or wooden spoon to mix until combined. Don't over mix. A damp cloth under the bowl will stop it moving when mixing. The finished mixture will easily fall off a spoon.



48 Words – 257 Characters

Original: 73 Words – 396 Characters

Saving: 25 words, 139 characters

Simplifying Language

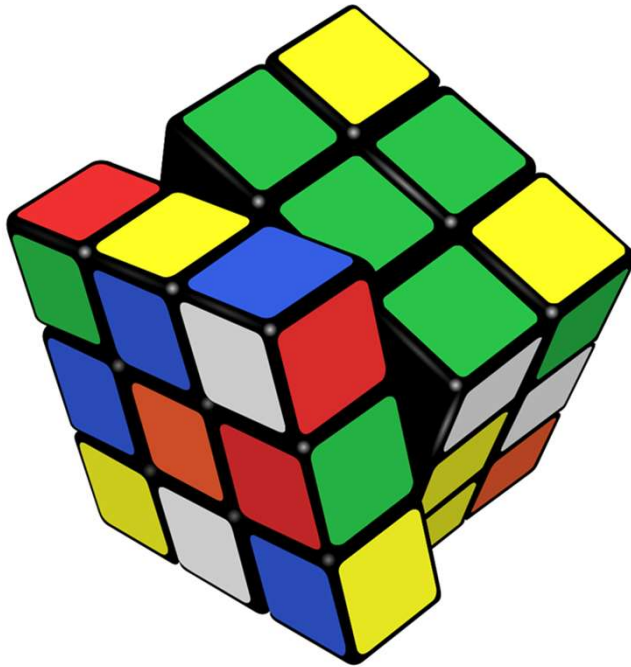
Instead of this...	Replace with this...
A sufficient amount of	Enough
Along the lines of	Like
As is the case	As is true
At such time as	When
At the present time	Now
Has been proved to be	Is
In all cases	Always
In the event that	If

Proof Reading - What To Look For?

- Have all parts of the question been answered?
- Is the proposition clearly explained and easy to grasp?
- Is the specification and evaluation criteria fully addressed?
- Is the response logically structured and easy to follow?
- Have you addressed the *how* as well as the *what*?
- Is there pertinent evidence to demonstrate competency?
- Is there consistency across every question response?
- Has available space and word count been used effectively?
- Consider using a “second pair of eyes”

Proof reading is more than spotting grammatical and spelling mistakes; bids are rarely lost for this reason.

Activity: So What Actions Will You Take Away From Today?



Please put actions in the
comments field!

