



Skills Funding
Agency

The Register of Training Organisations

Market Entry Pre-qualification Process

(Previously referred to as the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway)

Read me first instruction document

October 2015

For organisations interested in the delivery or development of learning



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1. About the Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency is an executive agency, of the [Department for Business, Innovation & Skills](#) exercising functions on behalf of the Secretary of State. We fund skills training for further education (FE) in England. We support over 1,000 colleges, private training organisations and employers with more than £3.7 billion of funding each year.

We are responsible for giving colleges, training organisations and employers the right funding to help adults, young people, the unemployed and people with low skills levels to get the skills they need for employment. This includes:

- supporting traineeships for young people not in education, employment and training (NEET)
- running the [National Apprenticeship Service](#) which supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships throughout England and provides a dedicated, responsive service for both employers and learners
- running the [National Careers Service](#), which gives impartial, professional advice on careers, skills and training
- overseeing and managing Advanced Learning Loans (Loans)
- being a co-financing organisation for the [European Social Fund](#) (ESF) in England, which is investing in jobs and skills
- helping offenders get into education or training using the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service

2. Terminology

For the purposes of this document:

- organisations are identified as colleges, local authorities, private training organisations, employers, public sector bodies and all organisations that want to deliver a contract and/or a Loans Facility
- The Register means the Register of Training Organisations
- we, us, the Agency and SFA refer to the Skills Funding Agency
- lead provider means an organisation that has the direct funding agreement with the Skills Funding Agency
- learners mean persons for whom education and training is provided and includes employees
- subcontractors mean organisations which have a subcontract with a lead provider

3. Market entry pre-qualification process

Background

The Public Contract Regulations 2015 came into effect in February 2015 and we have updated our processes to ensure that they comply with the regulations and that we continue to deliver a simple and consistent approach to selecting organisations to tender.

In line with the themes of simplification and consistency we have incorporated the following changes to our processes.

- **One Register** – the remit of the Register will now cover all education and training services, including the delivery of education and training, education and training development services (replacing the Supplier Development Framework), and delivery of information, advice and guidance (which may include for delivery for the National Careers Service).
- **Financial health self-assessment toolkit** – we have developed a self-assessment toolkit to guide organisations through the financial health assessment.
- **Updated pre-qualification process** – we appreciate that there are organisations that want to enter the Register to operate as subcontractors and do not want to compete for contracts. By changing our approach, we have reduced the number of questions these organisations are required to complete. For organisations that want to compete for contracts, our new questions help you understand what is required to have a contract with the Skills Funding Agency.

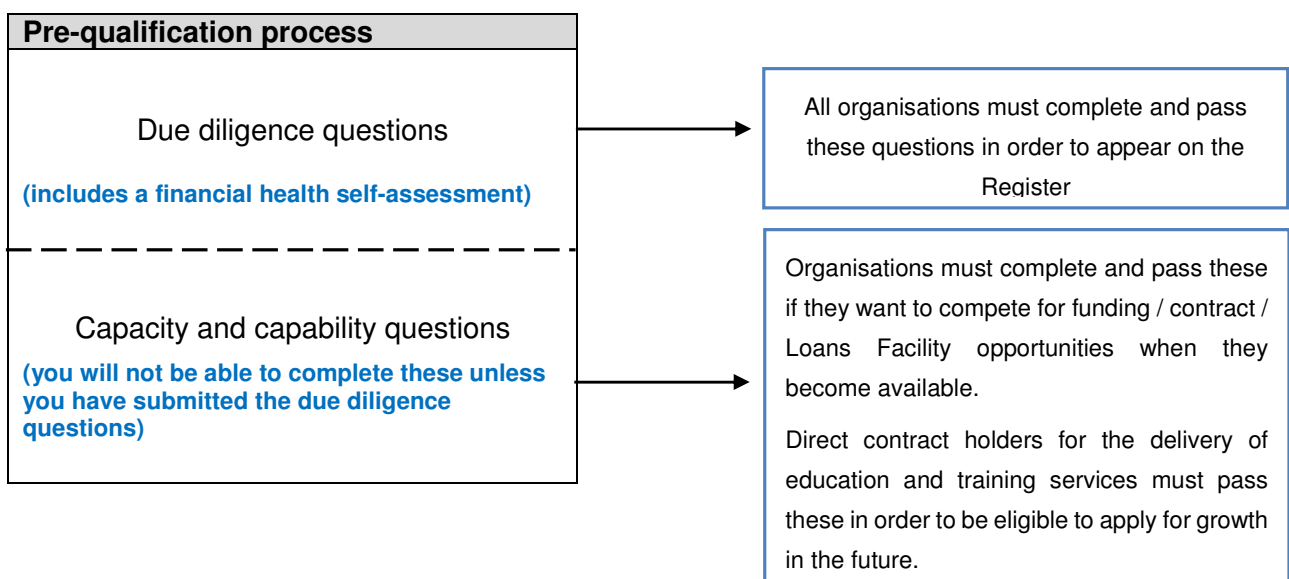
Process

The market entry pre-qualification process is based on financial and technical assessments which are designed to test an organisation’s ability to deliver contracts to the required standard and determine if they are financially robust.

The market entry pre-qualification process includes due diligence questions and capacity and capability questions which are available to complete and have the same deadline for completion.

