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Australian Government

Department of Education, Skills and Employment

New Employment Services Model 2022 Assessment Guide

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Contents

Glossary of Acronyms

APS	Australian Public Service
AMT	Assessment Management Team
CPR	Commonwealth Procurement Rules
CTA	Career Transition Assistance
ED	Evaluation Descriptor
ER	Employment Region
ES	Enhanced Services
ESAF	External Systems Assurance Framework
ESP	Employment Services Procurement
EST	Employment Skills Training
FVG	Financial Viability Guidelines
ID	Identification
IPP	Indigenous Procurement Policy (Participation Plan)
LMIP	Labour Market Information Portal
NAM	National Assessment Manager
NAMT	National Assessment Management Team
PaLMS	Procurement and Licence Management System
QA	Quality Assurance
RFP	Request for Proposal
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TAC	Tender Assessment Centre
TRC	Tender Review Committee
TtW	Transition to Work

1. Background

The New Employment Services Model 2022 (new model) will commence in July 2022, underpinned by a modern Digital Employment Services Platform (digital platform). The Australian Government's vision for the new model is a simple, efficient, trusted and connected employment service that will provide employers with candidates that have the skills they need. Support eligible job seekers to find sustainable employment through digital or Provider-led services.

The new model will focus providers on supporting high need job seekers, reducing the risk of these job seekers becoming or remaining long-term unemployed, and ensure resources are efficiently directed to those requiring the most assistance.

The services being procured through this Request for Proposal (RFP) are:

- Enhanced Services Generalist
- Enhanced Services Specialist
- Employability Skills Training
- Career Transition Assistance.

2. Purpose

This guide explains the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the assessment process, how the assessment process works, and the detailed procedure for assessing responses against published criteria. Assessors must follow this guide when assessing, analysing, and reaching conclusions about responses. It is important that assessors are familiar with the content of the response documentation and the objectives of the program for which services are being procured.

All staff involved in the assessment process need to have successfully completed probity training and completed a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Deed Poll and all Employment Services Procurement (ESP) training related to this procurement. This also includes any relevant departmental training. This document outlines the information on resources for the procurement, the key roles, staffing and security requirements for this procurement.

Where assessors require further data, material, or relevant background information to assess a response, this guide explains the process of how they should obtain and use this information.

If there is inconsistency between this Guide and the NESM 2022 Purchasing Plan, the terms of the Purchasing Plan will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

3. The assessment environment

Assessment and moderation, where possible, will be undertaken in centralised (National Office) and decentralised (State based) locations which will be known as Tender Assessment Centres (TACs) and Hubs. Table 5 in the RFP New Employment Services Model (NESM) 2022 Purchasing Plan outlines the locations where assessment will be undertaken and how assessment and moderation will be completed.

The designated secure area(s) are fit for purpose and support interaction between assessment managers, assessors and moderators and Quality Assurance (QA) staff.

Regardless of where assessment and moderation are being undertaken, the environment will include:

- workstations separated from business as usual staff not involved in the procurement
- computers configured for assessment only (that is, _t account in a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) restricted environment) which are in a dedicated area separate from normal department computers. One PC per Desktop Anywhere (DTA) will be assigned to each assessor/moderator
- sign in-out Register – for staff to sign in/out on arrival/departure
- lockable cabinet or room for storage of phones, electronic devices and all physical materials relating to the procurement
- secure paper bin – all procurement documentation must be provided to the Assessment Management Team (AMT) who will place documents in the secure bins as required
- separate meeting room for meetings and feedback where possible, depending on locations for each assessment
- dedicated video/teleconference facilities.

As outlined in section 9.2.1 Home-based work, in the RFP NESM 2022 Purchasing Plan, assessment, moderation and allocation will not be permitted and will not be approved **unless** the Project Manager authorises home-based work under the operation of the Business Continuity Plan (refer section 2.6.1 Exceptional circumstances of the ESP Guidelines) and conditions specified in section 5.8 of the ESP Guidelines are satisfied.

3.1. Location of assessors and moderators

Assessors will assess responses in a secure environment either in Canberra or one of the designated TACs and Hubs. Each location will have a dedicated AMT to support the operation of the assessment and to support assessors and moderators through the process.

Assessors and moderators will be co-located where possible, but this is dependent on staffing levels and State/Territory Health Directions.

Assessors are to consult with their moderator about any concerns they have with an assessment prior to finalising it and sending to their moderator for review. Moderators are not to influence an assessor's decision about determining an evaluation descriptor (ED) but rather, assist the assessor to understand the process and information provided by the Respondent.

The Procurement and Licence Management System (PaLMS) Assessment App workflow supports written moderator feedback. The VDI environment includes a collaboration platform that can be utilised where the assessor and moderator are not co-located. A secure conference line and designated spaces are also available within the TACs and Hubs to support communications between assessors and moderators. The VDI collaboration platform and the physical secure environment will be monitored to ensure probity requirements are always adhered to.

No landline phones or mobile devices are permitted on the assessment floor, however, AMTs will have a desk phone. This will be available to make calls or receive calls should family members need to make contact.

3.2. Systems and secure drive requirements

Assessment and moderation will be undertaken electronically in the PaLMS located within the secure VDI environment.

Analysis of the response can be written directly into PaLMS or into a word document and copied into PaLMS and can be edited within either environment. Assessors and moderators will have access to Microsoft Word and Excel in the VDI environment.

No information can be copied out of the PaLMS system into any other App in the VDI environment including OneNote, Word, or Excel. Only the version in PaLMS will be considered.

