



Request for Proposal: Development of the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Science Council's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Progression Framework and Guidance (Phase 1)

Summary of invitation

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) [Progression Framework](#) was developed in a collaboration between the [Science Council](#) and the [Royal Academy of Engineering](#) (the Academy) to progress EDI across engineering and science professional bodies. The framework is a self-assessment tool for organisations (specifically professional bodies) that addresses typical areas of activity and encourages EDI progression over time. Organisations associated with the Academy and the Science Council have the opportunity to participate in 4-yearly benchmarking to assess the evolution of their organisational diversity and inclusion.

In 2024, the Framework was reviewed and updated to Version 3.0, available on the [Science Council](#) and [Academy](#) websites. Benchmarking occurred in 2025. Participating organisations received individual reports. Aggregated reports can be found on [The Academy](#) and [Science Council](#) websites. Benchmarking will be repeated in 2029, and in the meantime, we have the opportunity to refine the Framework (Phase 1) and subsequently build a more user-friendly format for its use (Phase 2), to support our organisations' self-directed use of the Framework from the beginning of 2028.

Phase 1 will commence in 2026 and should be complete by March 2027, if not sooner. The deadline for tender submissions is 15 July 2026.

We are seeking a specialist practitioner or team to lead the refinement of the EDI Progression Framework and its accompanying guidance, ensuring it remains a robust, user-centred, sector-leading tool for our member bodies (organisations across the breadth of science and engineering).

About our organisations

The **Royal Academy of Engineering** creates and leads a community of outstanding experts and innovators to engineer better lives. As a charity and a Fellowship, we deliver public benefit from excellence in engineering and technology and convene leading businesspeople, entrepreneurs, innovators and academics from every part of the profession. As a National Academy, we provide leadership for engineering and technology, and independent, expert advice to policymakers in the UK and beyond.

Our work is enabled by funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, corporate and university partners, charitable trusts and foundations, and individual donors.

The **Science Council** is a collaborative interdisciplinary community of more than 30 professional bodies and learned societies across the breadth of science.

We work together to inspire, develop and support scientific professionals, and are committed to professional recognition of people working in all roles across the breadth of scientific disciplines and applications.

Our vision is of a diverse and growing science profession that is trusted, respected, innovative and equipped to meet regional, national and global challenges.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Science Council and the Academy are committed to advancing EDI in science and engineering, and therefore proactively seek to procure services from diverse suppliers. We expect the project to be delivered in line with our values of inclusion and diversity and to the highest ethical standards. Diverse perspectives should be considered in the development of proposals and outputs should be inclusive.

Please expect to be asked questions regarding your commitment to EDI.

Background

Aims of the Framework

The Progression Framework supports professional bodies to:

- ▶ track performance and progress on EDI against five levels of good practice, where level zero is prior to starting, and level four is the highest level of good practice
- ▶ structure conversations internally about performance and progress on EDI
- ▶ identify strengths and areas for development
- ▶ plan next steps in making progress on EDI

Context and use

The member organisations that complete this Framework vary hugely in size and nature.

There are challenges that have led to variation in users' interpretations of categories and to difficulties in comparing submissions from different user organisations.

This is a long-term asset. Our datasets go back to 2017. Continuity is important and needs to be balanced with remaining contemporary.

Currently, the Framework is completed within an Excel spreadsheet. Once the Framework content and guidance are updated in Phase 1, we will commission the development of a more user-friendly format (Phase 2).

Statement of requirements

1. Summary:

Scope of work

The aim is to improve the content of the Progression Framework to:

- Review content at each level, removing ambiguity and clarifying expectation for achieving each level of good practice.
- Ensure appropriate attention for underrepresented groups and intersectionality, without significantly increasing the length of the Framework
- Retain the capability for the Framework to be used by participating organisations for reflection and comparison. Comparison relates to both a participating organisation's profile of scoring over time and to their periodically benchmarked performance in relation to similar participating organisations.
- Whilst cognisant of the value of stability in a longitudinal data set, identify questions and/or sections which you recommend removing or amending.
- Propose revisions that improve clarity and usefulness

The project will also include exploring user-acceptability before implementation.

There is also a requirement to update the Guidance document to support users. This will include simplifying completion and supporting consistent, comparable responses. Guidelines need to include how to evaluate the achievement of each criterion and the scoring system.