5.00pm on 13 November 2015

Diagram 1: Market entry pre-qualification process



The format has changed and the questions appear on the e-tendering portal as ITT's instead of a PQQ. This is explained in [section 10](#).

Due diligence questions

The due diligence questions are mandatory. Within the due diligence questions is a section entitled 'financial health'. You are required to upload your latest financial statements in this section, as well as a fully completed self-assessment toolkit.

Your answers are evaluated by the SFA and your financial statements are assessed. If you are successful you will be listed on the Register. For information on why an organisation must appear on the Register please refer to [section 4](#).

Capacity and capability questions

The capacity and capability questions are not mandatory. However, you must complete the capacity and capability questions if you want to compete for funding or contracts or apply for a Loans Facility in the future. If you do not complete, and pass, the capacity and capability questions you will not be invited to tender or apply for a Loans Facility when opportunities become available.

If you are a direct contract holder with the Skills Funding Agency for the delivery of education and training, or in receipt of a Loans Facility you must pass the capacity and capability questions if you want to be eligible to apply for growth in the future. This includes growth of your Loans Facility.

Key considerations

If you do not pass the due diligence questions we will not evaluate your response to the capacity and capability questions.

If you pass the due diligence questions but fail capacity and capability questions we will list your organisation on the Register. However, you will be unable to compete for funding or contracts. You may complete the capacity and capability questions at the next opportunity to apply but you should consider whether you have the capacity and capability to deliver a contract before making an application.

4. Register of Training Organisations

The Register of Training Organisations is a list of organisations that have passed the due diligence questions part of our market entry pre-qualification process.

You must be listed on the Register if one or more of the following apply.

i. You hold a funding agreement or Loans Facility with us for the delivery of education and vocational training

It is a funding requirement that you appear on the Register and continue to be listed on the Register. This enables us to determine if you are suitable for us to continue to fund.

If you would like to apply for growth in the future you must also complete our capacity and capability questions which tests capacity and capability.

ii. You want to enter into a subcontract with a lead provider for the delivery of education and vocational skills training, and the aggregated value of your contract(s) will be £100,000 or more

To support the sector in subcontracting provision, it is a funding requirement that all subcontractors with an aggregated contract value of £100,000 or more, for each academic year, are listed on the Register and continue to be listed on the Register.

You must enter the Register **prior** to agreeing contracts with lead providers that will take you beyond the £100,000 threshold. Failure to comply with this rule may result in us contacting your lead provider(s) to request that they terminate the subcontracting agreement with you.

If you are not interested in competing for contracts in your own right you should only complete the due diligence questions.

iii. You are a large employer in receipt of, or in the process of applying for, grant funding from the National Apprenticeship Service

It is a funding requirement that you appear on the Register and continue to be listed on the Register. Please contact your employer development manager before completing the pre-qualification process.

iv. You are an organisation that wants to be selected to compete in future tenders or apply for a Loans Facility

To be eligible to **compete** for funding or contracts, or apply for a Loans Facility, when opportunities become available **you must pass** the due diligence questions and capacity and capability questions. Please note that you are **not** entitled to be awarded a contract or a Loans Facility for passing the due diligence questions and capacity and capability questions. Funding is awarded through an open and competitive procurement process which, if eligible, you will be invited to apply for when we launch procurements.

The process and criteria for applying for a Loans Facility can be found [here](#).

There are no alternative market entry points for organisations that want to deliver a contract or education and training funded with Loans, therefore you must comply with the processes within this document.

5. Passed due diligence questions at the refresh

This section of the instruction document is for organisations that applied and passed the due diligence questions at the Register Refresh in June 2015 and want to apply at the October 2015 opening to complete our capacity and capability questions. All other organisations including new applicants may move on to section 6 of our instruction document.

In order to submit a capacity and capability response at the October 2015 opening you must submit a response to our due diligence questions first. Question REG15-APPTYPEv1 on the due diligence questions asks if you are changing any of your responses to the due diligence questions in comparison to the Register Refresh. This question will help determine whether your due diligence response needs to be reviewed therefore please respond to this question as accurately as possible as this will assist with our management of the evaluation process.

The Bravo e-tendering portal forces applicants to submit their due diligence questions first in order to prevent the risk of an invalid application. This is where an applicant submits a capacity and capability response without responding to our due diligence questions.

6. Register refresh

It is a **funding requirement** that organisations listed on the Register refresh their information when required to do so.

This opening is not a refresh, and organisations will be notified of the requirement to refresh.

7. Delivery of education and training

We fund the delivery of education and training including: apprenticeships, traineeships, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), Skills for Life, workplace learning, pre-employment training, Offender Learning and Skills Service, Community Learning and Employer Ownership Funding.

Some of the delivery we commission will include education and training funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). We do not use a separate process for procuring this ESF-funded provision, therefore organisations interested in delivering this provision will need to pass the due diligence questions and capacity and capability questions. This may include procurements in consultation with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) to take account of individual LEP priorities.

We also identify the organisations that can access a Loan Facility in order to be able to offer Loans to learners. The application process and criteria can be found [here](#). Further information on Advanced Learning Loans is available on our [website](#).

If funding becomes available for new provision which we have not tested, to ensure we are equitable to all organisations we will invite all those organisations that have passed the due diligence questions and capacity and capability questions to tender for this.