3.3. Hard copy assessment files

All responses will remain in electronic (softcopy) format within the PaLMS and VDI environments. In the event of extreme and/or exceptional circumstances the Project Manager may approve the extraction and or printing of response information by the National Assessment Manager (NAM) or their proxy. The NAM will ensure the physical security throughout and secure disposal of the hardcopy immediately upon the satisfaction or resolution of the extreme event or exceptional circumstance.

AMTs will have access should anything need printing – no assessor or moderator will be able to print from the VDI environment.

4. Assessment personnel

The NAM is responsible for the efficient, effective, and ethical management of the assessment processes for each procurement.

The AMTs situated in all assessment locations, work with the NAM during assessment to ensure consistency in approach and timely completion of the assessment process.

4.1. Assessors

Assessors will assess a Respondent's submission against the selection criteria and will have access to relevant information sources to assist with confirming claims where possible. Assessors will apply an ED that is supported by the analysis. Further information on EDs can be found in section 7.3.1 of this guide.

Assessors will need to include comments to support the ED selected that is appropriate for the information provided in the response. Comments will also need to include analysis that is relevant for business allocation and debriefing, including identifying strengthening statements that can be provided to a Respondent on request at debriefing. The analysis should outline what the provider has presented in their response and how well this addresses the question asked.

Each review will be conducted by a single assessor supported by a single moderator. Responses will be assessed within specific Employment Regions and/or service types.

The majority of assessors will be sourced from recruitment agencies and supplemented with staff from the department's State and Territory offices and national program areas.

Assessors will need to think critically and analyse the information presented in the response to make informed judgements and justifications about the quality of a submission.

An assessor's role is to:

- allocate EDs against the relevant selection criterion that is supported by the analysis
- write an analysis consisting of statements that support the assessment result allocated for each selection criterion, including relevant comments that can be used for business allocation and strengthening statements used in the debriefing process.

Where relevant during the assessment, assessors will have access to information sources to assist with confirming a Respondent's claims against the selection criteria or information concerning the Respondent (including its past performance information) that can be used to substantiate a claim.

When assessing a selection criterion an assessor can take into consideration the information contained within any part of the single selection criterion, i.e. information contained in selection criterion 2.1 of the RFPcan be considered in any other question in selection criterion 2.

Information in any part of selection criterion 2 cannot be considered in selection criterion 1 or 3.

4.2. Validation or Clarification

Where assessors identify information that requires validation or clarification (either from a Respondent directly or third party, including SMEs), they must consult with their moderator to determine if:

- the information to be verified or clarified is already available, for example, through available data or an alternate source
- whether the validation or clarification is likely to make a material difference to the selection of EDs and subsequent suitability rating of the criterion response.

If the moderator agrees that validation or clarification is required, the assessor must complete a Validation and Clarification Request Form (see Attachment F) and advise the AMT. A copy of the Validation and Clarification Request Form can also be found on the secure R drive - R:\2022NESM\Assessment\templates.

Assessors and moderators should note that the department may only confirm or clarify a Respondent's specific statement or claim. In doing so the assessor cannot pose an open question, which invites a broad response and invites new or additional information to be submitted.

For complex or contentious issues, the NAM must consult the internal Probity Coordinator in the first instance, who will refer the matter to the external Probity Adviser, if required.

The Respondent or third party will be requested to provide the information in writing within a timeframe that is informed by the level of complexity of the information requested, as determined by the NAM and not generally greater than 2 days.

If the validation or clarification is not provided within this timeframe, the Respondent's submission must be assessed on the basis of the information contained within it (that is, to the extent that information can be considered in the absence of validation or clarification).

Responses to requests will be reviewed by the AMT and, where required, be referred to the internal Probity Coordinator in cases where there is uncertainty about whether new or additional information has been introduced and further advice is required.

If verification or clarification from a referee or another organisation is required, the assessor must:

- speak to their moderator to confirm that contact with a referee or other organisation is required
- provide a copy of the completed Validation or Clarification Request form (Attachment F) to the moderator who in turn will notify the local AMT that a Request form has been completed and request this form be sent to the NAMT for action.

If required, the request will be considered by the internal Probity Coordinator who will notify the NAMT once approved. Please note that questions (including possible supplementary questions in the case of a teleconference) to a referee or other organisation must be cleared in advance by the NAM and internal Probity Coordinator and directly relevant to the service type and selection criteria being addressed.

Generally, contact with the external party will be via the Hotline, however, where validation with a third party is conducted via teleconference, attendees could include the assessor, moderator, a member of the AMT and a member of the QA team. The teleconference must be minuted and only information directly relevant to the Respondent's claims must be transcribed to the Validation or Clarification Request form.

Completed forms will be added to the R Drive for the assessor and their moderator who have made the request to ensure relevant information can be considered by the assessor when completing their analysis.

Appropriate audit trails must be maintained throughout the assessment. To support this all claims for validation or clarification must be completed on the appropriate template and saved electronically in the VDI environment by the NAMT. Details will be documented in the PaLMS or equivalent system noting:

- who made the request and who provided the response
- when the request was made and actioned.

If validation is not undertaken during assessment and both assessor and moderator agree that there is a claim or comment that should be considered during business allocation, this must be noted by the Assessor in the Analysis i.e. *Note: XY claim/statement/example was made/provided, that did not impact the evaluation descriptor selected, but it is considered that the business allocation team may choose to review and validate if appropriate.* This must then be extracted by the moderator and emailed to the AssessmentQandA@tender.dese.gov.au mailbox to be raised with the respective BA team during business allocation.

