



**Creative Industries
Policy and
Evidence Centre**



PURCHASING SERVICES

Invitation To Tender: NU-2100

CONTRACT TITLE

Creative Employer Skills Survey (CESS)

Commercial Specification

Preamble

The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC) is commissioning a business survey to support skills audits for the creative industries and its component sub-sectors. Proposals in excess of £99,600 (including VAT) will not be considered and prospective suppliers should note the weighting of the pricing schedule when preparing their response. The commission is jointly funded by The Creative Industries Council (CIC) and The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), with Work Advance sharing responsibility with Creative PEC for successful management and delivery.

About Creative PEC

Creative PEC works to support the growth of the UK's creative industries through the production of independent and authoritative evidence and policy advice.

Led by Newcastle University with the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Creative PEC comprises a core consortium of Newcastle University, Sussex University, The University of Sussex, and Work Advance, which produces regular State of the Nations reports across four high-level priority areas: Arts, Culture and Heritage; Internationalisation; R&D, Innovation and Clusters; and Education, Skills and Talent. Alongside this activity, Creative PEC commissions and co-commissions research that responds to evidence gaps and live policy issues.

Creative PEC consults industry stakeholders about the challenges facing the sector, testing emerging questions with researchers, and feeding findings back to policymakers. This unique model ensures that resultant reports and recommendations are relevant and meet the needs and priorities of people working in and for the creative industries.

For more information, please follow this link: <https://pec.ac.uk/>

About Newcastle University

As a founding member of the Russell Group of Research-intensive Universities, and a Global Top 110 University (QS World University Rankings 2024), Newcastle University is dedicated to excellence, creativity and innovation, pioneering solutions that can change our world.

Delivering world-class research and teaching, the University is tackling some of the biggest challenges facing society globally, leading in [key strengths](#) of ageing and health, data, energy, cities, culture and creative arts, and one planet. [The University educates for life](#), nurturing the next generation of creative practitioners, clinicians, scientists, engineers and educationalists.

Newcastle University has a [global reach](#); home to a vibrant international community of 29,000 students from 140 countries worldwide, the University has three campuses in Newcastle, Singapore, and Malaysia. It is also connected to, and networking with strategic partners, industry collaborators and employers around the world. The University employs over 6,600 people across three faculties and professional services Hubs.

Further information about the University is available from: www.ncl.ac.uk

Background to the Skills Audits and Business Survey

The creative industries and its component sub-sectors have seen high growth in recent years. However, this, coupled with rapidly changing skills needs, has driven acute skills deficiencies in many parts of the sector, which risk undermining growth potential. Despite recognition of the pressing skills challenges, there is a lack of robust, comprehensive, and consistent evidence on skills needs, as well as the scale, nature, and impact of skills shortages and gaps in different sub-sectors.

The commission has been devised by The Creative Industries Council (CIC), The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Work Advance and Creative PEC, with the stated intention of supporting future policy development to align with the government's growth mission.

Scope of the Skills Audits and Business Survey

The aim of the skills audits is to improve evidence on the creative industries' occupations and skills that are, and will be, in demand over the next three to five years, to inform actions and interventions on education and skills provision.

The overarching questions that the skills audits will answer are:

- What are the current skills needs of the creative industries?
- How are the skills needs of each sub-sector of the creative industries expected to change in the future (approximately the next three to five years)?
- How are skills needs currently being addressed?

The skills audits will comprise research across several stages:

- Delivery of a business survey
- Rapid evidence assessment
- Secondary data analysis
- Stakeholder engagement
- Delivery of a final report bringing together the findings of all stages

This research will be delivered in two phases:

- Phase one will provide a robust, coherent narrative on the skills priorities of the creative industries as a whole, while drawing out commonalities & differences between the sub-sectors
- Phase two will focus on creative industries sub-sectors in more detail and will set out the skills priorities of each sub-sector.

The commission seeks to identify a supplier to deliver the business survey, only, but with the intention that the data collected will enable the research stages to be completed successfully across the two phases. Creative PEC and Work Advance will provide guidance on the development of the business survey, in consultation with the CIC and DCMS, once a supplier has been identified.

Technical Requirements of the Business Survey

The technical requirements for the business survey are to be found in Appendix 1. The successful bid will need to satisfy the evaluators that the requirements have been met as fully as possible, in line with the evaluation criteria shown below.

Data Handling Requirements

Prospective suppliers should confirm: which dataset they plan to use to set the sample frame for the survey; if they already have access to this dataset; if not, the likely timeframe for obtaining the necessary permissions. Prospective suppliers should also make clear any limitations in using the dataset identified.