Please note that at the time of publication, the policies and programmes referred to in this document are correct. However, this information may be subject to change and updating as appropriate. We recommend you check our [website](#) for the latest information.

You should also look at the qualifications we fund currently fund on our [website](#).

You can find information on apprenticeships on the National Apprenticeship Service [website](#)

8. Delivery of information, advice and guidance

In the future the Skills Funding Agency may procure services relating to the delivery of information, advice and guidance.

This may include delivery for the National Careers Service. The [National Careers Service](#) provides information, advice and guidance to help individuals make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential and impartial advice.

9. Development of services

In the future the Skills Funding Agency may procure services aimed at enhancing the delivery of the National Careers Service and increasing the numbers of young people taking up apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.

This may cover:

- activities focused on delivery of innovative services designed to engage individuals and employers in the National Careers Service and in apprenticeships and traineeships
- delivering services that will result in the increased engagement of individuals from under-represented groups with the National Careers Service
- delivery of a range of services resulting in an increase in the numbers of individuals starting on an apprenticeship and traineeship
- delivery of services which will directly increase the engagement of small and medium-sized employers with apprenticeships and traineeships, resulting in the employment of more apprentices and the provision of more work placements for traineeships

10. Accessing our pre-qualification questions

When we are open for applications you can access the pre-qualification questions described in section 3 through our [e-tendering portal](#). The pre-qualification questions are located within an 'ITT' on the e-tendering portal therefore it is important that you review the [guidance document](#) referenced at the end of this section.

If you do not hold an account on the e-tendering portal you will need to register. You may complete registration at any time but you will not be able to access the pre-qualification questions unless the e-tendering portal is open for applications. The registration page that you complete to register on the e-tendering portal is **not** the pre-qualification questions that you are required to complete as part of the pre-qualification process.

If you already hold an account on the e-tendering portal it is important that you use your existing account when accessing the pre-qualification questions and continue to use this account in the future. If you are not sure whether your organisation already has an account or you require a password reset, please contact help@bravosolution.co.uk rather than attempting to re-register.

The [guidance document](#) will assist you with registration on the e-tendering portal. It also includes guidance on how to locate the pre-qualification questions for the pre-qualification process.

11. Communication

When we are open for applications we will only communicate with organisations about the pre-qualification process through the message board on the e-tendering portal.

If you need to contact the Skills Funding Agency regarding the pre-qualification process or Register of Training Organisations, you must use the online message board on our e-tendering portal. This ensures that we maintain the integrity and robustness of the process, and that the answers you receive are accurate and consistent. **Please do not** contact us about the process using any other method, as you will be directed to the online message board or our email address.

We aim to respond to queries within two working days of receipt on the online message board. During busy periods there may be a delay in our response. We may also decide not to respond to queries two working days before the closing date for the completion of the pre-qualification questions.

If you are unable to direct your communication through the e-tendering portal then you must use the following email address: register.help@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

12. Completing the pre-qualification process

12.1 General

We recommend that you respond to the pre-qualification questions as early as possible to ensure that you meet the deadline. The deadline for applications is final. You will not be granted additional time to complete your response.

If you previously applied at the June 2015 refresh, your responses to the pre-qualification questions will be pre-populated. We advise you carefully review your responses to ensure they are still accurate.

You must ensure that your answers are correct and complete before you submit your application. We will not accept any information or changes after the closing date or information outside the process as this would disadvantage other organisations.

The information that you submit will be verified to ensure that it is a true reflection of your organisation. If we find that you have provided incorrect answers or information that

intentionally misleads us, we will remove you from the Register. We may also share your answers with other government departments/agencies to ensure public funds are safeguarded as well as assist with the prevention and detection of fraud.

12.2 Changes

We reserve the right to modify, amend or provide further clarification on the pre-qualification questions at any time prior to the deadline for completion. We will notify you either by direct communication or as a broadcast message on the online message board. Where such modifications constitute a significant change we may, at our discretion, extend the deadline for completion of the pre-qualification questions.

Should we make any changes to any of our pre-qualification questions whilst it is live, your application will be 'unpublished' by this action. An email alert advising that we have made changes will be sent to your registered email address. You must then review the details of the change(s) and if necessary amend your submission. Whether the change(s) affect your submission or not, you will still have to resubmit your response in order for us to evaluate your application.

12.3 Consortiums

A consortium is a group made up of two or more entities that work together to complete a project, deliver a specific service, or conduct an ongoing business.

If you are a consortium, or have intentions of forming one to deliver education and training services funded by the SFA or through Loans, each member of the consortium (or proposed consortium) must pass the due diligence questions and capacity and capability questions.

If you are invited to tender, you would need to indicate that you are bidding as part of a consortium with one member of the consortium taking a lead role in the tendering process.

12.4 Responding to questions

Questions that are prefixed with a **red asterisk (*)** are mandatory. If you do not answer all mandatory questions, the e-tendering portal will not allow you to publish your response and we will not be able to evaluate your response.

Where we ask a closed question and ask you to provide supplementary information in the next question, you must provide all the information requested in the follow-up question. If you do not provide this information you may fail the process.

When responding to a question your answer must be contained within the relevant textbox or attachment provided. If you include information in other questions we will not consider this information when evaluating responses.

If you encounter a question that requires a text-based answer and it is not applicable to your organisation, please type 'NA' in the textbox provided.