4.3. Moderators

Moderators are experienced and/or trained officers who are responsible for overseeing the quality, consistency and completeness of assessments undertaken by the assessors (see section 9.3.7 of the Purchasing Plan). Where possible Moderators are responsible for up to 4 assessors and need to ensure the expected number of completed assessments per day is achieved. They require strong leadership and management skills.

A moderator's role includes:

- managing both the quality and quantity of output of the assessors, including relaying common issues feedback from the QA and/or NAM
- overseeing the consistency of assessments within ER or locations and across states
- monitoring the range of EDs allocated by the assessor
- where moderating an assessment, assisting assessors to reach agreement on an ED where there has been an impasse
- reviewing and considering the strength of the assessor's recommendation and the quality of the analysis, including the recommendation against the response provided
- where appropriate, checking that referees or other third parties have been contacted
- checking that demonstrated performance data has been considered appropriately for the relevant selection criteria
- checking that all relevant assessment tools have been accessed and used appropriately
- considering and where appropriate endorsing assessor requests for validation or clarification, and what evidence has been validated
- ensuring that all relevant comments relating to validation are completed appropriately and considered in the analysis
- ensuring that comments for debriefing are included, where required
- ensuring that final analysis is complete in the PaLMS or equivalent system.

Moderators may discuss and provide feedback to assessors on the following issues:

- why a particular ED was allocated
- supporting evidence from a response (for example, demonstrated performance, research or studies)
- whether the analysis contains adequate and appropriate analysis to support its recommendations
- why a response may need to be reallocated to a new team (for example, time delay, potential conflict of interest)
- speed of assessment and any difficulties in meeting assessment completion targets.

Moderators should not respond to questions that relate to the mechanics or standard operating procedures of the assessment process or logistics of the assessment floor. These should be raised with the AMT.

At times, moderators will be required to assist assessors determine if validation or clarification of a claim is needed and who the request should be directed to (refer to 3.1 Validation or clarification). Moderators will need to ensure that the claim needing validation or clarification will make a material difference to the assessment and that the request is written to ensure a Yes/No answer so that no additional information is provided. A validation or clarification template to request this information is provided as part of this guide at Attachment F.

4.4. National Assessment Manager

The NAM will:

- oversee and support the local TAC Assessment Managers
- work collaboratively with AMTs to manage the assessment process across assessment locations
- escalate issues and emerging risks to the Project Manager in a timely manner and generally provide regular updates on assessment progress, quality, and trends
- manage the validation process for all assessment locations with the assistance of the NAMT based in Canberra and program staff for validations and clarifications requiring program specific input
- monitor and make recommendations to maintain a productive assessor: moderator ratio
- conduct meetings with assessors, moderators, or TAC AMTs as required
- implement contingency measures under the direction of the Project Manager as and when required
- compile the assessment report in consultation with the TAC AMTs and State Manager (where applicable) to go to the Project Manager for the Tender Review Committee (TRC).

To ensure smooth operation of the assessment phase, the AMT based in Canberra in consultation with the NAM will determine the allocation of responses to assessors. This will be reviewed throughout the process depending on how assessors are progressing and number of assessors available.

4.5. Assessment Reporting

Reports will be generated by the NAMTs to track the progress of assessments. The NAM, the NAMT and TAC–AMTs will discuss these to assist with determining what action (if any) is needed to complete the assessment phase on time.

An example of a report that will be run is the number of responses assessed per day, the number completed by individual assessors and how many claims are currently undergoing validation or clarification. This will allow the progress of assessments to be tracked against the projected estimates.

4.6. Assessment Management Team

The National and TAC AMTs will be responsible for:

- establishing assessment and business allocation teams in PaLMS or equivalent system, as required
- allocating selection criterion to assessors
- managing the process by providing the NAM information to ensure there are sufficient assessment staff to complete the assessments within the time frame allowed for the assessment phase

- clarifying processes or assessment issues for assessors, including providing any clarifications in consultation with the relevant program and policy areas
- liaising with moderators in relation to assessor performance and ensuring that any input sourced from program areas, TACs or Hubs does not result in the consideration of material or information that should not be considered by the assessors
- conducting meetings, when appropriate, with assessors, moderators, and the NAM to discuss any issues that have arisen
- arranging for referees or third parties and SMEs to be contacted
- tracking the progress of assessment and updating the NAM to enable them to update the Project Manager or TRC as required on progress, quality, and trends
- managing communications between assessors and other parties in the assessment process (Financial Viability, QA, Probity Adviser, Adjudication Teams and SMEs).

4.7. Subject Matter Experts

Assessment staff should seek input from SMEs throughout the assessment phase, as required, to ensure claims made within a response are adequately considered and tested where necessary.

All SME requests must be lodged with the Local AMTs before being provided to the NAMT for action. These must be endorsed by the moderator and completed on the appropriate validation/clarification template. The SMEs will include personnel from the relevant program area and other areas of the department or personnel from other departments.

Generally, during assessment, validation or clarification will be conducted through internal validation, that is, approaching departmental program areas or reviewing websites for information. External validation refers to going to a third party outside the department or the Respondent themselves. External validation occurs predominantly during business allocation, however if required may be conducted at any phase of the evaluation process.

4.8. Adjudication Teams

Adjudication occurs when the assessor and moderator are unable to agree on the ED or why a Respondent should receive a particular result for an assessment. An adjucidacation can also be requested by the NAM, the Project Manager, or a member of the TRC.