Prospective suppliers are asked to set out their approach to disclosure management in the data they provide to the project steering group. This should include explanation of how they will establish the necessary agreements to share data and confirmation they will follow all publication guidelines as part of any ONS data access agreements

The selected supplier will be responsible for quality assurance of the data collected and should confirm that this will be carried out by an individual or team who/which has not been involved in the original production of the research.

Prospective suppliers should make clear how data will be stored securely and confirm their intention to comply with Newcastle University's data handling regulations.

Output Requirements

The central output from the business survey will be a new dataset. For a comprehensive list of all expected outputs, prospective suppliers should refer to points 7.4 and 8.1 of the technical requirements outlined in Appendix 1. All outputs must be delivered to the satisfaction of Creative PEC and Work Advance.

Prospective Suppliers should submit a detailed project management plan, explaining how the outputs will be produced.

Desired Delivery Timetable

The below sets out the proposed delivery timetable. Project commencement dates may change due to internal processes and are provided as a guide, only.

DATE	STEP
Tues 10 th Dec 2024	Issue ITT
Fri 20 th Dec 2024	Clarification questions deadline
Mon 13 th Jan 2025	Deadline for receipt of proposals
Fri 17 th Jan 2025	Review submissions and evaluate against criteria
Mon 20 th Jan 2025	Announcement of successful bidder and initiation of contracting
Wed 22 nd Jan 2025	Project inception meeting
Fri 24 th Jan 2025	Detailed research plan submitted
Fri 31 st Jan 2025	Questionnaire development and pre-testing
Fri 7 th Feb 2025	Survey set up including successful procurement of sample and completion of interviewers' training
Mon 10 th Feb 2025	Fieldwork begins
Fri 23 rd May 2025	Fieldwork ends: 100% of interviews completed
Fri 6 th June 2025	Data cleaned, packaged and sent to Creative PEC, with accompanying technical report

Proposed Milestones and Maximum Budget

The proposed project milestones are set out below.

Prospective suppliers should indicate how these will be met, with dates, in the project management plan to be submitted in response to the ITT (see ITT Response below).

Milestone 1	Approval of detailed research plan
Milestone 2	Questionnaire developed to satisfaction
Milestone 3	Survey set up successfully
Milestone 4	Fieldwork begins
Milestone 5	Fieldwork ends: 100% of interviews completed
Milestone 6	Data collected through survey supplied to Creative PEC in agreed format, with accompanying technical report

Between Milestones 4 and 5, Creative PEC will require the chosen supplier to provide weekly updates on progress, with a particular need to obtain robust outputs from the survey as early as is practicable.

The maximum budget available is £99,600 (including VAT)

Payments will be released on the receipt of invoices following completion of agreed milestones written into the contract signed between Creative PEC and the successful bidder.

The final milestone, indicating project completion, shall be clearly documented in any contract entered into as a result of this ITT, and in accordance with its terms, conditions and requirements.

Pricing is a consideration in determining the preferred supplier, so bidders are advised to cost their proposals in a transparent and accurate fashion.

ITT Response

In order to be considered for this commission, prospective suppliers are asked to send proposals that meet the technical requirements outlined in Appendix 1, provide information on the suitability of the proposed delivery team, and a fully itemised pricing schedule.

Proposals should be submitted as PDFs, no more than 9 pages in length excluding pricing schedule and appendices, written in English, single spaced, in 11-point font and A4 in size. Hard copies are not required. The pricing schedule can be submitted either as table on a PDF or a locked excel spreadsheet. Appendices can take whatever form is appropriate.

Proposals should include the following [suggested page lengths in brackets]:

- A response to the stated technical requirements, including the proposed methodology and expected outputs [max. 3 pages]
- A response to the stated data handling requirements, including: identification of which dataset will be used to set the sample frame; the conditions of access; confirmation of whether access has already been granted; and consideration of how GDPR obligations will be met [max. 1 page]
- A response to the stated research output requirements including: a project management plan that features a proposed delivery schedule; proposed specification for methodological and output oversight and sign off; identification of risks and risk mitigations related to the project; identification of any ethical considerations; and a description of how the team will allocate the appropriate level of resource to manage the project alongside any concurrent work [max. 2 pages]
- Biographies of team members, including details of previous projects of relevance [max. 2 pages]
- Evidence of how the team has successfully collected similar data in the past [max. 1 page]
- A separate pricing schedule
- Any appendices in support of the proposal

Proposals should be submitted by email by the deadline of 23:59, on Monday 13th January 2025 to Bernard.Hay@pec.ac.uk and Tom.Cahill-Jones@pec.ac.uk

Evaluation of Proposals

All submissions will be scored independently by a panel comprising members of Creative PEC, Work Advance, The Creative Industries Council (CIC) and The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The independent scores will be aggregated according to the process below, to determine final scores. Final scores will form the basis of the decision to award the contract.

