

# Universities UK

## Invitation to tender

**Tender title: “Exploring the contribution of international postgraduate research students to the UK’s science and research base”.**

September 2023

Prepared by: Peter Mason, Head of Global Research & Innovation Policy, Universities UK International

# Invitation to tender

This specification invites tenders for a research project with the title “**Exploring the contribution of international postgraduate research students to the UK’s science and research base**”.

This invitation to tender (ITT) is available to download at [universitiesuk.ac.uk](https://universitiesuk.ac.uk).

## Universities UK (UUK)

### Mission

At Universities UK, we harness the power of the UK’s universities and create the conditions for them to thrive. We are their collective voice, bringing them together to pursue a common cause: thriving universities, serving society.

### Purpose

- Influence policy and opinion.
- Bring our universities together to take collective action.
- Provide insight into our universities, helping others to understand them better and helping them to plan for the future.

### Universities UK Strategic Plan 2024-2030

By 2030, we will have enabled our universities to:

- **Transform** the lives of more people from the UK and around the world through high-quality education.
- Drive greater **growth and prosperity** through the knowledge and skills they generate, creating places that allow communities to flourish.
- Be **globally competitive** centres of research, at the forefront of making ground-breaking discoveries with the power to change our world.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Secure sustainable funding** that enables our universities to serve society better.
- Build **trust and confidence** that our universities are a national asset to be **proud of** and are acting in the best interests of society.

## Background

In June 2022, UUKi published the report Global demand for UK postgraduate research degrees to explore the current state of international students' demand for UK postgraduate research (PGR) degrees in the UK and via UK transnational education overseas to understand trends, opportunities and challenges. The report identifies several key actions for the sector and government to support the UK's PGR recruitment, among which the action to **clearly articulate the role and value of international PGR students for UK science and innovation**.

As our report highlighted, the UK remains a popular destination for international PGR talent, however overall recruitment has stagnated. Given the high priority set out by the UK government to establishing the UK as a global science and tech superpower and being a destination for global R&I talent, it is timely to review and enhance the evidence base on the contribution of international PGR students to the UK's overall capability, capacity and excellence.

# Aims of the commission

## Intended outcomes of the commission

This project will enhance the evidence base on the contribution and impact of international PGR talent to the UK's R&I performance. In doing so, it will help to:

- Articulate the contribution of international PGR students to UK R&D.
- Stimulate debate of the role and contribution of international PGR talent to the UK.
- Inform university, funder, and government policy with regards to international PGR students.

## Research required:

This research will involve the following:

- **Descriptive analysis** of public data, identifying the key characteristics of international PGR talent in the UK (including disciplinary mix and highlighting where this cohort represents a major strategic asset)
- **Bibliometric analysis** of the contribution of international PGR students to the UK science and research base in terms of scientific output, impact and collaboration.
- **Qualitative case studies** of how international PGR students contribute to their universities and their universities' research performance.

## Anticipated deliverables

Final Report (approx. 40 pages), and Executive Summary (approx. 5 pages), with key recommendations.

Successful consultants will be asked to present at UUKi's flagship conference, the International Higher Education Forum (IHEF) on Wednesday, 1 May – Thursday, 2 May 2024.

## Budget and timeline

**The total budget available for this project is £40k plus VAT (if applicable). For the avoidance of doubt, if VAT is not applicable, the total budget remains at £40k.** This will be payable in two tranches:

- 50% on signing of the contract.
- 50% on satisfactory completion of the project.

Funding for this project is provided as part of a grant from UKRI.

We anticipate this project will begin week commencing **Monday, 13 November 2023**.

All outputs must be satisfactorily delivered to UUK no later than **Friday, 26 April 2024**.

### **Management, monitoring and oversight**

This project will be managed by Latisha Gordon, Policy Advisor at Universities UK International (UUKi).

The appointed supplier will be expected to provide light touch fortnightly monitoring updates to track progress against agreed milestones.

In addition, you will be required to attend the following with senior UUKi colleagues: an initial kick-off meeting at the start of the project; a mid-point meeting; and a final review meeting at the end of the project, ahead of publication.

The contracting entity for this project will be Universities UK.