Adjudication Teams are composed of 2 experienced departmental officers selected by the NAM or the AMT in the respective location after consultation with the NAM. No staff involved in the adjudication can have any previous involvement in the assessment process for that particular response. One of the members may be a moderator from the process but must not have been involved in the assessment of the response undergoing adjudication.

If the Project Manager, NAM, or the TRC, request a review, in part or full, the adjudication team will review the original assessment by considering the following issues:

- has the assessment team considered all relevant material
- has the assessment been conducted in accordance with the Purchasing Plan and this guide
- have the assessment decisions been justified appropriately
- is the assessment consistent with assessments of other Responses.

The adjudication will:

- determine the point of disagreement between the assessor and the moderator
- determine if any additional elements need to be considered
- recommend if the assessment stands or if it needs to be reassessed.

If the adjudication team determines that a re-assessment needs to be completed, the response will be reallocated to a new assessor and moderator. The previous record will not be seen by the new team, and the new team will not know that this has been assessed and has been through adjudication.

The adjudication team's recommendation will be considered final.

4.9. Quality Assurance

The QA Manager will oversee the QA process for the assessment phase. They will determine the range, scope, and type of QA activities to be undertaken and the timeline for their completion.

The QA Manager and the NAM will work closely throughout all phases of the procurement and will consult with the Project Manager, as required, to discuss issues of concern needing remediation and reach agreement on required actions to resolve the issues or support escalation to the Project Manager or TRC for decision.

4.10. NAM and AMTs Quality Assurance Review

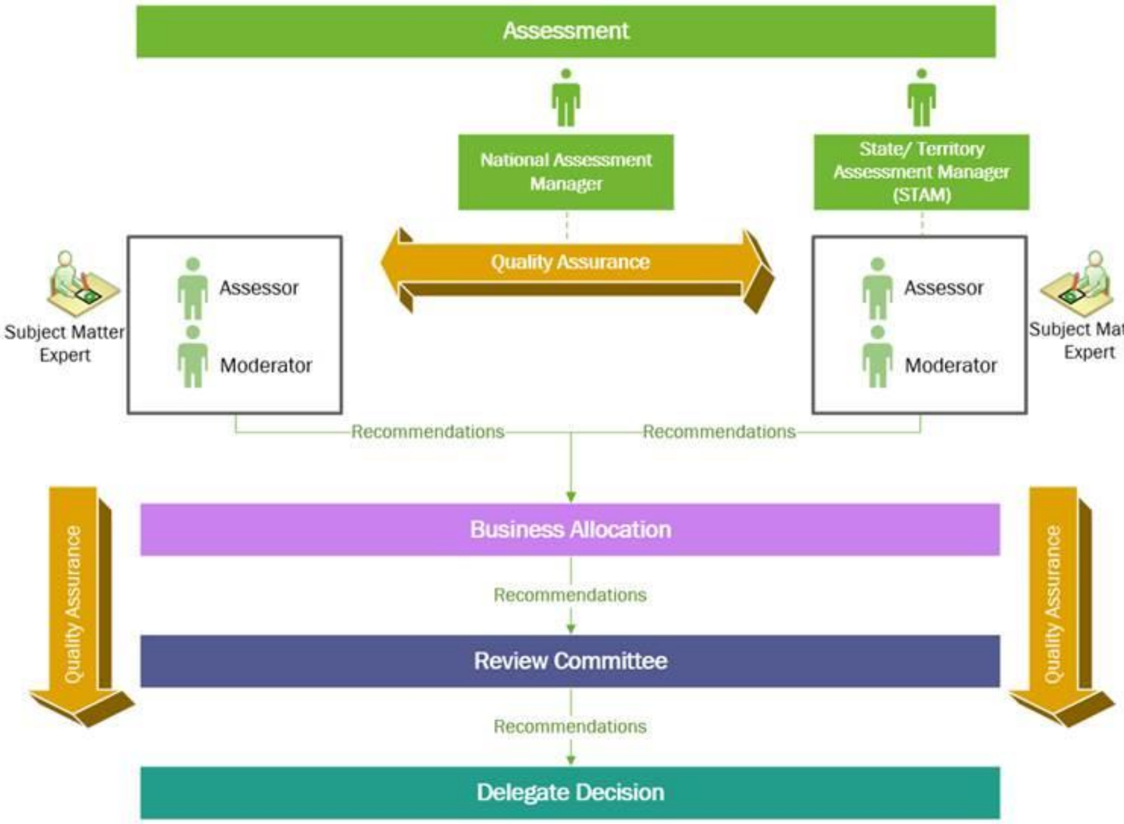
The NAM will monitor assessment results throughout the assessment phase. Checks will be conducted by the NAMT for outliers (where QA has not been undertaken) to determine whether the assessment should be reviewed.

If the NAM deems any assessment requires review, this will be done in accordance with the adjudication process outlined in section of this guide.

4.11. Assessment Team Structure Diagram

The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the assessment and decision-making process.

Figure 1: Assessment and Decision Structure



4.12. Probity Adviser

A random quality check of assessment reports may be carried out by the Probity Adviser. The Probity Adviser may review the reports, identify any issues, make recommendations, and report these to the NAM, the QA Manager and Project Manager.

5. Preparation of assessment personnel

The NAM and the AMTs work with the Training Manager and People, Security and Logistics Manager to ensure all personnel involved in the assessment process are appropriately prepared for the assessment process.

