



Selling to Newcastle University

A Guide for Suppliers and Contractors

Contents

	Page
About Newcastle University	3
About this Guide	3
How is procurement organised?	3 - 4
Types of Contract	4
ProContract e-tendering system (Due North)	5
What Rules & Regulations must be followed?	6 – 7
What are EU Procurement Directives?	8
Procurement Process: General Requirements	9 - 10
Flow Diagram: The Pre-qualification Process	11
Procurement Process: Tender Stage	12 –13
Procurement Process: What are the University's expectations of Suppliers and Contractors?	14
Procurement Process: How else might I be evaluated?	14
Procurement Process: How is the contract awarded?	15
Flow Diagram: Tender Stage	16
Can I get some feedback?	17
How are contracts monitored?	17
Where can I get further information?	17

Selling to Newcastle University

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About Newcastle University

Newcastle University can trace its origins to a School of Medicine and Surgery, established in Newcastle in 1834. The University is a forward-looking, dynamic community of more than 18,000 students and 4,500 staff.

As one of the UK's leading universities, our reputation rests on the quality of our teaching - both for undergraduates and postgraduates, our outstanding research, and our work with the regional and local community, businesses and industry. This is underpinned by our mission to play a leading role in our city and region.

Whether you call it procurement, purchasing, contracting, tendering or buying the University spends approximately £130 million a year on obtaining a vast range of supplies, works and services from the external market.

About this Guide

Naturally many organisations will want to sell their services and supplies to the University. This guide is intended to help suppliers understand the processes and procedures we follow so that you can understand what you have to do in order to work with us or supply to us.

Outlining the rules that Newcastle University must follow. It explains:

- Where to find details of opportunities to supply the University
- How to tender for the University's business
- What is expected of you when providing goods or services or undertaking work for us

How is procurement organised?

Newcastle University has a Purchasing Services team responsible for developing the University's procurement strategy, policy, good practice and procedures to secure best value-for-money procurement.

It is also responsible for managing a range of framework agreements for the majority of supplies, which are used commonly across the University.

For more specialist services and works the Purchasing Services team works with individual Faculties, Institutes, Schools, and Services that have more knowledge of the technical requirements.

These Faculties are:

- Medical Sciences
- Science, Agriculture, and Engineering
- Humanities and Social Sciences

The Services are:

- Estates Support Services
- Information Systems and Services
- Accommodation Services

Note: The Estates Support Service have their own tender procedures.

Types of Contract

Contracts let by the University take a number of forms, including:

Framework Agreements: An agreement where terms and conditions are agreed with the provider for certain services, supplies or works which allows call-offs to be made e.g. catering supplies.

One-off Contracts: These contracts meet specific needs/individual requirements e.g. capital equipment.

Term Contracts: These are contracts accepted from a contractor, to carry out repetitive tasks for a period of time. Work is then issued to these contractors as and when it is available. Any amount or value of work cannot be guaranteed. These are usually for planned and reactive works e.g. minor works and improvements.

Consortia Agreements: Different procurement authorities can join together to form a Consortia to create tenders as a group. This can provide better value for money as larger quantities can be aggregated for purchase. Newcastle University is a member of the North East Universities Purchasing Consortium (NEUPC) e.g. stationery, car hire, laboratory supplies and also, as a public body, has access to contracts arranged by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) e.g. telecoms networks.

Concessions: An arrangement whereby the University grants the contractor the right to operate a contract, within stipulated parameters and to benefit from the profit made from the operation, for example laundry equipment.

ProContract eTendering system (Due North)

The University uses an eTendering system ProContract hosted by Due North to administer and manage PQQ and tender processes. The system provides an efficient and transparent way of conducting the tender process.

Companies can register their details via: www.ncl-tenders.co.uk/suppliers.

The system will ask you to register against a specific category which identifies and describes your main business activity. You are also able to upload other relevant information, such as company accounts, quality accreditations etc if you wish. When a contract is advertised on ProContract you will be sent an email notification inviting you to apply for the pre qualification Questionnaire or tender documents.