For questions that require you to upload an attachment you must return it in the format that we specify or we will not evaluate the document. Where we do not specify the format you must use widely recognised formats such as PDF, Excel, Word documents and image files. We are unable to open Mac or equivalent files or extensions. Please do not 'password protect' your information as we will be unable to evaluate it.

If you would like to upload more than one file as an attachment you may do this by submitting a Zip file. A Zip file is an archiving system that allows you to pack together one or more files into a single file or folder.

To help ensure that we are able to access your attachments efficiently please:

- keep the length of your filename as short as possible
- only use letters and numbers in your filename
- do not use special characters in your file name, for example, the full stop, comma, percentage sign, ampersand or asterisks

12.5 Qualification and technical envelopes

The due diligence questions and capacity and capability questions of the pre-qualification process contain qualification envelopes and technical envelopes:

A **qualification envelope** contains three sections. The first two sections contain important information about the questionnaire whilst the third section is a declaration to confirm these notes have been read.

A **technical envelope** includes the pre-qualification questions that you will be assessed on. There will be a technical envelope for the due diligence questions and a technical envelope for the capacity and capability questions.

13. Completing due diligence questions

The due diligence questions contain the following sections.

Organisation details

This section is used to record and verify details of the organisation applying. We may also use this information for reporting and monitoring purposes. Whilst this section is not scored you may incur a fail if you provide insufficient or false information.

You must ensure that your name on the Bravo e-tendering portal matches your legal name and that it is not abbreviated. Your name on the UKRLP website must also match your legal name:

- if you are a company this is your name on [Companies House](#)
- if you are a charity this is your name registered with the [Charities Commission](#)
- if you are a sole trader or partnership you must enter your own name followed by trading name; for example 'John Smith T/A Smith Training'.

The legal name of the organisation completing the questions as requested in REG15-OD-01 should be the legal name of the organisation applying.

You must hold a valid UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) and include this on your application. If you do not hold a UKPRN you will need to register your organisation with [UKRLP](#) in order to obtain one. If you are an organisation outside the UK please inform us by sending a message through the e-tendering portal.

The information that you provide in response to REG15-OD-12 will form part of our pre-qualification checks to help safeguard public funding. These checks include reviewing your answer against information held at Companies House and the [Disqualified Directors Register](#). This information will not be published externally and will be held for at least five years, and for as long as necessary after that to fulfil the purposes described above.

Grounds for mandatory exclusion

You will be excluded from the process if there is evidence of convictions relating to specific criminal offences including, but not limited to, bribery, corruption, conspiracy, terrorism, fraud and money laundering, or if you have been the subject of a binding legal decision which found a breach of legal obligations to pay tax or social security obligations (except where this is disproportionate, for example, only minor amounts involved).

An organisation that provides evidence that remedial action has taken place and 'self-cleans' by paying necessary compensation, collaborating with investigations, and taking concrete technical, organisational and personnel steps to prevent recurrence of the offence or misdeeds - may be able to proceed in our process providing they are able to demonstrate satisfactory remedial action.

Discretionary grounds for exclusion

The Skills Funding Agency reserves the right to exclude organisations if any of the discretionary grounds for exclusion apply.

Financial health

Please refer to [section 14](#) for further information on the financial health assessment.

Technical and professional ability – compliance

In this section we are seeking information on whether you:

- comply with equality legislation
- have a health and safety policy (if you have more than five employees)
- have legal issues or investigations that may affect your ability to deliver a contract
- have outstanding debts; if you do, we want to know how you manage this
- manage contracts effectively and if you have withdrawn from any contracts
- have adequate levels of insurance
- meet any of the criteria in our [Higher Risk Providers and Subcontractors Policy](#)

If you or your organisation has an outstanding debt with us, your organisation will not progress in our pre-qualification process until the debt has been cleared or a resolution has been reached.

Technical and professional ability – delivery

This section is only for organisations that deliver, or are seeking to deliver, education and training including education and training funded with Loans. If you are interested in the development of services only, or only want to deliver information, advice and guidance you may select 'not applicable' for these questions.

If we determine that you have selected 'not applicable' to the questions in this section and you deliver, or are seeking to deliver, education and training your organisation will fail this part of the process.

[Information Commissioner's Officer](#) (ICO) - we require you to be registered for the processing of personal data for educational purposes. If you do not hold this registration you will fail this section. This includes employers.

Learner health, safety and welfare - if you deliver directly or indirectly (as a subcontractor) you must have appropriate and adequate processes in place to ensure learner health, safety and welfare.

Awarding Organisation Status - in this section we ask questions about your awarding organisation status. If you deliver education and training directly or indirectly you must have the necessary awarding organisation status to deliver the qualifications we fund. You can find more information [here](#).

Procurement

This question checks your understanding of our pre-qualification process and reminds you that you must complete the capacity and capability questions. If you are interested in competing for funding / contracts or applying for a Loans Facility in the future.

Declarations

We ask you to confirm that you are giving us true and accurate information. This is the point at which you are validating that all your information is correct.

Authorisation of submission

We ask you to state the name of the individual who is authorised to sign your submission on behalf of your organisation. As well as the details of the person who has completed the pre-qualification questions (if this is different).