To ensure a confident and well-prepared approach to the assessment, personnel involved must participate in any required training and ensure they:

- read and understand the NESM 2022 RFP, particularly the selection criteria response requirements and the Statement of Requirements
- understand their role in the assessment process, as outlined in these Guidelines and in the NESM 2022 RFP Purchasing Plan
- are fully aware of and comply with all requirements of the:
    - the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act 2013)
    - the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) with respect to ethics and fair dealing with parties submitting, or invited to submit, applications

  - the APS Code of Conduct
  - the department's Code of Conduct in Contracting
- have completed the department's probity training and all department mandatory training
- complete, and update where circumstances change, the Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Deed Poll
- read the probity guidelines and follow the procedures to ensure a fair and transparent process.

All potential probity issues must be raised with the local AMT or NAM immediately so that they can be addressed. This is an ongoing obligation throughout the assessment process.

6. Supporting information available

In addition to assessing the response against the criterion, assessors will have access to supporting information that will assist them in assessing the responses.

All data-related supporting information will be located on the 2022 NESM folder on the R drive.

Information available to assessors if required through the AMT when assessing criteria includes, but is not limited to:

- the NESM 2022 RFP
- the NESM 2022 RFP Purchasing Plan and this Guide
- the Respondent's submission, including:
  - the Respondent's statement of claims against the relevant criterion
  - information from a referee requested through the verification and clarification request form – see Attachment B
- demonstrated performance information available to the department, including:
  - jobactive Star Ratings data and Disability Employment Services (DES) performance data through the department of Social Services
  - performance data on existing providers
  - Labour Market and Service Data from the Labour Market Information Portal (LMIP) to assist in gaining an understanding of some of the key characteristics of the labour market being assessed
  - job seeker data
  - special cohort data where available
  - local area data including maps of capital cities, major regional centres, and states
  - Risk Management Module Reports
- the assessor may consult a SME if more information is required to validate a claim refer to section 4.7.

7. The assessment process

Assessment involves considering and evaluating a Respondent's submissions against the relevant selection criteria, while taking demonstrated performance information (where available), any data available to the department, external data/evidence validation and information from referees (where appropriate) into account.

The assessment process can only commence after:

- the Delegate has approved the relevant Purchasing Planand the Project Sponsor, has approved this Guide
- the closing date and time for submissions specified in the Approach to Market documentation have passed.

The Purchasing Plan for the NESM 2022 RFP may stipulate changes to this general process, which assessors must comply with. Accordingly, the specific assessment requirements and considerations for each program are outlined in the relevant procurement Purchasing Plan. The specific assessment requirements are developed by the AMT and are designed to support and produce a fair, transparent, and defensible outcome.

Assessment of a Respondent's submission against published selection criteria under a fair, closely managed and transparent process will greatly aid in achieving best value for money outcomes and support the department to withstand public scrutiny. It is a key component of the evaluation process for a procurement but is not the only assessment conducted. Separate specialist assessments are conducted for:

- Financial Viability and Credentials assessment. These are conducted in accordance with the department's Financial Viability Guidelines (FVG)
- Right Fit For Risk (RFFR) questionnaire assessment is conducted in accordance with the department's External Systems Assurance Framework (ESAF)
- Indigenous Participation Plan assessment is conducted in accordance with the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP)

The FVG and RFFR assessments are undertaken by the department's Financial Viability and Cyber Security teams. The IPP process will be assessed by suitably experienced staff.

7.1. Allocation of Selection Criteria

The Canberra based NAMT will allocate responses to each assessment location according to the section 9.3.4 Allocation in the NESM 2022 RFP Purchasing Plan.

Where possible and dependent on circumstances in each TAC, local AMT will assign submissions to individual assessors. Where a Respondent has lodged submissions to deliver business in multiple locations or regions, each response will be assessed separately.

s 47E(d)

The NAMT will monitor the progress of each assessor in consultation with the local TAC–AMT, assigning responses as they progress through their allocated queue. This will be managed though PaLMS or the relevant equivalent system.

7.2. Assessing Responses

The overriding principle guiding the selection of successful Respondents will be value for money to the government.

The supporting principles of value for money are:

- encourage competition and to be non-discriminatory.
- use public resources in an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical manner that is not inconsistent with the policies of the Australian Government.
- facilitate accountable and transparent decision-making.
- encourage appropriate engagement with risk.
- be equal with the scale and scope of the business requirement.

Value for money is the optimum combination of quality of services, price, and other factors (including diversity, coverage and meeting the needs of specific client groups) and minimal risk exposure for the Australian Government.

7.2.1. The evaluation process will involve:

- assessment staff with appropriate expertise, training and knowledge who will assess the Respondent's response
- assessment of an organisation's Financial Viability, RFFR and IPP
- assessment of responses to selection criteria and other data
- making recommendations to a committee of senior departmental managers who will oversee the process and review the recommendations
- the Deputy Secretary, Employment and National Workforce Group, considering the recommendations and making the final decision.

7.3. Developing the Assessment Report

PaLMS will draw information contained in the analysis (written assessment) provided by an assessor including the EDs selected and the recorded analysis automatically into the assessment report, and later into the debriefing scripts. Each assessor must record, within PaLMS, their analysis of the claims against each of the selection criterion, detailing the supporting evidence and strengthening statements in the response.

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Guidance on how to consider any additional information will be provided in the guidance matrices.

