



Purchasing and Contracts Request for Proposal Procedure

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F.PC.001.PR.3 Request for Proposal Procedures (“RFP”)

The Request for Proposal is a method of soliciting information and pricing from a supplier. The Request for Proposal procedure is generally used when the user does not have exact specifications or procedures finalized for a product or service. An RFP is issued so that suppliers (proposers) can offer suggested processes or services, or alternate proposals to be considered by the University. **The Purchasing and Contracts department is the only department authorized to issue a Request for Proposal on behalf of the University.**

F.PC.001.PR.3.1 Commitment to Supplier Diversity

Pace University is committed to fostering a proactive and comprehensive supplier diversity program. The University recognizes supplier diversity as an important component of its overall diversity effort. In support of these efforts, the Procurement Department encourages continuous relationships with minority suppliers. This includes small business and disadvantaged businesses, veteran-owned businesses, woman-owned businesses, and minority owned businesses.

Prospective vendors interested in working with Pace have the ability to use the VRS (Vendor Registration System), which allows the prospective vendor to identify itself as a diverse supplier.

Use of SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Individual e-Procurement Marketplace users shall be encouraged to consider this commitment with all purchases under the required RFP process. **The Purchasing and Contracts department will identify opportunities for supplier diversity during the RFP process.**

What types of businesses are considered in the SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM?

- **Small Business** – For profit organization, operates in the US, independently owned, non-dominant in its field and meets the size standards within the United States Small Business Association (US SBA).
- **Woman-Owned** – Must be at least 51% owned, controlled and managed by one or more women. Women must be US Citizens. Additional designations may be applied as defined in the US SBA.
- **HUBZone** – Historically Underutilized Business Zone, meets the small business standards above and falls within the designated urban and rural areas.
- **Additional programs** such as Minority Owned, Native American Owned, Veteran Owned, 8(a) Business Development Program, socially and economically disadvantaged businesses may be considered part of our supplier diversity program. Additional information can be found at the United States Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency.

Feel free to use the New York State M/WBE Directory located below.

[NEW YORK STATE CONTRACT SYSTEM](#)

If you have any questions please contact the Purchasing Department – Purchasing@pace.edu

F.P.02.PR.3.2 Process Overview

In collaboration with PCD, proposal documents are developed to outline the scope, complexity, service, deliverable, schedule and other relevant information to be provided to the specified list of vendors. The Purchasing and Contract department will issue the completed RFP via e-mail or hardcopy the completed RFP to potential vendors.

Upon completion of the proposal documents, PCD and the requesting department will assemble an Evaluation Team comprised of key stakeholders that are responsible for the review of vendors based on criteria and corresponding weights, based on the initial goals of the proposal. The Evaluation Team will evaluate and score



each respondent's Qualifications, Scope of Work, and Staff and Deliverables using the Proposal Evaluation Process form and the selected criteria and weights identified in the RFP. PCD will tabulate the total points for both cost and non-cost evaluation criteria and rank the respondents accordingly.

It may be necessary for respondents who are within the competitive range to allow for a site visit or submit a Best and Final Offer ("BAFO") after new information is provided. All BAFOs are evaluated on the same criteria as the original proposal.

After all offers are tabulated, PCD shall complete the Evaluation History and Scoring of the Proposal Evaluation Process.

F.P.02.PR.3.3 Request for Proposal Checklist

A Request for Proposal is an invitation for suppliers to submit a proposal on a specific commodity or service. A bidding process is one of the best methods for leveraging negotiating ability and purchasing power with suppliers. The RFP process brings structure to the purchasing decision and allows everything to be identified up front. The steps to a successful RFP are detailed below.

1. Researching Requirements

Before you request an RFP, determine the specific needs and goals for the project. In order to obtain the most accurate information it is important to provide a detailed scope of work. The scope of work will typically include project type, project size, program summary, project budget and project schedule. PCD is available to guide or assist with any questions that may arise during the RFP development process.