14. Financial health assessment

14.1 Introduction

Financial health is a measure of financial status in terms of your financial performance and ability to meet ongoing financial commitments. As administrators of public funding, only organisations that are able to demonstrate they are financially robust and present a low risk to the Skills Funding Agency will progress in our pre-qualification process.

In the due diligence questions we ask you to provide your latest financial statements in order to carry out a financial health assessment of your organisation. We assess these

financial statements according to the financial elements specified in the [financial health assessment guidance](#) available on our website.

14.2 Self-assessment toolkit

In addition to submitting your latest financial statements you are required to complete and submit a [Self-Assessment Toolkit](#) which must be returned in Excel format. If the toolkit is not returned in Excel format we will not assess your financial statements and you will fail the process. You will also fail the process if you submit a blank toolkit. The toolkit, along with the supporting guidance, has been designed to guide you through the financial health assessment and help determine what information is required to undertake an assessment. The toolkit, based on the information you enter, will indicate a predicted grade of (Outstanding/Good/Satisfactory/Inadequate). This information will be checked and verified by the Skills Funding Agency for accuracy.

If you experience any technical difficulties when opening the toolkit, please send a message through the message board on the e-tendering portal.

14.3 Guidance documents

It is important that you review our financial health guidance documents before completing the financial health assessment section. You can review the [guidance documents](#) below on our website.

- Financial health assessment: non-college training organisations
- Financial health assessment toolkit
- Financial health assessment toolkit guidance

You may also consider providing additional supplementary information to support your application. The additional financial information [guidance document](#) includes information such as a business plan forecast for the current year, management accounts, draft financial statements as well as a Director or Parental Guarantee. You may review this guidance by using the link below.

14.4 General rules for completion

When completing the financial health section of the due diligence questions you must:

- complete all the required information on the self-assessment toolkit
- upload the completed self-assessment toolkit in Excel format
- upload all the financial information required (set out in the self-assessment toolkit)
- upload fully complete financial statements – full accounts, not abbreviated accounts, not an extract and not selected pages
- ensure the information you submit is current
- submit your latest available financial statements
- ensure the figures provided in the self-assessment toolkit are a true reflection of your organisation

If you do not comply with any of the points above you will fail the financial health assessment due to 'insufficient information'. If there are significant irregularities with the figures you provide on the self-assessment toolkit you will fail the financial health assessment, if we determine irregularities at a later date we will remove you from the Register.

Question REG15-FHA-02 requires you to upload financial information identified in the self-assessment toolkit and supporting guidance. This has been split between questions 'A' to 'F'. You are not required to upload a document to every single question but you must upload the documents that are indicated in the self-assessment toolkit. If you do not provide this information you will fail the financial health assessment.

14.5 Direct contract for the delivery of education and training services

If you hold a direct contract with the Skills Funding Agency for the delivery of education and training services you are not required to submit financial statements as part of the pre-qualification process. You submit these as part of your funding agreement with us. Please upload a note to question REG15-FHA-01a confirming that you have an existing funding agreement. Organisations listed on the [SFA Funding allocations to training providers: 2015 to 2016](#) document fall into this category. Please note that if your current financial health grade is inadequate we will not list you on the Register.

If you only hold a Loans Facility agreement with the SFA you are required to submit financial statements as part of the pre-qualification process.

14.6 Organisations exempt from the financial health assessment

There are a range of organisations that are exempt from the financial health assessment these are listed in the [financial health assessment guidance](#) available on our website. Please ensure that you complete the toolkit (up to section 11) and upload it to question REG15-FHA-01a.

14.7 Organisations part of a wider company group

If you are part of a wider group of companies or classed as a subsidiary you must provide the latest financial statements of your ultimate UK parent company as well as your own full financial statements. If you do not supply this information you will fail the financial health assessment. In assessing the financial health of an organisation that is part of a group of companies the SFA will consider the financial standing of the group as a whole. If your ultimate parent company is registered outside of the UK, you are required to provide the accounts for your UK parent company.

15. Completing capacity and capability questions

Please note that you will not be able to complete these questions unless you have completed the due diligence questions. Some questions within capacity and capability require knowledge of the subject area therefore we advise that you consult with the most appropriate person within your organisation before completing your answer and submitting your response. Capacity and capability contains the following sections.

Table 1: Sections you must answer fully depending on your interest

		What you are interested in delivering		
		Delivery of education and training	Delivery of information, advice and guidance	Development of services
Section	Generic	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Ofsted	Yes	Yes	
	IT	Yes	Optional	
	Delivery of education and training	Yes		
	Delivery of information advice and guidance		Yes	
	Development of services			Yes
	Declaration	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Authorisation of submission	Yes	Yes	Yes

Generic questions

If you are interested in completing the capacity and capability questions as part of our pre-qualification process you must answer all the questions in this section.

- We test how you would performance-manage and quality-assure a contact with the Skills Funding Agency.
- We test whether you will meet requirements for organisations to ensure that equality of opportunity is built into systems and processes and that equality and diversity data is reviewed to inform future planning.
- Organisations must provide high-quality and easily accessible information and advice to help learners or users understand the opportunities and support available to them about education, training or connected matters (including employment).

Where one of the main objectives of the services to be provided under a contract is to deliver information and advice, you must have or attain the matrix standard accreditation within six months of a contract being awarded. If information and advice is embedded as part of the delivery of services, you should work towards achieving the matrix standard accreditation within 12 months of the start of a contract.