Each submission will be scored against three areas, with the following weighting:

Technical description of methods	45%
Experience of delivery team	25%
Pricing schedule	30%

The scoring criteria for each area will be as follows:

Technical Description of Methods (45% Overall Weighting)

The criteria below are weighted as indicated and add up to a total of 100 marks:

Appropriateness of proposed methodology and outputs. This should include your approach to developing and finalising survey questions, sample design, and maximising engagement with the survey	50%
Provide confidence in the ability to meet the stated data handling requirements, including access to, and processing of, the identified dataset within the timeline provided, and an explanation of how information will be stored, reported and protected	25%
Provide confidence in the ability to successfully deliver the project in a timely manner that takes ethical considerations into account, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clear project management plan including a delivery schedule, proposed specification for methodological and output oversight and sign off, and a detailed breakdown of how milestones will be met• Identification of the main risks associated with undertaking the study, and proposed mitigations that can be applied within the project timelines• The approach to ensuring the work is compliant with relevant ethical codes of conduct, setting out any ethical considerations presented by the study along with details of the proposed arrangements for ethical scrutiny	25%

Each panel member will score each criterion above out of 4, as per the Scoring Table below. These scores will be aggregated and then converted to the weighting available, giving a total score out of 100. This score will then be calculated against the overall weighting in this area (45%). This percentage - **the technical score** - will be taken through to the calculation of the final score.

E.g. if a submission achieves a total score of 80 out of 100, that would convert to a technical score of 36%.

Experience of Delivery Team (25% Overall Weighting)

Two criteria, weighted equally:

Skills, expertise and experience in delivering similar projects, to provide confidence in the successful completion of the project, with appropriate knowledge of primary data collection in the creative industries, and including experience with the dataset the supplier intends to use to set the sample frame.	50%
Overall balance and capacity of team to achieve requested project outcomes within the desired delivery timetable, including roles and availability of senior team members	50%

Each panel member will score each criterion above out of 4, as per the Scoring Table below. These scores will be aggregated and then converted to the weighting available, giving a total score out of 100. This score will then be calculated against the overall weighting in this area (25%). This percentage - **the experience score** - will be taken through to the calculation of the final score.

E.g. if a submission achieves a total score of 80 out of 100, that would convert to an experience score of 20%.

Pricing Schedule (30% Overall Weighting)

Prospective suppliers should provide a separate pricing schedule that includes a detailed breakdown of costs, including the rates and/or fees of all members of the delivery team. It is strongly advised that each element that will be delivered as part of the project is itemised, so that the components of the final contract can be determined.

A formula will be used to determine the score of the pricing schedule, as follows:

$(\text{lowest total price received} / \text{prospective supplier's total price}) \times 100$

To avoid doubt, the maximum budget for this research is £99,600 including VAT

This score will then be calculated against the overall weighting in this area (30%). This percentage - **the price score** - will be taken through to the calculation of the final score.

E.g. if a submission achieves a score of 80, that would convert to a price score of 24%.

Final Score

The final score will form the basis of the decision to award the contract. It will be weighted as previously explained and calculated as follows:

Final score = **technical score + experience score + price score**

Scoring Table

In scoring the above criteria, the following table will be used:

Score	Score Description	Definition
0	Unacceptable in Whole or Part	No response has been provided or the response fails to address the requirement; elements of the response are unacceptable in whole or part, with proposals not justified or unsupported by evidence where required; fails to demonstrate any understanding of the requirement.
1	Low Confidence	Lack of content/detail or significant gaps or lack of justification/evidence in response to the requirement; response given is generic and not relevant; fails to demonstrate understanding of the requirement. The response provides the University with low confidence that the Bidder has the capacity/capability to deliver the University's requirements.
2	Satisfactory	The response is satisfactory and meets some of the University's requirements with some gaps or lack of justification/evidence in response to the requirement. The answer provided is satisfactory and provides the University some confidence that the Bidder has the capacity/capability to deliver the University's requirements.
3	High Confidence	The response is good and meets most of the University's requirements providing most of the benefit/value/experience specified. The response provides the University with high confidence that the Bidder has the capacity/capability to deliver the University's requirements.
4	Full Confidence	The response is excellent and meets all the University's requirements providing the full benefit/value/experience specified. The response provides the University with full confidence that the Bidder has the capacity/capability to deliver the University's requirements.