2. Distinguish Between Needs and Wants

If you want an application that can transmit pictures between headquarters and the vans at the job site, you may specify the number of images per second, the maximum size of the image, and the resolution needed. It might be nice to have the images in color, but you need to decide if that is necessary. Things that are needed are identified in the RFP but using words like "will", "shall", and "must". These are the "requirements". Those things that are merely "wants" are identified by words like "may", "can", and "optional".

3. Decide What the Winner Will Look Like

The proposals you receive in response to your RFP will differ. Each company that responds will have different strengths. Some will focus on lowest cost; others on best quality; still others on most complete feature set. You should decide up front whether you are looking for the lowest cost, the fastest delivery, or some combination.

4. Organize the Document

Your document should be thought through and organized. An outline is a good place to start. You will need sections, at least, for the areas mentioned below. Many of these will have subsections. For instance, the requirements section will also include the optional items. These may be blended into the individual requirements or placed in their own section. Purchasing and Contracts can assist in organizing and preparing the RFP and are available to answer any questions that may arise.



The following are key elements in developing an RFP and requires your input:

Department Name:		Funding Index:	
Requestor:		Est. Project Cost:	
Budget Representative:		Division Dean/VP:	
Target Posting Date:		Target Submission Date:	

University Department Information:

- Describe operating environment, size and volume, uniqueness, etc. if beneficial to the increasing the respondents' understanding of the department.

Project Overview/Objectives:

- Describe the nature of the project and project outcomes

Evaluation - Selection Criteria:

- Indicate the factors the department would like to consider for evaluation and award of the RFP (i.e., Cost; Project Schedule; Qualifications of Company and Project Personnel; Work Statement; References and Experience in a Pace University-like setting, site visit of other facilities, etc.)

Specifications/Scope of Work: (complete all applicable)

- Detail specific requirements relating to the work or product(s); define the department's role and the responsibilities of the vendor
- Define the proposed schedule or allow vendor to define project schedule and completion dates of key tasks
- Acceptance Criteria (define factors for accepting work and payment thereof)
- Warranty Requirements
- Support Services (i.e., training and implementation assistance)
- Designation of Pace University Project Coordinator and their role (i.e., scheduling, work approval)

Pace's Responsibilities (i.e., provide vendor on-site office space, telephone, PC; review of vendors work plans and submittal of approvals/comments within seven days)

Payment / Rate Schedule:

- Pace University pays only upon acceptance (i.e., completion of a task, acceptance of product(s), or entire project)
- Rates can be set up as lump sum/fixed price for entire project or per task
- Define unit pricing for consulting/professional fees including estimated hours; unit cost for equipment/materials, and not to exceed cost for expenses; i.e., per diem, travel



Federal or Other Restrictions on Funds:

- Are there federal funds involved in this RFP action?
- Are there any other restrictions on the funding source (i.e. the funds are from a grant or other temporarily restricted account)?

Questionnaire:

- Develop a list of questions which will enable you to select a vendor by determining if: a) vendor is qualified; b) the vendor understands the project; and c) vendor is capable of satisfactorily performing all requirements

Vendor Source List:

- Develop a list of vendors that you would like to send to the RFP. This will be in addition to the vendors on file, for your type of project, with Purchasing and Contracts.

F.P.02.PR.3.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Department Representative: Responsible for initiating a proposal request for procurement of goods and services over \$50,001, completing the RFP Development Checklist, and working with the Purchasing and Contracts department during the proposal process.

Purchasing and Contracts ("PCD"): In collaboration with the department representative, PCD facilitates the assembly of an evaluation team, responds to vendor inquiries, provides addendums to the original RFP (if required), coordinates pre-proposal conferences and on-site visits when applicable, solicits vendors, retains copies of correspondence and responses, price negotiation, and educates Pace University staff on RFP procedures.

F.P.02.PR.3.5 RFP Development Phase

RFP Development

PCD shall work with the requesting department in the development and review of the RFP. It is necessary for each department to complete the RFP Development Checklist. The department shall be provided a final draft of the RFP for approval before distribution to the vendors.