7.3.1. Elements and Evaluation Descriptors

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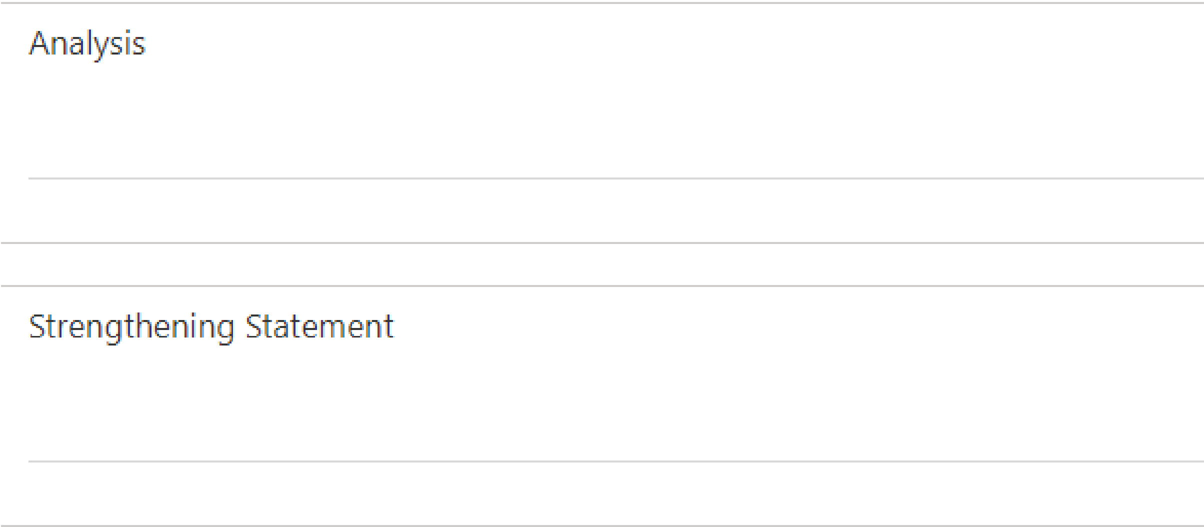
7.3.2. Finalising the Assessment Report

Before finalising an analysis, the assessor and moderator must ensure there is a strong correlation between the EDs selected and the evidence and strengthening statements recorded in the analysis fields. For example, if the EDs selected were low there would be fewer elements considered and more strengthening statements.



As described in section 4.8, if there is disagreement between the assessor and moderator regarding an assessment, the moderator will refer the matter to the NAM for consideration for adjudication.

In circumstances where verifying or clarifying information provided by the applicant will have a material impact on the ED selection, assessors, in consultation with their moderator, must seek validation.

Moderators are responsible for overseeing the quality and consistency and completeness of assessments undertaken by the assessors they are supporting. Moderators do not participate in the assessment of any bids and do not make an independent assessment of a bid.

A moderator must ensure the assessment result reflects a fair, accurate and complete evaluation of the selection criteria responses before changing the status of the response to completed. A moderator will review the assessment report, checking for consistency and quality, and will provide feedback to assessors for consideration.

When an assessment is complete, the assessors must ensure the assessment report has been updated with any amendments.

7.4. Summary of Assessment Process

- Step 1 •Review the selection criteria and supporting documentation
- Step 2 •Consider the Respondent's response in relation to the selection criteria/criterion and supporting documentation
- Step 3 •Consider the elements and assign an indicative descriptor - discuss with your moderator if required
- Step 4 •Request validation and/or clarification (if required)
- Step 5 •Write up the analysis, strengthening statements and confirm the descriptors
- Step 6 •Send the assessment to your moderator for review, moderator reviews and sends to QA if in agreement or sends back to assessor if they have feedback
- Step 7 •QA review the assessment and provide feedback if required and return to the moderator if required or notes QA complete
- Step 8 •NAM reviews assessments before finalising

Refer to IT user guides for support on how to manage the PaLMS which are located in the R drive.

8. Financial Viability

The Financial Viability assessment of a Respondent is a key component of the evaluation process for a procurement that is managed by the Financial Viability team.

Attachment A – Selection Criteria – NESM 2022 RFP *(extract)*

This RFP encompasses 3 services thereby allowing Respondents to lodge one response covering an individual service or a combination of services of the Respondent's choice.

A Respondent may elect to apply for one, 2 or all 3 services. Respondents must choose the Employment Regions in which they are bidding for the selected service(s). For Enhanced Services, an additional selection will be required to elect to bid for either a Generalist or Specialist Licence or both for the Employment Region in which the Respondent is bidding.

Respondents will enter their claims against the selection criteria directly into 360Pro which will allow Respondents to save drafts and return to the response as often as required before finalisation and submission. It will also allow Respondents to reuse and edit previous responses in a single data entry, allowing a multiple use approach to response lodgement.

The selection criteria are grouped into 3 areas of capability for each of the 3 program areas as listed below:

- organisational capability
- tailored services
- local knowledge and connections.

Respondents to this RFP will be required to respond to targeted questions under each area of capability for each service type they are bidding. Respondents are required to provide examples and/or case studies to evidence their claims against the criteria. Examples and case studies should be appropriate to the criteria, relevant and demonstrate the capacity to deliver the services sought.

In responding to the selection criteria, Respondents should refer to the relevant Service Statement of Requirements in this RFP and the relevant general requirements in either the Draft Deed of Standing Offer (DoSO) and/or relevant Draft Deed.

Organisational capability

Respondents will only need to address selection criterion 1, capability once, including the provision of supporting information, irrespective of how many Employment Regions, location(s), or services the Respondent is bidding for.