All tender Questions and Answers, post tender clarifications and general correspondence are carried out using this system.

What Rules & Regulations must be followed?

As a public body, the University has Purchasing Procedures which have to be followed when procuring supplies, works and services. It is vital that if you wish to contract with Newcastle University you are fully aware of the rules and regulations, which govern the way we operate.

The Purchasing Process

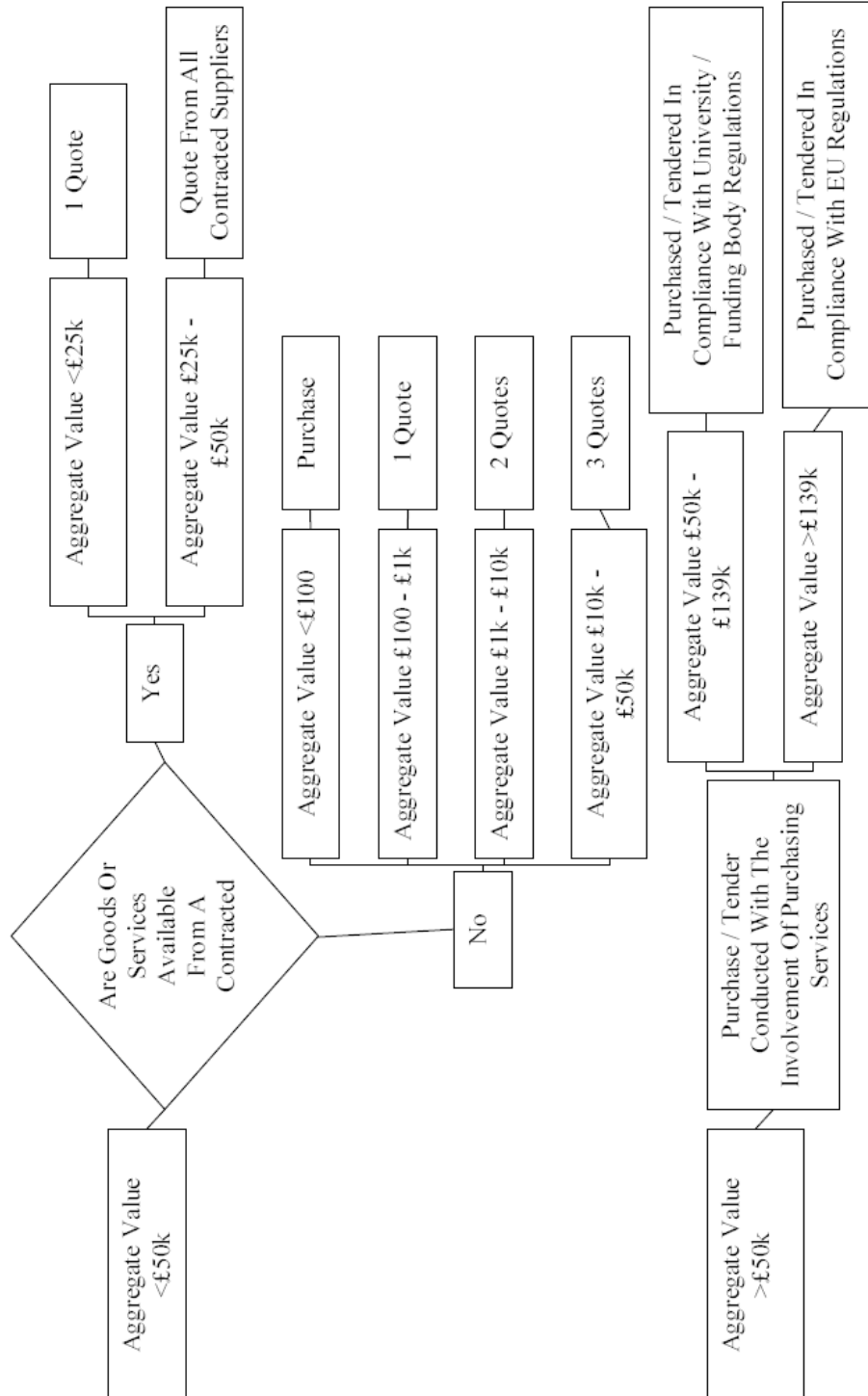
This route should be followed where a contract or framework agreement exists.