All evaluation criteria and evaluation weights shall be determined prior to advertisement to the vendors. The weight for each evaluation criteria item must be determined by the Evaluation Team and PCD prior to the solicitation. The weight shall be based on a percentage where the combined weights for all the evaluation criteria shall equal 100%. Under no circumstances shall the weight for cost/pricing be below 25%, unless approved otherwise by Director of Purchasing and Contracts. The Proposal Evaluation Process form shall be completed by PCD and forwarded to the department for approval. **Note:** PCD requires a minimum of 72 hours to review all RFP documentation prior to solicitation.

Forming the Evaluation Team

PCD will work with the requesting department to form an Evaluation Team of knowledgeable personnel to evaluate and recommend an award of the RFP prior to solicitation. It should be clear to Evaluation Team members from the outset that their duties may require significant time and effort.

There is no restriction as to how many people there may be on the Evaluation Team, but usually it is between three and seven individuals. The number of individuals on the Evaluation Team should be limited to the minimum required to do the job.



PCD should advise the Evaluation Team that the once respondents have provided formal responses to the University, respondents must communicate only with the PCD office or evaluation team on any matter related to the RFP. Responses to technical questions should not be provided to respondents without first contacting the requesting department for input and concurrence.

PCD shall be responsible for answering all pertinent questions pertaining to purchasing issues and procedures. The Evaluation Team is provided a copy of any written responses. The Evaluation Team should not contact respondents directly and should refer all questions to the designated PCD staff member or evaluation team as a whole.

F.P.02.PR.3.6 RFP Solicitation Phase

RFP Solicitation

RFPs shall be sent via e-mail to the vendors identified by PCD and the department. PCD shall retain a copy of all e-mails and e-mail delivery receipt confirmations as a matter of record in the RFP File. A hard-copy shall be mailed to all vendors without e-mail or may be mailed to a vendor upon request. Additionally, a hard copy shall be in the RFP file.

For those vendors that do not accept e-mail, additional means of solicitation will be considered by PCD.

During the solicitation phase, PCD should advise the vendors that the cost portion of the proposal should be separated from the technical portion. This will allow PCD to distribute the technical portion to the Evaluation Team while additional analysis of the cost portion is conducted.

Vendor Questions and/or Inquiries

PCD shall provide all questions and answers of general interest to all vendors solicited by written addendum. If questions arise after receipt of proposals, communications shall be restricted to PCD and the respondents only. PCD must ensure that fair and consistent practices are followed and consistency maintained for all respondents.

Note: PCD is under no obligation and should not answer any hypothetical or speculative "what if" questions.

Pre-Proposal Conferences

Based on the scope and technical requirements of an RFP a Pre-Proposal Conference may be required. If a Pre-Proposal Conference is conducted, modifications to the solicitation may result. A Pre-Proposal Conference provides an opportunity to:

- review the requirements,
- facilitate a clear understanding, and
- promote competition.

The evaluation team will first determine if a Pre-Proposal Conference is mandatory. If a mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference is required it may limit competition.

Prior to the actual Pre-Proposal Conference, PCD should meet with the end users who are responsible for answering questions or entering into discussions related to the RFP. The meeting is used to coordinate participation and establish ground rules so that the Pre-Proposal Conference is conducted in an organized, meaningful, and professional manner.



The Pre-Proposal Conference is a meeting of potential respondents, PCD, and the requesting department's technical representative(s). The RFP shall state the time and place of the Pre-Proposal Conference. The date is usually set for about 10 days after potential respondents have received the RFP. At the discretion of the Director of Purchasing and Contracts, minutes may be taken by the PCD designee.

At the Pre-Proposal Conference, PCD serves as chairperson and is primarily responsible for addressing matters related to the purchasing process including the RFP evaluation and award. PCD should have persons present to answer technical and site specific questions relating to the actual acquisition. An attendance roster is recorded at each Pre-Proposal Conference to collect the attendee name; company represented, and contact information. An agenda should be prepared detailing the following:

1. **Opening:** After calling the Pre-Proposal Conference to order, PCD introduces the Pace University representatives and explains what their responsibilities are in the proposed acquisition.
2. **Introduction:** Next, attendees may be requested to introduce themselves, give their name and title, and identify the company they are with.
3. **RFP Overview and Review:** A Pace University representative gives an overview of the project. Review of the RFP itself serves as the focus for the conference. PCD indicates that the purpose of the Pre-Proposal Conference is for clarification of the RFP and that the complete document will be covered. PCD reviews the document, page by page, if necessary, permitting attendees the opportunity to ask questions as each page is reviewed. This is imperative for an orderly Pre-Proposal Conference and to ensure all questions are answered and/or all points are addressed.
4. **Recap and closing:** Some questions are answered immediately. Some questions may not be easily answerable and PCD must only give an answer that will withstand rigorous scrutiny after the Pre-Proposal Conference. All questions that impact the RFP will be addressed in any subsequent addendum.

Some suggestions may be offered or objections made which must be taken under advisement. PCD will indicate to the attendees that there will be a response in writing, made in a timely manner before the scheduled opening or, if necessary, the opening is rescheduled. No decision on complicated or sensitive matters should be made in haste at the Pre-Proposal Conference. It may be necessary to further research the matter to provide the correct response.

Note: Questions concerning the RFP may be requested prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference in order to identify the type of questions that may be asked.

Some projects will necessitate a site visit of Pace University by potential respondents, such as those with installation requirements. The point of contact for arranging a site visit is included in the RFP. A general site orientation walk through may be appropriate for the pre-proposal conference with a site visit scheduled later.

Minimum Required Respondents

To ensure the best vendors will be used to meet project objectives and to better protect Pace University's interests, a minimum number of respondents are required as follows:

RFP Amount	Respondents
> \$50,001	3
> \$100,001	4

If less than the minimum number of respondents responds to the proposal, the Executive Director of Procurement and Information Systems (in collaboration with the requesting department) will determine whether the RFP should be reissued.



Late Proposals

It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure that their proposals are received in the Purchasing and Contracts office no later than the appointed time and date as specified on the request for proposal. Late proposals will not be considered and will not be opened.

F.P.02.PR.3.7 Addendum

If needed, an addendum to the RFP may be issued to correct any inconsistencies of the RFP, revise elements of the RFP, and/or respond to inquiries by potential respondents that may be of interest to all potential respondents. PCD will coordinate the issuing of addendums. The addendum is e-mailed to all vendors solicited and anyone who has requested a copy of the RFP.

Prior to issuing an addendum, PCD must consider the period of time remaining until RFP opening date. If additional time is needed for the potential respondents to respond, the addendum is also used to extend the due date of the RFP.

F.P.02.PR.3.8 Evaluation, Clarification, and Negotiation Phase

RFP Evaluation

1. Copies of all responses to the RFP will be sent by PCD to the previously identified Evaluation Team along with the Proposal Evaluation Process form. Each team member is entitled to one score for each of the evaluation criteria item identified in the RFP for each proposal submitted. The scoring will be based on a point system from 0 – 4.

Note: Cost will be reviewed and analyzed by PCD. The cost information will be made available to members of the Evaluation Team for final scoring.

2. The Evaluation Team may contact a number of references for the respondents. A subcommittee is normally appointed by the Evaluation Team to accomplish the task.

A written questionnaire identifying the referenced questions to be asked is developed. A brief summary of the answers is recorded on the questionnaire. If necessary, additional and follow-up questions may be asked. If the reference volunteers information outside the questions, the information may be recorded. Upon completion, the subcommittee members sign the documents and report the information to the team.

3. Upon completion of the scoring by the Evaluation Team, PCD will tabulate the results and identify the top rated respondent(s) for award consideration. The total points awarded for Cost shall be determined by PCD. Determination of awarded Cost points shall be calculated by taking the lowest Total Project Cost proposed by a respondent and dividing it by each respondent's Total Project Cost and then multiplying it by four (4), the maximum points allowed. For example:

COST SCORES	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3
Total Project Cost:	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 250,000.00
Calculation of Points:	$(200,000/200,000) \times 4$	$(200,000/225,000) \times 4$	$(200,000/250,000) \times 4$
Cost Points:	4.00	3.55	3.20