# Tender requirements

## 1. The tender proposal

Candidates should deliver a concise tender (8 pages maximum excluding CVs), focusing on the proposed work and budget. The tender should include information on the following:

- details of organisation including name, legal status, full contact details and lead contact
- name and job titles of staff who will undertake the work and a clear break down of how much time each person will contribute to the project
- details of other pieces of work that you/your organisation has delivered which are similar in focus, scope and tone to the project / activity, in particular where this has involved analysis of bibliometric or other higher education / research-related data sets
- reasons why you are interested in applying for the research project
- professional experience and expertise relevant to the project / activity including experience and expertise of working within the UK HE sector and on issues connected to the research
- a proposed approach/methodology to deliver the research / activity including:
  - a clear timetable for the work, including key milestones and clear timescales for completing the project
  - a schedule of all costs including a detailed breakdown of how costs will be allocated in terms of staff hours, travel, VAT etc, including any preferred variation to the payment terms set out in section 2 below
  - details of any potential sensitivities involved in researching this area and how they will be managed
  - a risk assessment of your proposed approach and how you will mitigate any key risks
  - conflicts of interest (as requested in section 7 below)
  - a signed certificate of non-collusion and declaration, set out in the form given in **Appendix A** to this ITT.
- If the tender is submitted on behalf of a consortium, please:
  - list the members of the consortium
  - identify the lead member and a point of contact
- If the tender contains a sub-contracting relationship please state:
  - the main contractor and sub-contractors
  - the nature of this relationship.

## 2. Fees

**The total budget available for this project is £40k plus VAT (if applicable). For the avoidance of doubt, if VAT is not applicable, the total budget remains at £40k.** This includes all attendance fees, conference fees and expenses related to the project.

Our intention is to pay for the work in two stages:

- Initial payment of 50% on signing the contract;
- Final payment of 50% on satisfactory completion of the project.

UUK wishes to agree a fixed price for the work.

UUK is not bound to accept the lowest priced tender and shall not be bound to accept the contractor as a sole supplier.

## 3. Selection criteria

In awarding the contract, UUK will consider the balance between the quality of the candidate's tender and value for money, taking account of the factors listed in this ITT and in particular the proposed methodology.

Each candidate's tender shall be assessed on the following:

- Relevant experience and research credibility of the individual/organisation, including similar reports or other relevant publications and track record in managing credible and significant research projects.
- An understanding of the higher education sector and an awareness of the role of international students to the UK science and research base.
- Appropriateness of the proposed methodology in terms of securing credible and robust research.
- Feasibility of completing a practical programme of work to a high quality within the specified timetable.
- Understanding of need to work closely with UUK's strategic aims for the project.
- Risk mitigation.
- Overall value for money.

## 4. References

The name and contact details of two referees for whom the candidate has recently worked (within the past five years only) should be provided so that references can be taken up.

## 5. Timing

The candidate should note the following key dates:

- This project will begin week commencing **13 November 2023**
- Deadline for receipt of emailed tenders: **16 October 2023 at 12noon GMT**
- Award of tender to successful candidate: **6 November 2023**
- All outputs must be satisfactorily delivered to UUK no later than **26 April 2024**
- Shortlisted applicants are likely to be invited to interview which will take place week commencing **30 October 2023**.

The dates set out in this paragraph are provisional only and may be altered by UUK at its discretion.

## 6. Reporting responsibilities

The successful candidate will report to Latisha Gordon, Policy Advisor at Universities UK International (UUKi).

## 7. Conflict of interest

Details of the candidate's policy on handling conflicts of interest which may exist or arise regarding this engagement must be provided. In the event that a director, partner, employee or employee's representative of the candidate has an interest or connection in UUK, please provide that person's full name, position and the nature of the connection/interest in UUK.

## 8. Tender submission

Please **email, attaching your response** in English to

- Latisha Gordon (Latisha.Gordon@international.ac.uk) with copy to
- Dajana Dzanovic ([dajana.dzanovic@international.ac.uk](mailto:dajana.dzanovic@international.ac.uk))

with the subject marked as: "**Exploring the contribution of international postgraduate research students to the UK's science and research base**" tender response: [*your name*].

**The email containing the tender documents attached should arrive no later than 16 October 2023 at 12noon GMT.**



UUK shall have the right to disqualify any candidates who submit incomplete or late tenders.

## 9. Contracting

This tender is being issued by UUK. Any contracts with the successful provider will be made with UUK. The form of contract that the successful candidate will be expected to enter into with UUK is enclosed within this ITT as **Appendix B**.

## 10. Further information

For further details, please contact Latisha Gordon or Dajana Dzanovic at Universities UK International (UUKi). Latisha is also candidates' point of contact for any queries that you have relating to this ITT.

Any queries should clearly reference the appropriate paragraph in the documentation and, to the extent possible, should be aggregated rather than sent individually. The deadline for submitting queries is **9 October 2023**.

