

UK Biobank Ethics and Governance Council policy on judging proposals to provide consultancy services

1. Scope and objective of the policy

This policy sets out the key elements of the process by which competing proposals to provide consultancy services will be judged by the UK Biobank Ethics and Governance Council ('the Council'). This policy supplements the 'Wellcome Trust Guidelines for Procuring Consultancy Services' which describe the processes and procedures that must be followed in relation to the procurement of consultancy services.

The objective of this policy is to promote consistency and transparency in the decision-making process by which proposals to provide consultancy services are judged.

The term 'consultancy' covers a wide range of activities and it is therefore a difficult term to define simply. As a guide 'consultancy' is defined as "a contract entered into between the Wellcome Trust and a third party whereby the Wellcome Trust [on behalf of the Council] requests the third party to provide guidance or professional advice."

2. Key elements of the process for judging competing proposals to provide consultancy services

All services with a value in excess of £10, 000 (including VAT where applicable) will undergo a process of formal tender. All services under £10, 000 are not required to undergo formal tender but should be supported by at least two quotations for the proposed service. The Council reserves the right to vary these procedure in appropriate circumstances. Any proposed deviation from these rules (for example the exceptional use of sole supplier) will be brought to the Council's attention for approval before entering into a commitment to incur expenditure.

2.1 Criteria

The following criteria will be used to judge proposals to provide consultancy services: (N.B. the order of this list is not significant and does not imply the order of importance, the list is non exhaustive.)

- understanding of the objectives and requirements of the proposed work
- contributions to existing knowledge and the work of the Council
- elaboration on the specification/original ideas of the proposed work
- evidence of administrative and organisational skills
- evidence of suitable institutional support, where relevant
- relevant experience
- ability to meet the timetable (where specified)
- overall value for money.

2.2 Review of competing proposals to provide consultancy services

In general, a Review Panel will evaluate proposals submitted in response to the tender process against the criteria specified in 2.1. A Review Panel will normally consist of two Council members and at least one individual external to the Council. Where the relevant expertise is limited or does not exist on the Council, the Review Panel will comprise of more than one external individual. In circumstances where a Council member has submitted a proposal, the Review Panel will comprise two external individuals.

2.3 Feedback to applicants

In general the Council will provide feedback to applicants regarding the outcome of the review process. The Council may not, however, provide feedback in circumstances where applications are triaged prior to peer review. The Invitation to Tender will indicate if no feedback will be given.

2.4 Audit trail

A summary of decisions made by the Review Panel will be maintained at least until the service has been delivered.