Attachment B – Selection Criterion 1

Total character limit: 18,000

Weighting: 20 per cent

This criterion seeks information about the Respondent's proposed service model and delivery framework, and how it will ensure the delivery of high-quality employment services.

Note: Respondents must upload their organisation/operational structure as part of their response. For the avoidance of doubt, the organisation/operational structure should be a diagram that sets out the organisation's internal operating structure. This diagram should not include a **written account** of the individual or the organisation, job titles etc are acceptable but should be meaningful, clear, and concise. The department will exclude from consideration any diagram with additional information that fails to meet these requirements.

1.1 Explain the key design and operational elements of your service model, including the guiding principles, values, and service vision and how the model will ensure appropriate access to services for Participants and be effective in delivering against the objectives of the Service or Services bid for. *(2,000 characters)*
1.2 Describe your organisational approach to workforce development, including staff recruitment, training and support systems that advance the objectives of the Service or Services bid for. *(2,000 characters)*
1.3 Provide details, including examples that show your organisation's experience and/or capacity to work with Participants who need intensive support to improve their employment prospects. *(2,000 characters)*
1.4 In relation to your organisation/operational structure how will the reporting and program management systems drive continuous improvement? *(2,000 characters)*
1.5 In relation to your organisation/operational structure how will the governance systems and procedures ensure currency and compliance with contractual obligations, relevant legislation, and internal controls e.g. risk, fraud, access? *(2,000 characters)*
1.6 In relation to your organisation/operational structure how will the governance and program management systems safeguard employees and program Participants? *(2,000 characters)*
1.7 Explain your organisational approach to business continuity and disaster management to ensure continuity of service delivery. *(2,000 characters*)

Question 1.8 and 1.9 Demonstrated performance

These questions seek information regarding the Respondent's performance relating to quality of service, contractual compliance, and achieving measurable outcomes for disadvantaged cohorts.

For existing Providers contracted by the department, the department will use current performance and other quantitative data held by the department. Existing Providers will have the option to ***NOT*** *provide additional information in response to this question.*

Respondents that are not currently contracted to the department should ensure they describe current or past performance in delivering similar services for other organisation(s) and/or different services *targeted to similar Participants. These Respondents must provide details of referees who can verify the Respondent's specific claims (refer to section 6.11 Referees).*

Demonstrate in quantitative terms:

1.8 performance against measures most relevant to the services described in this RFP, including assisting a diverse range of Participants with vocational and Non-vocational barriers to improve their employment prospects. (*2,000 characters*)

1.9 adherence to all contractual requirements and service quality. *(2,000 characters*)

Attachment C – Enhanced Services *(extract)*

Respondent's bidding for Enhanced Services, either Generalist or Specialist or both will need to address the following selection criterion in their response.

Tailoring services capability

Respondents must address this criterion and associated questions and provide supporting information for each Employment Region and location(s) and licence type selected in which they are bidding to deliver Enhanced Services (Generalist and/or Specialist). Respondents will be able to reuse and edit responses to allow adjusting of similar responses to different Employment Regions or location(s) and licence type.

Selection Criterion 2

Character limit: 20,000

Weighting: 40 per cent

This criterion seeks information about the Respondent's approach to tailoring and adapting its service model to meet the diverse needs of Enhanced Services Participants to achieve outcomes. The information provided should relate to the specific Employment Region or location(s) and the licence type (Generalist or Specialist) for which the Respondent is bidding. Respondents should refer to Appendix 1 – RFP – Enhanced Services (Statement of Requirements) when responding to this criterion.

Questions 2.1 – 2.4 to be answered by all Respondents bidding for Enhanced Services (Generalist and Specialist Licences)

In this Employment Region or location describe your service model and how it will:

2.1 deliver quality in person, face-to-face and alternative service delivery methods tailored to the individual needs of each Participant to address their Vocational and/or Non-vocational barriers to employment, improving their employability and supporting them into work and off Income Support. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

2.2 actively engage Participants on your caseload, to meet their Mutual Obligation requirements including through referral to services that help them overcome barriers, the delivery of suitable activities and training that improves their employability and that is appropriate for their particular circumstances. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

2.3 empower Participants to engage effectively with their individually tailored support and, ensure their input into the interventions that will contribute towards their Points Target under the Points Based Activation System. In doing so describe the strategies employed through your model to ensure the support offered is meaningful and contributes to the Participant's increased employability and capacity to find work. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

2.4 advance the objectives of this service through the staff recruitment, training, development, and staff support systems. *(4,000 characters)*

Question 2.5 to be answered ONLY where the Respondent is bidding for Enhanced Services Generalist Licence

In this Employment Region or location describe your service model and how it will:

2.5g tailor approaches to meet the specific needs of different job seeker cohorts such as, but not limited to, Indigenous Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees, young people, mature age Participants, ex-offenders, people facing homelessness, people facing complex health issues and/or disabilities (including mental health issues) and long-term unemployed job seekers. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

Question 2.5 to be answered ONLY where the Respondent is bidding for Enhanced Services Specialist Licence

In this Employment Region or location describe your service model and how it will:

2.5s tailor approaches to meet the specific needs of the Enhanced Services Participant cohort your Specialist Licence bid refers <Indigenous/ex-offenders/ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)/refugees>. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. (*4,000 characters)*

Note: All examples and case studies should clearly demonstrate the link between the outcome and your organisation’s proposed service delivery model.

Local knowledge and connections capability

Respondents must address this criterion and associated questions and provide supporting information for each Employment Region and location(s) In which they are bidding to deliver Enhanced Services (Generalist and/or Specialist). Respondents will be able to reuse and edit responses to allow adjusting of similar responses to different Employment Regions or location(s).