Stakeholders

Your expertise is key but a collaborative approach with stakeholders is required. This work is commissioned by the Academy, working closely with the Science Council. These organisations will work collaboratively with you to support your delivery of the commissioning brief. They will also monitor delivery against the Scope of Work/ Specification.

We jointly support a 'Progression Framework Implementation Group'. Its membership includes representatives from professional bodies that use the Progression Framework. Their experiences are expected to be a useful source of advice as the project progresses.

2. Timing:

To start as soon as possible, with completion by March 2027 or sooner.

3. Experience:

The individual or team must have:

- a track record of developing effective, user-centred questionnaires and guidance
- appreciate the longitudinal nature of learning from benchmarking cycles

- be willing to engage with stakeholders to understand their needs and perspectives
- have a sufficient understanding of EDI to refine the Framework and guidance appropriately
- an understanding of the sectors and/or stakeholders involved

We anticipate that the appointed individual or team will have social science expertise, or another area of professional expertise that they can demonstrate, enabling them to approach this commission knowledgeably and manage the process appropriately whilst remaining focused on the outcomes of an improved Framework and improved guidance.

Deadline for proposals: 15 July 2026

Schedule

Date	Activity Number	Activity
19 June 2026	1	Issue of RFP (this document) to potential suppliers
30 June 2026	2	Deadline for submission of RFP clarification questions to RAE
6 July 2026	3	Deadline for RAE to respond to all clarification questions
15 July 2026	4	Deadline for return of RFP
22 July 2026	5	Deadline for initial evaluation of RFP
27 July 2026	6	Pitches
29 July 2026	7	Notification of preferred supplier
w/c 3 August 2026	8	Meet with successful bidder

Please send your clarification questions and submissions to:

Karen Grayson

Karen.grayson@raeng.org.uk

Your response

Your succinct response to this invitation should include:

- Your response to the brief, including a draft timeline
- The challenges you anticipate and how you would manage them
- A summary of your relevant experience and expertise, which may include examples of similar work in other contexts
- A list of the people who will contribute to this commissioned work, the time each will commit, and their role. Please append a 2-page CV for each individual.
- Proposed costs and your invoicing schedule.

- If you propose to use a subcontractor for the delivery of any part of this work, please include the details of these people or organisations, their relevant experience and expertise, and what they will deliver.
- References.

Scoring matrix

0	No Answer/Unacceptable Response
1	Very Poor Response
2	Poor Response
3	Acceptable Response
4	Good Response
5	Excellent Response

To score well (i.e. 3 and above) the evaluation panel will look for clear evidence. The scores will be weighted to give an overall score. The tables below indicate the weightings which will be applied to each section. The three highest scoring proposals will be invited to present their proposal.

At interview, we will consider all criteria. The scores given before the interview may be amended following new information provided at interview.

Selection criteria

Your response will be evaluated using the following:

Quality of proposal

Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Clear, realistic and effective proposal	0-5	1	5
Familiarity with science, engineering, and/or professional bodies (from any sector)	0-5	1	5
Understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion	0-5	1	5
Understanding and experience with maturity models and/or benchmarking activities	0-5	1	5
Total			20

Schedule

Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Delivery process and timescale is clear and realistic	0-5	2	5
Total			10

Cost

Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Is competitively priced	0-5	2	10
Expenditure broken down and pricing clear	0-5	1	5
Total			15

Organisation

Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Suitability of the organisation and investigators	0-5	1	5
Quality of references	0-5	1	5
Total			10

Additional Information

The Academy is committed to developing a diverse and inclusive supply chain. Therefore, we request information about your approach to equity, diversity and inclusion to understand your organisation's level of commitment. This can be evidenced through your corporate policies, training, strategies and/or accreditations. **Your response will not form part of the assessment criteria.**

Responses submitted can be verbal or written. All responses will be captured in an internal Academy Vendor List for monitoring purposes.

What is your organisation doing to show a commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion? As applicable, please provide details of policies, training, strategies and/or accreditations

*If you wish to receive any additional or updated information, please ensure that you register interest prior to submitting the proposal. All proposals must remain valid for a period of **90 days** from the date of submission by the vendor. This RFP and the information contained within it are deemed to be confidential information. Proposals must include information about costs and state whether these do or do not include VAT or any other levies. By submission of a proposal, the vendor warrants that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation or agreement with any other potential vendor.*