Value of Supply	Process & Requirement
< £25,000	Approach contracted suppliers for a quotation.
£25,001 - £50,000	Approach contracted suppliers for formal written quotations
£50,001 - £139,893	Tender to be conducted with the involvement of Purchasing Services in compliance with University/Funding Body Regulations
Above £139,893	Tender to be conducted with the involvement of Purchasing Services in accordance with EU Regulations.

Where a contract or framework agreement is not available then the process below should be followed:

Value of Supply	Process & Requirement
< £100	Purchase
£101 - £1,000	Obtain one quote
£1001 - £10,000	Obtain two quotations
£10,001 - £50,000	Obtain three quotations.
£50,001 - £139,893	Tender to be conducted with the involvement of Purchasing Services in compliance with University/Funding Body Regulations
Above £139,893	Tender to be conducted with the involvement of Purchasing Services in accordance with EU Regulations.

The following chart summarises the rules that must be followed, depending on the value of the purchase:



What are EU Procurement Directives?

The University has a legal requirement to comply with the EU Procurement Directives, which govern the way in which public sector procurement is conducted for contracts over certain specified thresholds. The directives and regulations require the University to follow detailed procedures for all procurements above these financial thresholds.

The thresholds for 2008/2009 are:

Services	Supplies	Works
£139,893	£139,893	£3,497,313
€206,000	€206,000	€5,150,000

Note: the thresholds are reviewed every 2 years. The next review is due in January 2010.

Under the EU Procurement Directives, Newcastle University can conduct its procurement using one of three processes:

Open – any organisation can express an interest and request tender documents.

Restricted – a two-stage process. Organisations expressing an interest undergo an initial pre-qualification assessment. The most suitable applicants are invited to tender.

Negotiated – the University, under limited circumstances, will negotiate with suitable contractors to determine the most economically advantageous offer.

Competitive Dialogue – if the tender is very complex or an overall pricing structure cannot be created, it may be necessary to discuss the tender bid with suppliers. All such discussions are conducted on the basis of transparency and fairness to all parties to ensure an unbiased tender response.

Where procurements exceed the above thresholds and therefore come within the scope of EU Procurement directives, we must follow these basic requirements

- Publish a Prior Information Notice (PIN)
- Decide which of the procedures to use.
- Publish a Tender Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) to give all EU suppliers an equal opportunity to tender;
- Invite tenders according to the procedure being used (open, restricted, negotiated etc.), taking account of the minimum timescales imposed, to ensure that reasonable time is given to respond to adverts and prepare submissions;
- Select a suitable contractor/s using the criteria published in the Tender Notice or Tender Document.
- Place a Contract Award Notice in OJEU.

Procurement Process: General Requirements

Details of contracts will appear on our etender site: <https://www.ncl-tenders.co.uk/suppliers> along with details of the tendering programme. Expressions of interest can be made against specific contracts that you wish to be considered for by the University.

Contracts over EU thresholds are advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). Potential contractors/suppliers should review the official EU website, <http://ted.publications.eu.int/official>, regularly to obtain details of potential forthcoming opportunities.

How do I apply for EU advertised contracts?

The contract notice or advertisement will advise contractors/suppliers of the procedure to be followed for that particular contract and the conditions to be met. In some cases potential tenderers will be sent a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ), which will be used to assess their suitability to supply the University and their ability to satisfy the contract. It is essential that you supply all of the information requested and respond by the due date.

What information do I need to provide?

In a pre-qualification questionnaire you will be asked to provide basic details about your organisation to verify that it can be identified as a legitimate trading organisation, that it has acceptable levels of economic and financial standing, and that it promotes good practice in areas of equal opportunities, protecting the environment and health and safety.