You can find more information on the [matrix standard](#) on the SFA [website](#).

- Business continuity – the regular activities performed by an organisation to ensure that critical business functions remain available to customers, suppliers, regulators, and other entities that must have access to those functions.
- We ask for the areas that you may be interested in delivering in. Further information on these areas, including a map, can be accessed using the following [link](#).

Ofsted

The questions in this section are for organisations that deliver, or want to deliver, education and training and / or organisations that want to deliver information, advice and guidance.

If you are not interested in delivery, and only want to develop services, please select not applicable to these questions and type 'NA' for the text-based questions in this section.

In this section we are looking to test the quality of service you are able to deliver for us.

We are only interested in Ofsted inspections as a further education and skills provider that have been specifically carried out on your organisation. If you answer A to question CC15-QUAL-05 and we determine that you have not had an Ofsted inspection as a further education and skills provider and/or that you are no longer hold a direct contract holder with the Skills Funding Agency or Education Funding Agency – you will fail this section.

If you are answering questions CC15-QUAL-05, CC15-QUAL-06 and CC15-QUAL-07 please ensure that you refer to the common inspection framework. If you have been inspected by other bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), you may refer to this in your answer but you must relate it to the 'common inspection framework'.

For further information on Ofsted please refer to the following [website](#).

IT

Organisations that deliver, or want to deliver, education and training must pass the questions in this section. For organisations that want to deliver information, advice and guidance this question is not mandatory, but it may be used for selection purposes for tendering opportunities that require organisations to produce an Individualised Learner Record as part of the delivery of information, advice and guidance.

If you only want to develop services, please select not applicable to these questions and type 'NA' for the text-based questions in this section.

If you are awarded a contract or Loans Facility in the future you must have a management information system that is able to produce an Individualised Learner Record (ILR) XML file that meets the requirements of the ILR specification and schemea.

You may access further information on these requirements by reading the SFA's [guidance](#).

An ILR Learner Entry tool is also available for download which supports returns for up to 500 learners. This software is free to organisations that submit data to the Skills Funding Agency and do not have access to a data management system. You may download the ILR Learner Entry tool from the useful links area on the front page of the [Hub](#). A user guide is available [on GOV.UK](#). This software can only be used with Windows operating systems.

Please note that if you are unable to meet our data collection and compiling management information requirements at a contract award stage, you will be excluded from future procurement opportunities for making an incorrect declaration. Please take time to review the information relating to ILR data before you complete these questions(s).

Delivery of education and training

This section is for organisations that deliver, or want to deliver, education and training. If you are not interested in this please select not applicable when answering these questions.

We ask you to select the types of programme you are interested in delivering and which age groups. We also set out requirements for you to inform us if your organisation is under any awarding organisation sanctions in the future.

Delivery of information advice and guidance

This section is for those interested in the delivery of information, advice and guidance. If you are not interested in this please select not applicable when answering these questions

Development of services

This section is for those interested in the development of services. If you are not interested in this please select not applicable when answering these questions.

Declarations

We ask you to confirm that you are giving us true and accurate information. This is the point at which you are validating that all your information is correct.

Authorisation of submission

We ask you to state the name of the individual who is authorised to sign your submission on behalf of your organisation. As well as the details of the person who has completed the pre-qualification questions (if this is different).

16. Timetable

The timetable for this opening is set out in the table below.

Action	Date
Pre-qualification process opens for applications	16 October 2015
Deadline for completing due diligence questions	13 November 2015 at 5.00pm
Deadline for completing capacity and capability questions	
Feedback provided from Skills Funding Agency	Late January 2016
Register of Training Organisations is published	Late January 2016

Please note that we use the dates for feedback and publication as a guide only. The exact dates depend on the volume of applications that we receive.

17. Evaluating your response and scoring

All applications submitted and received by 5.00pm on the closing date will be downloaded and evaluated. We will **not accept** any additional information or changes after the closing date or information outside the process as this will disadvantage other organisations that have applied.

Due diligence questions

In order to be successful you must pass the due diligence questions and financial health assessment.

Table 2: Evaluation criteria for due diligence questions

Section	Evaluation	Comments
Organisation details	Pass / Fail	Your organisation will fail this section if we are unable to verify your details
Grounds for mandatory exclusion	Pass / Fail	Your response will be reviewed against the Public Contract Regulations 2015
Grounds for discretionary exclusion	Pass / Fail	Your response will be reviewed against the Public Contract Regulations 2015
Technical and professional ability [compliance] and [delivery]	Scored	If you score between 0 and -99 you will pass this section
Procurement	Not scored	
Declaration	Pass / Fail	If you are unable to comply with the conditions we have set you will not progress in our pre-qualification process
Authorisation of submission	Not scored	

If you are evaluated as a 'fail' in any of the sections marked as pass/fail you will not pass the due diligence questions part of our pre-qualification process.

The Technical and Professional Ability section (Compliance and Delivery) is based on the assessment of risk. All organisations begin with a score of 0 (zero). If your answer to a question indicates that you are a risk you will generate a negative score for that question.

Table 3: Scoring of questions in the Technical and Professional Ability section

Score	Risk
-100	High risk
-50	Medium risk
-25	Low risk
0	Satisfactory

The scores for each answer in the Technical and Professional Ability section are aggregated. If your total score is between 0 and -99 you will pass the Technical and Professional Ability section. If you score -100, or less, you will fail the Technical and Professional Ability section and will therefore fail the due diligence questions part of our pre-qualification process.

