



Tendering and Procurement Practice

A Qualification for Tendering

Tendering and Procurement Practice (TaPP) is a qualification which is accredited by the Open College Network (OCN) at Level 3 (A level equivalent) with 6 credits. It has been developed by Project Development and Support Ltd when we found that no accredited qualification existed for people whose job requires them to prepare tenders for public sector contracts.

There are a number of excellent courses available which cover aspects of the tendering process but nothing which accredits the skills of people who work in this increasingly important area. The lack of a recognised qualification has led to problems for companies recruiting suitable staff to undertake this work which can mean the continued existence of a company. It also means that a career route is not easily available for people who work in this specialist area. Although developed to meet a need charities, there is a growing demand from companies providing services in a very wide range of areas, not just in the care sector.

It is believed that contracts worth more than £26billion are let annually by public sector purchasers. These range from handyman services to local transport; home insulation to childrens' playgrounds as well as legal, accountancy, housing services, etc. The list for last week included many thousand tenders for example:

- laminated wooden table tops
- dental services and GP practices
- printed matter
- office refurbishment
- personnel and payroll services
- cleaning services
- website design and software services
- taxi services
- boiler upgrade
- the list goes on.....

It is government policy to open up this market to SMEs and very small businesses. It can be demonstrated that businesses employing 10 people or fewer can tender successfully, indeed our company tendered for and won a Government DWP contract, but there are considerable specialist skills needed in order to do this successfully. Tendering also represents a major investment in time and sometimes money. But the opportunities are there.

The TaPP course has been validated by the UK learning Directory and is listed on over 70 government education and learning websites such as DirectGov. It is designed to help companies of all sizes to tender more effectively. It is designed to complement the information, training and support services which are available on a membership or consultancy basis and have been developed by the company over the past three years. Although originally for charities providing care for people with learning disabilities, tendering skills are generic. We now have a membership of just under 400 companies and organisations ranging in size from an annual T/O of £100,000 to £200million.

For more information on the TaPP qualification go to www.tappocn.org.uk
For more information on TfC membership, our tendering consultancy and in-house training services go to www.tenderingforcare.com
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