Financial Information - suppliers will be asked for certain financial information such as Published Accounts as we need to be sure that you can meet the requirement for the life of the contract.

Capability and Technical Ability - We will ask for further information to assess whether a supplier has the relevant capability, resources and technical ability to carry out the categories of work and to provide the type and quality of service required. In most cases it is necessary to provide details of similar contracts held over recent years and to provide contact details of referees. Some further questions may be asked tailored to the needs of the individual contracts.

Equal Opportunities - Newcastle University is committed to equality in its Procurement activities. The University strives to ensure that its services are equally accessible and appropriate to the differing needs of all community sectors, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, age or sexual orientation. This section will ask how the company includes racial equality provisions in its employment and service provision.

Organisation - We will ask about your organisational structure to establish whether you have the appropriate resources to fulfil the contract.

Environment - Newcastle University is committed to protecting the local environment and taking responsibility for minimising the wider environmental effects of its procurement decisions. The University expects its contractors and suppliers to meet a similar level of commitment and will seek information to determine the commitment from potential suppliers.

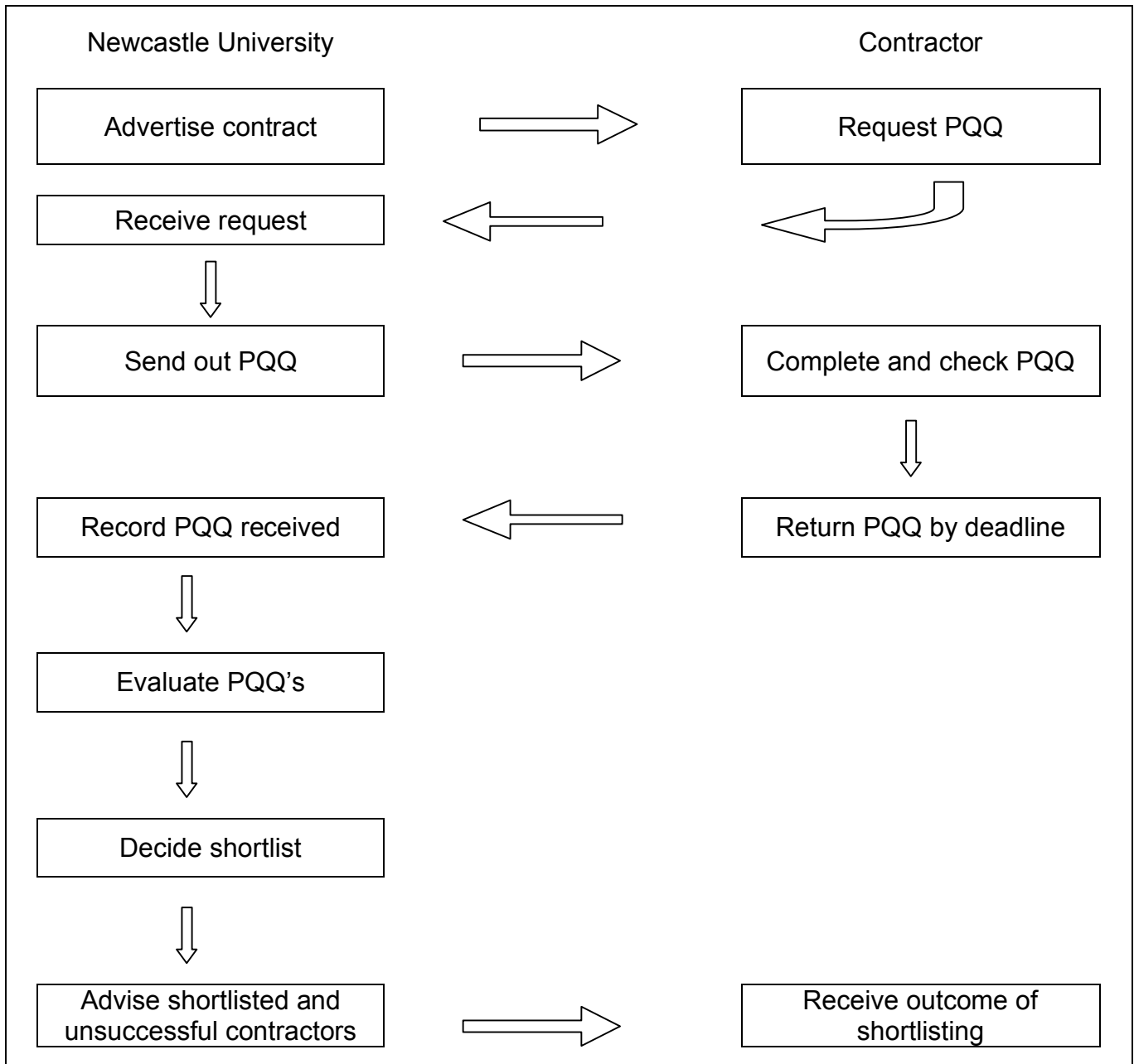
Insurance - You are also asked to provide assurances regarding insurance cover, as Newcastle University has a responsibility to ensure that organisations with which it contracts carry any appropriate insurance cover such as Professional Indemnity, Public Liability and Contractors All Risk insurance.