UUK will respond to all reasonable requests for clarification of any aspect of this ITT and supporting documents as soon as it is reasonably possible. Please note that the response to your query shall be posted on our website (without naming your organisation), therefore your query should not contain any details which are confidential.

Please note that no pre-tender negotiations are permitted.

## Confidentiality statement and disclaimer

The information contained in this ITT and all other information made available at any time to the candidates by and on behalf of UUK in connection with the project is supplied on the basis that the candidates will keep such information confidential at all times and that such information will be used only for the purposes of participating in the bidding process.

No information contained in this ITT or any other written, oral or other information made available to the candidate shall form the basis of any warranty, representation or term of any contract by UUK with any third party.

UUK does not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy or completeness of the ITT or any other oral or written information provided by UUK to any candidate.

UUK reserves the right not to follow this ITT in any way and/or to withdraw from or amend the procurement process.

## **UUK rights to cancel**

UUK reserves the right, without prior notice and in its absolute discretion, to change or terminate the tendering procedure for the project at any time before signing the contract with the successful candidate.

# Appendix A

## Certificate of Non-Collusion and Declaration

I certify that:

- a. The prices in the Tender have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices, with any other Candidate or with any competitor.
- b. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in the Tender have not knowingly been disclosed by the Candidate, directly or indirectly, to any other Candidate or competitor, nor will they be so disclosed.
- c. No attempt has been made or will be made by the Candidate to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a Tender for the purpose of restricting competition.
- d. No attempt has been made directly or indirectly to canvas any employee or adviser of UUK concerning the award of the contract which is the subject of this invitation to tender.

I acknowledge that any price fixing or collusion with other Candidates in relation to the Project shall give UUK the right to exclude a Candidate from the procurement process and may constitute an offence.

I am authorised by the Candidate (and all relevant associated companies and organisations) to supply the information given in the Tender.

I declare that, at the date of signing this declaration, the information given is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge having made reasonable enquiries.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

On behalf of:

## Appendix B

### Contract for Consultancy Services

This contract is made this day of            xx xx 2023 between:

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“the Contractor”

Universities UK, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No. 2517018) Registered Charity No. 1001127 (England and Wales) and SC052497 (Scotland).

Woburn House  
20 Tavistock Square  
LONDON  
WC1H 9HQ

Hereinafter called  
“Universities UK”

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It is hereby agreed as follows:

## 1. Scope of work

The Contractor will undertake project support work for Universities UK

- Universities UK's invitation to tender – **“Exploring the contribution of international postgraduate research students to the UK's science and research base”**.
- Contractor's original tender document in respect of this work, dated [13 November 2023]

and the terms and conditions herein set out which shall together comprise the contract. In event of any conflict between the terms herein set out (or as set out in Universities UK's invitation to tender document); Universities UK's terms shall prevail.

## 2. Assignment of subcontracting

The Contractor shall not assign or subcontract the services to be provided under the contract or any of its rights or obligations thereunder without the previous written consent of Universities UK. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

## 3. Contacts

Universities UK's contacts will be: Latisha Gordon, [Latisha.Gordon@international.ac.uk](mailto:Latisha.Gordon@international.ac.uk)

The Contractor's contacts will be: [Name] Email:

## 4. Publicity

The Contractor shall not without Universities UK's prior consent disclose by way of press release or otherwise to any third party anything which relates to the services provided under the contract save as is necessary in the execution thereof.

## 5. Confidentiality

The Contractor will respect and maintain the confidentiality of any information given to them by Universities UK or its agencies or by any higher education institutions involved in the study and will not reveal any part of such information or any part of the described study and its findings to a third party without the prior written consent of Universities UK.

## **6. Use of Data Supplied by Universities UK to the Contractor**

- a. The Contractor shall be registered appropriately with the Data Protection Registrar and shall comply with all statutory regulations relating to its use of data supplied by Universities UK.
- b. Data supplied by Universities UK to the Contractor shall not be used by the Contractor for any purpose other than that outlined in the study specification as set out in Universities UK's invitation to tender.
- c. The Contractor will ensure that personal data is not disclosed to any third party.
- d. The Contractor will ensure that the data is processed fairly and surrounded by proper security.
- e. The Contractor will destroy any statistical and personal data supplied by Universities UK when and if required to do so by Universities UK and provide confirmation as to its destruction in such form as Universities UK may reasonably require.
- f. The Contractor will return any documentation supplied to it during the course of the contract by Universities UK for the purposes of carrying out the study.
- g. The Contractor is liable for any compensation in legal costs incurred by Universities UK from the loss and / or misuse, of data supplied to the Contractor.