Therefore, if you score -100 or less this may be attributed to one of your answers being considered as high risk (-100), or it may be a score that has been accumulated over a

number of your answers. For example, three questions may score -100, where one answer is determined to be medium risk and two answers are determined to be low risk.

For the financial health assessment you will be given an assessment grade of outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate. If you score inadequate you will fail due diligence questions part of the pre-qualification process.

If you pass the financial health assessment we will give your organisation a recommended funding limit. If you are successful in tenders in the future, the Skills Funding Agency will normally only award your organisation funding / contracts up to this limit.

Capacity and capability questions

Table 4: Evaluation criteria for capacity and capability questions

Section	Evaluation	Action	Comments
Generic	Pass / Fail	All organisations must pass this section	The SFA needs to ensure that risks associated with project or performance-management can be identified and addressed by organisations. If you have quality assurance systems and processes we want to understand how you apply these.
Ofsted	Pass / Fail	You must pass this section if you want to be invited to tender for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of education and training • The delivery of information, advice and guidance 	If your latest Ofsted inspection grade is inadequate (grade 4) for 'Overall Effectiveness' you will fail this section. If you have not been inspected by Ofsted your responses to CC15-QUAL-05, CC15-QUAL-06 or CC15-QUAL-07 will be reviewed against the Common Inspection Framework. If we determine that at least one of your responses to CC15-QUAL-05, CC15-QUAL-06 or CC15-QUAL-07 are the equivalent of an inadequate (grade 4) Ofsted grade you will fail this section.
IT	Pass / Fail	You must pass this section if you want to be invited to tender for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of education and training 	Organisations must demonstrate that they will be able to comply with the SFAs data and information requirements in the future. For organisations interested in the delivery of information, advice and guidance this question may be used for selection purposes. Please refer to section 15 for further information
Delivery of education and training	Pass / Fail	You must pass this section if you want to be invited to tender for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of education and training 	
Development of information advice and guidance	Pass / Fail	You must pass this section if you want to be invited to tender for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the delivery of information, advice and guidance 	
Development of services	Pass / Fail	You must pass this section if you want to be invited to tender for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of services 	

Declaration	Pass / Fail	All organisations must pass this section	If you are unable to comply with the conditions we have set you will not progress to our pre-qualification process.
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All questions are either pass/fail questions or are questions that will be used to select organisations to invite to tender or to apply for a Loans Facility.

18. Feedback

We will provide written feedback to all organisations following evaluation of the due diligence questions, and if applicable the capacity and capability questions. This feedback will be communicated through the Bravo e-tendering portal message board. The email addresses that you registered against your Bravo account will receive an email notification that you have a message on Bravo, and you will need to log in to access the feedback.

Please note that if you fail any part of the process we cannot accept any additional information to change our decision. The Agency will not enter into a dialogue about your submission and we cannot provide feedback outside of this process.

For the due diligence questions your feedback will set out:

- overall status of application – APPROVED or NOT APPROVED
- outcome of due diligence questions – PASS or FAIL
 - this will be broken down by section. For the ‘Technical and Professional Ability’ sections you will receive the total score for the compliance and delivery sections
- outcome of the financial health assessment – PASS or FAIL
 - financial health assessment grade

For the capacity and capability questions your feedback will set out:

- outcome of capacity and capability questions – PASS or FAIL
 - this will be broken down by section

19. Passing the market entry pre-qualification process

If you pass the due diligence questions you will appear on the Register of Training Organisations. Please note that you will not receive a registration number and you are not entitled to use our logo. Appearing on the Register does not imply that we endorse you as an organisation and it is not a ‘kite mark’ nor an ‘award’.

If your organisation changes its legal structure whilst listed on the Register you must inform us immediately. You will then be required to make an application at the next opportunity in line with your new legal structure or status.

You can access the Register on our [webpage](#) which also includes information about the Register.

If you pass the capacity and capability questions this does not mean that you are awarded funding, a contract or a Loans Facility. It means that you will be invited to compete for

funding or contracts when opportunities become available and these are based on your responses to our pre-qualification questions.

Therefore it is important that you ensure your e-tendering portal registration details are current and accurate, including email addresses. This is because we will invite organisations to tender through the e-tendering portal when opportunities become available.

Organisations are not appointed an 'account manager' for passing our pre-qualification process either.

20. Resubmissions

If you decide to re-apply, we advise you to review your previous responses and consider your commercial and financial status, especially if your situation/information has not changed since the previous submission.

21. Removal of organisations from the Register

The Skills Funding Agency reserves the right to remove any organisation from the Register. The grounds for removal of organisations reflect the circumstances described in the Skills Funding Agency's ['Funding Higher-risk Providers and Subcontractors' Policy](#)

If we find you have provided false information on your application we will remove you from the Register.

22. Company name and name changes

Your name on the Bravo e-tendering portal must be your full legal name with no abbreviations used. If there is a change to your organisation name, with no other legal or organisational change, your details must be amended on the Bravo e-tendering portal. In order to do this you must take the following actions.