Health and Safety – Newcastle University is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees, service users and those affected by its operations. Suppliers and contractors can play a key role in achieving this. Before carrying out work for the University information will be sought concerning tenderers' health and safety policies and operational health and safety procedures. You will be expected to know how to manage health and safety in your area of work and to accept responsibility for it.

For further details on Health & Safety at the University please visit: www.safety.ncl.ac.uk

It is essential that pre-tender documentation is returned by the date and time stipulated. Documentation received after the deadline will remain unopened.

The Pre-Qualification Process



The Prequalification process is carried out through our e-tendering system ProContract (Due North).

Procurement Process: Tender Stage

What if I am invited to tender?

Applicants who have been shortlisted after evaluation of the PQQ will receive a set of tender documents, through the etender system which will consist of all or some of the following:

Instructions to tenderers – provides guidance for completing tender documentation.

Form of Tender – the form declares that the submitted tender has followed the legal guidelines.

Instructions – informs you how the tender should be completed and the rules which the University requires its suppliers to comply with.

Specification – sets out what needs to be achieved and includes policies, procedures and guidelines that need to be followed as well as the tender evaluation criteria, which advises how the tender submission will be evaluated and the contract awarded. Tenderers are expected to tender on the basis of this specification, which will include performance targets or criteria to be met in delivering the services, supplies or works.

Pricing Schedule – the document where you enter all your prices.

Alternative Proposals – this is where you can record any proposal you wish to make that differs from the specification.

Declaration of Bona Fide Tendering – the form states that the submission is a bona fide tender.

Non-compliance/qualification statement – a form to record any areas in which the tender is not compliant with the instructions, specification or terms and conditions.

Supplier Appraisal questionnaire – When a PQQ has not been completed a supplier appraisal form will be required. It requests details about the company to give Newcastle University more background information.

Environmental Questionnaire - will ask pertinent questions relating to your Company and products effects on the environment.

Equal Opportunities – determines if suppliers meet the University's expected Equal Opportunities policies.

Terms & Conditions – defines how Newcastle University will let the contract, the rules tenderers must comply with and the relationship between the University and the selected contractor.

WEEE Regulations – If it is applicable to the purchase, the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations will be included.

Any additional supporting information – such as Newcastle University's policies that tenderers are expected to follow.

Tenders must be returned by the date and time given. This is because all tender documents must be opened at the same time in order to ensure a fair process.

Procurement Process: What are the University's expectations of Suppliers and Contractors?

Newcastle University needs to ensure that it offers value-for-money procurement. We therefore expect excellent performance from contractors and suppliers, demonstrated through:

Value for money - not only best price. Suppliers should consider the total, whole life costs of supply when putting together their tenders such as delivery costs, operating costs, maintenance costs, etc.

