

Request for Proposals: Development of the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Science Council's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Progression Framework and Guidance (Phase 1)

Clarification Questions and Answers

6 July 2026

1. What is the budget for this project?

We would like to receive proposals that are realistically and competitively priced to fulfil the requirements, based on an assessment of the resources required for this. As a guide, we anticipate a cost of around £25-35,000 including VAT.

2. What are the required outputs of the project?

The required outputs are an updated Progression Framework in Excel format, a revised Guidance document, and a report on the changes that have been made.

3. What documentation will be available to the successful supplier?

The supplier will have access to the existing Progression Framework 3.0 and guidance document, as well as benchmarking reports from 2025 and 2021. This documentation is available on the Academy website: <https://raeng.org.uk/policy-and-resources/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-research-and-resources/measuring-progress/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-progression-framework/>

The supplier will additionally have access to (unpublished) detailed feedback from organisations that have participated in benchmarking, and a set of recommendations on how to improve the Progression Framework.

Anonymised quantitative scores from the 2025 benchmarking may be provided if this is beneficial. However the supplier will not receive individual self-assessment reports from the 2025 benchmarking exercise as those self-assessments are confidential to the participants; although the Academy's data may be provided as an example.

You will be working with Academy and Science Council colleagues throughout, who will provide guidance.

4. How will the successful supplier be expected to engage with stakeholders, and what will be involved in acceptability testing?

The supplier will work closely with the Science Council and the Academy at each stage of the process and will be supported by them throughout.

The supplier will attend a meeting (expected September) with the Progression Framework Implementation Group (approx. 10-15 individuals from Professional Engineering Institutions and Science Council members). We anticipate an iterative process involving the supplier reviewing the Framework section by section, with each section being shared with the Progression Framework Implementation Group for review (the secretariat will liaise with the Group). Changes will be ultimately agreed by the Academy and Science Council, who will provide primary direction on the process.

That iterative process is expected to be the key factor in acceptability testing; we do not expect a more formal or involved testing process. The supplier should make allowance for a second meeting/workshop at the end of the process to present results and share learning. The supplier is not expected to maintain contact with stakeholders other than Academy and Science Council representatives.

5. Are organisations that take part in the Progression Framework aware of the project to update it?

Members of the Progression Framework Implementation Group, which represents many of the participating organisations, are aware of this project.

6. What are the issues that have driven the decision to commission this work?

We are aware from the 2025 benchmarking process of the range of challenges experienced by participants completing the Progression Framework. As one example, an organisation responding to Framework criteria may find that they can score a 'level 3' without necessarily being able to agree with everything specified under 'level 2'.

7. How important is consistency in the longitudinal dataset (ie comparability from one benchmarking exercise to the next), versus the latitude to make changes to the Framework?

We are expecting relatively modest changes to be proposed by the supplier, with the exception of the section on Publishing where further consideration of how best to score will be needed. The supplier is expected to consider how to balance the changes

needed to improve the Framework with the importance of consistency between versions. We need to ensure we have comparative data we can use over time.

8. Is the supplier expected to make recommendations for Phase 2 of the project in respect of the format/platform for the Framework?

This is not expected as part of the current project/phase, although we welcome suggestions on our approach to Phase 2. If a prospective supplier has recommendations that may add value, we are open to this being factored into their proposal for Phase 1 (subject to budget considerations).

9. Who will the supplier report to?

The supplier will interact with and report to staff members from the Academy and the Science Council (two Managers and an Assistant). On occasion (and in case of any necessary escalation) it may be appropriate for the supplier to interact with a Head of Department from either organisation.

10. What format is required for proposals?

We expect to receive a document or slide deck that fully addresses the requirements of the RFP and enables us to score against the criteria set out therein. As a guide, this might be 10-20 pages in length, but the approach to constructing a proposal largely depends on the choice of prospective suppliers.

11. What is the format for pitches (scheduled for 27 July)?

We anticipate meeting shortlisted suppliers for up to an hour each; they will be invited to briefly present their approach and respond to a few set questions as well as follow up questions based on their presentation.