- Ensure your legal name has been updated on the Companies House website if you are a Limited Company, or on the Charities Commission website if you are a registered Charity.
- Ensure your legal name has been updated on the [UK Register of Learning Providers](#) website. If your name has not been updated, please contact the UKRLP helpdesk on 0345 202 1600.
- When your organisation name has been updated on the UKRLP website you will need to contact the Register team by email at register.help@sfa.bis.gov.uk and confirm the following information.

Your name as it stands on the bravo e-tendering portal:

Full Legal Name (your new name):

UKPRN:

Companies House Number (if applicable):

Charity Number (if applicable):

Sole trader / Partnership (Yes/No):

Once the evidence has been received and validated we will authorise Bravo Solutions to make the name change. If you are already listed on the Register at the point that your name changes, your name will be amended on the next publication of the Register.

If you are completing an application, please prioritise the completion of your application, you can request your name to be updated on the e-tendering portal after you have submitted your application.

23. Freedom of Information

We are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Under the provision of the FOIA, we are required to provide information we hold in response to a request made in accordance with the FOIA. This includes information about third parties. Organisations are referred to the Freedom of Information Policy available on our [website](#).

If, when completing your application you consider that any of the information you are providing is classed as 'commercial in confidence' you must indicate what this is in a message sent through the online message board on the e-tendering portal. We will then check this and if appropriate (under FOI legislation) we will seek a redaction to not publish that particular information if requested.

24. Complaints

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your application you can make a complaint using the Agency's complaints procedure which is available on [GOV.UK](#).

25. Links to helpful information

To assist your application the following links may be useful:

Advanced Learning Loans - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/24-advanced-learning-loans-an-overview>

Bravo e-tendering portal - <https://skillsfundingagency.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml>

European Social Funding - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-operational-programme-2014-to-2020>

Funding higher-risk providers and subcontractors

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-financial-assurance-higher-risk-providers-and-subcontractors>

Funding Rules - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-funding-rules> Note: updated annually.

Health and Safety Executive - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Skills Funding Agency Register of Training Organisations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-register-of-training-organisations>

Skills Funding Statement - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-funding-statement-2013-to-2016>

List of declared subcontractors – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-subcontracting-using-funding-to-offer-education-and-training>

Matrix standard - <http://matrixstandard.com/>

National Apprenticeship Service - <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>

Ofsted - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

Ofqual - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>

UK Department for Business, Innovation & Skills -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-innovation-skills>

UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) - <https://www.ukrlp.co.uk/>

26. Definitions appendix

Academy – is a school directly funded by central government (specifically the Department for Education) and independent of direct control by local government.

Business continuity process – an organisation’s response planning that sets out how the business will operate following an incident and how it expects to return to ‘business as usual’ in the quickest possible time afterwards.

Continuous improvement process – the process to demonstrate how regular small changes and improvements to the service delivered are implemented controlled and recorded.

European Social Fund (ESF) – the European Social Fund was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU) and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. As one of the EU’s structural funds, the ESF seeks to reduce differences in prosperity across the EU and enhance economic and social cohesion.

Financial statements

- Where available, audited financial statements which are submitted to Companies House are required. These financial statements must be fully complete, an extract is insufficient.
- Where an organisation produces abbreviated financial statements, we require the full accounts from which the abbreviated accounts are extracted. These should consist of, as a minimum, profit and loss account with turnover figure, balance sheet and notes to the accounts.
- Where the company has taken advantage of audit exemption, we require the financial statements as a whole; an extract is insufficient.

General Further Education College – an institution conducted by a corporation established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

Joint venture – a joint venture is a legal entity that is owned or governed (for example in the case of a company limited by guarantee) by two or more organisations for the purpose of submitting a common bid for funding.

Loan Facility – an agreement issued by the Skills Funding Agency to eligible providers, giving them the ability to offer Loans to learners and to receive Loans payments from the Student Loans Company on behalf of learners.

Notice of concern – issued to a college that has fallen below standards in relation to financial health, financial control, Ofsted judgement or minimum levels of performance.

Skills investment strategy – owned by BIS, this sets out how we will reduce bureaucracy; remove unnecessary interference from intermediary agencies whether local, regional or national; streamline the organisational skills landscape; remove unnecessary regulation and introduce new freedoms and flexibilities. Collectively, these measures will

ensure the sector is better able to meet the needs of individuals, businesses and local communities.

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) - Please see the [EU definition](#).

Statutory financial statements – are those prepared using generally accepted accounting principles in accordance with the legislative requirements of the organisation type. For example, a limited company's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts. A registered charity's accounts are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission.

Third sector – the Third Sector has been defined by HM Treasury as organisations which:

- are non-governmental
- are 'value driven' in that they are primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental and cultural objectives rather than make a profit
- reinvest surpluses, principally to further their social, environmental or cultural objectives.

Training provider – for the purposes of this document, colleges, local authorities, private training organisations and employers are all identified as training organisations.

UKRLP – the UK Register of Learning Providers. This is a database that is a register of the legal entity details of learning providers in the United Kingdom. It is designed to link together existing data sources on providers and give access to the information to learners, employers, providers and government agencies.

UKPRN – UK Provider Reference Number. This is a unique eight-digit number assigned to all providers on verification. The number does not provide endorsement by UKRLP.

UPIN – a UPIN is the Unique Provider Identification Number. This is the unique number allocated by the Skills Funding Agency to each individual training organisation it holds a contract with.



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