Quality - contractors/suppliers are expected to provide services, supplies and works to an appropriate standard of quality, to meet the needs set out in the specification.

Adherence to University policies and procedures - we are committed to delivering our services, with consideration for a number of issues including sustainability, equality, health and safety, and look for suppliers/contractors who are committed to helping us achieve our aims in these respects.

Integrity - honesty is expected in all dealings between the University and its contractors in addition to other relevant parties. In particular it is a criminal offence to give or offer any gift, inducement or reward to an employee of a public body. It is Newcastle University's policy not to accept inducements, gifts or hospitality. Tenderers should note that they risk being excluded from the procurement process for failing to observe this requirement.

Innovation - suppliers are encouraged to be innovative and suggest new ideas to add value, continuously striving to improve their performance.

Communication - suppliers are expected to maintain good communications with the University throughout the contract and will be expected to attend regular contract review meetings.

How else might I be evaluated?

The tender documents may include Method Statements, Risk Assessments and/or Case Studies, which are used to determine how suppliers would manage the service or deal with particular issues. In responding to method statements, risk assessments and case studies suppliers are expected to show what methods and procedures they propose to use in undertaking the work, showing initiative and innovation in delivering the service.

At any time during the tender process you may be invited to give a presentation or attend an interview as part of your submission. The University will often conduct site visits to see first hand how tenderers organise their work.

In many cases a pre-tender meeting will also be held to discuss the tender and clarify any issues raised from the tender documents.

How is the contract awarded?

Tender evaluation is always carried out in a comprehensive, equitable, auditable and transparent manner. To ensure fairness the evaluation criteria and method will be clearly defined in the tender documents.

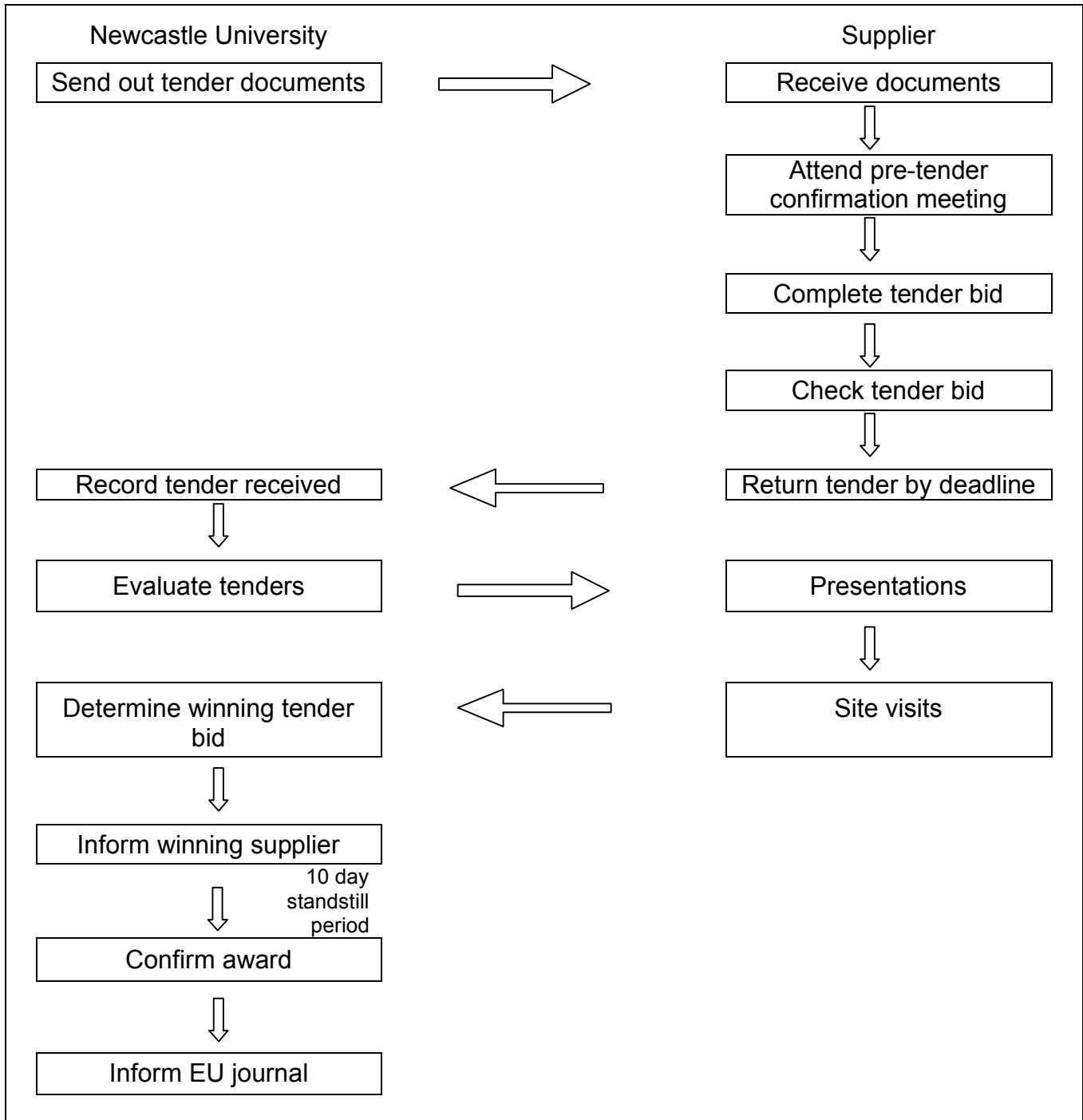
The University must be sure that in selecting a supplier/contractor it is getting value for money and the services will be delivered effectively. Evaluation is usually based on several key criteria – how the tender proposes to deliver the contract (quality) and the cost of the contract (price). The University is looking for the best balance of quality and price, not just the lowest price. In most cases additional criteria will also be used in evaluating tenderers.