## **7. Freedom of Information**

If the Contractor receives a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to disclose any information that, under this Agreement, is Universities UK's Confidential Information, it will notify Universities UK and will consult with Universities UK. Universities UK will respond to the Contractor within 10 days after receiving the Contractor's notice if that notice requests Universities UK to provide information to assist the Contractor to determine whether or not an exemption to the Freedom of Information Act applies to the information requested under that Act.

## 8. Business Ethics and Conflict of Interest and Warranty

The Contractor shall maintain the highest professional standards including those necessary to avoid any real or apparent impropriety or to prevent any action or conditions which could result in conflict with Universities UK's best interests.

The Contractor shall ensure that the information provided in the study shall be true and accurate in all material respects and shall otherwise comply with the study specification as set out in Universities UK's invitation to tender.

## 9. Liability

The advice or information given by the Contractor will not constitute an infringement of third party rights and the Contractor shall accordingly indemnify Universities UK against all costs, expenses and liabilities incurred in respect of any claim brought by a third party alleging infringement.

## 10. Timescale

The timescale for this contract is:

Date	Event
[All significant dates]	[All significant events/outputs]

All planned work will be completed by the Contractor in accordance with the timetable stated above and within the life of this contract. Time is agreed to be of the essence in relation to the Contractor's delivery of work in accordance with the timetable stated above.

The Contractor will provide such information as is required to enable Universities UK to monitor progress.

## 11. Payment

**The total budget available for this project is £40k plus VAT (if applicable). For the avoidance of doubt, if VAT is not applicable, the total budget remains at £40k.**

The Contractor shall invoice Universities UK for the fee which will be paid in two instalments:

- i. Initial payment **£20,000 (50%) plus VAT (if applicable)**
- ii. Final payment **Up to £20,000 (50%) plus VAT (if applicable)**

*(To be included if the contractor is an individual, i.e. not a company or an institution)* [The Contractor shall be exclusively responsible for the payment of National Insurance contributions and for the discharge of any income tax payable in respect of the fee, and shall pay any such contributions and taxes to the appropriate authorities.]

Invoices are to be sent by email to Latisha Gordon ([Latisha.Gordon@international.ac.uk](mailto:Latisha.Gordon@international.ac.uk)) with copy to Dajana Dzanovic ([dajana.dzanovic@international.ac.uk](mailto:dajana.dzanovic@international.ac.uk)). Receipts will be submitted to support claims for reasonable expenses incurred.

## **12. Settlement Terms**

Invoices are normally payable within thirty days of their receipt. Prices are fixed for the duration of the contract.

## **13. Termination**

Universities UK may terminate the contract for any reason on giving twenty one (21) days written notice.

Either party may terminate this agreement forthwith for any serious breach of contract by the other which is not remedied within seven days' written notification of the breach.

The provisions of clauses 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 shall survive any termination of this contract.

## **14. Force Majeure**

Neither party shall be deemed to be in breach of contract if failure to comply with the requirements of the contract is due to circumstances beyond their reasonable control.

## **15. Copyright and Intellectual Property**

Copyright of written work produced in connection with the contract shall be vested in Universities UK.

Universities UK reserves the right to publish or not to publish, but, subject to the prior written approval of Universities UK, the Contractor will be able to make use of the material in other research but shall not be entitled to profit from the commercial exploitation of such material without agreeing appropriate royalties with Universities UK. The latter is



conditional on the Contractor treating all information obtained during the course of the contract in strict confidence.

The Contractor may publish articles based on the final written report following its acceptance and as approved in advance by Universities UK.

**16. Publication of Final Report**

The text and accompanying figures of the final report resulting from the contract must be provided by the Contractor in Universities UK house style conforming to a standard word processing format. The Contractor will be obliged to review and amend as necessary a final proof before any final report is printed.

Universities UK will be responsible for any publication of any final report resulting from the work undertaken by the Contractor and will take all final decisions on design and content.

Universities UK will take all decisions on sponsorship of any final report resulting from the contract or any dissemination event.

**17. General**

The ruling law of contract law and of the relationship of the parties hereto arising out of it shall be English law. Both parties agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the English courts in respect of any matters arising out of or in connection with the contract.

The terms herein set out (together with the documents referred to in the first clause) constitutes the entire agreement between the parties hereto and supersedes all negotiations, representations or agreements either written or oral preceding the contract.

FOR: CONTRACTOR

FOR: Universities UK

BY: .....

BY: .....

[Name and position]

[Name and position]

DATE: .....

DATE: .....