The total points will be tabulated by taking the average of the Evaluation Team scores for each non-Cost evaluation criteria item plus PCD's determination of scores for Cost, and multiplying it by that criteria item's weight; for example:

Respondent No. 1	Avg. Score	Weight	Total Points
Qualifications	4.0	10%	0.40
Scope of Work	3.5	30%	1.05
Staff & Deliverables	2.0	35%	0.70
Cost	4.0	25%	1.00
Total:		100%	3.15

Oral Presentations by Respondents

Oral presentations by respondents are used to clarify or verify the respondent's written proposal and should be used when appropriate. They are usually restricted to those respondents in the competitive range of scores after the initial evaluation of all proposals. PCD, in coordination with the requesting department, shall develop discussion points and questions for the respondents to address during their presentation. The agenda should reflect:

- any issues/discussion points in the proposal, and
- attempt to identify any unnecessary costs or requirements that may not be necessary to meet Pace University's objectives.

It is the responsibility of team leader to forward those discussion points and questions to the respective respondents with sufficient time to prepare for and address issues during the oral presentation.

All members of the Evaluation Team should be present for each presentation, or the presentation may be recorded for those not able to attend. The presentation typically allocates time for the respondent's response to the questions/issues raised by Pace University and is followed by a discussion period. The respondent may modify their proposal to address the issues raised by Pace University or incorporate additional value-added services/products. The respondent may be required to document an answer if written clarification is determined to be in the best interest of Pace University.

Note: If PCD feels it is necessary, the discussion may be temporarily suspended and the appropriate representative(s) may be asked to exit the room and discuss the situation with PCD. This is usually done when PCD feels the validity of the RFP process is being compromised.

After the oral presentations, all respondents that presented may be re-evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and process by the Evaluation Team.

Based on the presentations or other issues identified, Pace University may issue a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) for the respondents (usually those in the competitive range) to complete. Extreme care must be taken not to significantly alter or modify the scope of work stated in the RFP.

Respondent Site Visits

An on-site visit of a respondent's site may be required. The purpose is to verify facts presented in the proposal, whether stated in the RFP or not. The site visit is usually restricted to only those respondents in the competitive range of scores after the initial evaluation of all proposals. Arrangements for tests and inspections must be coordinated with the respondent. Costs of travel and per diem for Pace University employees and any



consultants assisting Pace University should be at Pace University's expense to avoid conflicts of interest and per se violation of rules and policies.

After the conduction of the on-site visit, all respondents visited may be re-evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and process by the Evaluation Team.

Best and Final Offer (BAFO)

A Best and Final Offer may be used following negotiations, clarifications, oral presentations, site visits, etc. to clarify Pace University's requirements and/or the respondent(s) proposal and pricing. BAFOs are usually restricted to only those respondents in the competitive range of scores after the initial evaluation of all proposals. The BAFO typically allows the respondent to:

- modify the initial offer,
- update pricing, and
- include any added value.

The BAFO must address all changes and submittal instructions.

PCD may include in the BAFO a list of modifications to the requirements of the RFP agreed to by Pace University. While the BAFO may, in some cases, be tailored to individual respondents, care must be taken that all respondents remain on the same competitive level and are proposing to substantially and materially the same conditions and requirements.

All discussions, negotiations, and clarifications usually cease upon issuance of BAFOs. Changes are not allowed in proposals or prices after BAFOs are received unless the Director of Purchasing and Contracts makes a written finding that re-submission would be in Pace University's best interest.

After receipt of the BAFO, all respondents submitting a BAFO shall be re-evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and process by the Evaluation Team.

F.P.02.PR.3.9 RFP Award Phase

After the responses to a RFP has been evaluated and tabulated, or re-evaluated after oral presentations, site visits, negotiations, and/or BAFOs, PCD shall complete the Evaluation History and Scoring of the Proposal Evaluation Process and associated documents. The Purchasing Department will then provide final recommendations to the evaluation team and department. Under certain guidelines, final documents will be forwarded to the appropriate Senior Executive for review and approval. Once approved, PCD shall notify the awarded vendor with a Notice of Contract Award and proceed with preparing a Contract/Agreement, if applicable.