Contracts are awarded to the provider who is considered to offer best value-for-money, having regard to price, quality and best value and to be best able to meet the specification. Evaluation of the most economically advantageous tender can incorporate a number of factors including:

- Financial viability of the tender
- Quality issues
- Technical merit
- After sales service
- Delivery date
- Technical back-up
- Experience
- Competence
- Policy issues such as equality & sustainability

The criteria to be used in any particular instance will be listed in the tender documents. The weightings of the criteria may also be given. The tender process is summarised in the flow chart on the following page.

Tender Process



The tender process is carried out through our e-tendering system ProContract (Due North).

Can I get some feedback?

If your tender is unsuccessful you should ask for feedback from the Purchasing team. Within the limits of confidentiality, we can provide tenderers with feedback on which aspects of their bid were strongest and which were weakest, along with advice on improving and developing for the future.

Under the EU directives you are legally entitled to request this feedback from us. Being unsuccessful in one contract does not mean you will be unsuccessful in future. You should use the feedback to help you improve for upcoming opportunities.

How are contracts monitored?

You will be expected to provide the service in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation and your proposals to carry out the contract. In order to ensure that we are continually providing value for money services to our community, suppliers and contractors working for the University are regularly monitored to assess their compliance with predefined performance criteria. The contract conditions are strictly applied, and explanations sought if a contractor fails to perform to the levels required.

Where can I get further information?

If you are seeking information regarding a specific contract please use the contact details provided in the advert/contract notice and tendering details.

General information on the tendering process and procurement at Newcastle University can be obtained from Purchasing Services, 1 Park Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU or by e-mail: purchasing@ncl.ac.uk. The Purchasing Manager is Neil Addison, tel. 0191 222 6000, fax 0191 222 8845, e-mail purchasing@ncl.ac.uk

Should you have any comments or feedback on this guide we would be happy to hear from you, as we are always looking to develop the advice, guidance and support we offer to potential contractors. Please contact us by e-mailing purchasing@ncl.ac.uk