Selection Criterion 3

Character limit: 16,000

Weighting: 40 per cent

This criterion seeks information about the Respondent's knowledge of the local labour market and economy, and its capacity to establish and/or use existing local networks and connections to create and support employment opportunities for Enhanced Services Participants in the Employment Region or location(s) for which it is bidding. Respondents should refer to Appendix 1 – RFP – Enhanced Services (Statement of Requirements) when responding to this criterion.

In this Employment Region or location describe how your service model and delivery approach will:

3.1 respond to local labour market circumstances, including strategies to address issues faced by Participants/specific cohorts of Participants in engaging with local employment opportunities. Provide examples and/or case studies to show how the approach described in your response will address the challenges and issues faced by Participants. *(4,000 characters)*

3.2 support strong connections to and collaboration within the local community to deliver effective service offers for Participants — for example, local employers and industry, education and training providers, community, social services, and other service providers. Provide examples and/or case studies of local collaboration to show the effectiveness of the approach described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

3.3 use local resources and connections to create interventions to support Participants to address Non-vocational barriers, increase their employability, and generate pathways to employment. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approach described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

3.4 engage with local employers and industries to create employment opportunities appropriate for Participants, prepare Participants to meet employer needs and support job retention once Participants are placed. Provide examples and/or case studies to show how the support offered will be high quality and tailored to meet the needs of employers. *(4,000 characters)*

Attachment D – Employability Skills Training *(extract)*

Respondents bidding for Employability Skills Training (EST) will need to address the following selection criteria in their response.

Tailored services capability

Respondents must address this criterion and associated questions and provide supporting information for each Employment Region and location(s) selected, in which they are bidding to EST. Respondents will be able to reuse and edit responses to allow adjusting of similar responses to different Employment Regions or location(s).

Selection Criterion 2

Character limit depends on which EST Training Block Respondents are bidding for:

- Training Block 1 only – 18,000
- Training Block 2 only – 18,000
- Training Block 1 and 2 – 22,000

Weighting: 40 per cent

This criterion seeks information about the Respondent's approach to tailoring and adapting its service model to meet the diverse needs of Participants and achieve the EST program objectives within each Employment Region or location(s) for which it is bidding. Respondents should refer to Appendix 2 RFP – Employability Skills Training and Placement Management Services (Statement of Requirements) when responding to this criterion.

2.1 How will your organisation tailor the training content and its delivery to meet the needs of key Participant cohorts? Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

2.2 How will your organisation tailor the training content and its delivery to assist Participants to build employability skills and digital literacy skills relevant to the workplace; identify and explore career options that suit their aptitude and interests; and improve job search, job application and interview skills? Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(5,000 characters)*

2.3 How will your organisation deliver training in a way that engages Participants; allows you to monitor participation regularly and actively; and fosters a positive peer group dynamic? Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(3,000 characters)*

2.4 Provide the details of the Registered Training Organisation(s) that your organisation has or will partner with, and how the Registered Training Organisation(s) will provide assurance of the quality of your organisation's EST course content before it is delivered to Participants. *(2,000 characters)*

Question 2.5 (1) to be answered ONLY where the Respondent is bidding for Training Block 1

2.5 (1) How will your organisation tailor the content of Training Block 1 Courses and their delivery, including Industry Awareness Experiences if relevant, to promote Participant understanding and skills development? Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

Question 2.5 (2) to be answered ONLY where the Respondent is bidding for Training Block 2

2.5 (2) How will your organisation tailor the content of Training Block 2 Specialist Courses and their delivery to equip Participants to be ready for entry-level employment opportunities or further training in the industry of focus? Your response should describe any micro-credentials that will be delivered and include examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

Local knowledge and connections capability

Respondents must address this criterion and associated questions and provide supporting information for each Employment Region and location(s) in which they are bidding to deliver EST. Respondents will be able to reuse and edit responses to allow adjusting of similar responses to different Employment Regions or location(s).

Selection Criterion 3

Character limit depends on which EST Training Block Respondents are bidding for:

- Training Block 1 only (Questions 3.1 to 3.3) – 12,000
- Training Block 2 only (Questions 3.1 to 3.4)– 15,000
- Training Block 1 and 2 (Questions 3.1 to 3.4) – 15,000

Weighting: 40 per cent

This criterion seeks information about the Respondent’s knowledge of the local labour market and economy, and its capacity to establish and/or use existing local networks and connections to create and support employment and training opportunities for eligible Participants in the Employment Region or location(s) in which the Respondent is bidding. Respondents should refer to Appendix 2 RFP – Employability Skills Training and Placement Management Services (Statement of Requirements) when responding to this criterion.

3.1 How will EST training be tailored to entry-level opportunities and/or growth industries in the local labour market? Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

3.2 How will your organisation build and strengthen linkages with local employers and industry to help Participants build their employability skills and understand and meet the expectations of employers? Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(4,000 characters)*

3.3 How will your organisation source and/or manage quality work trials with a genuine prospect of employment for eligible Participants? Your response should include a description of how your organisation will ensure a safe system of work for Participants throughout their placement.

Provide examples where possible to show your organisation's capacity in sourcing and managing similar services. *(4,000 characters)*

Question 3.4 to be answered ONLY where the Respondent is bidding for Training Block 2

3.4 How will your organisation's Industry Awareness Experiences expose Participants to work-like environments, provide Participants with insight into the tasks and duties of a particular industry, and highlight the expectations of working in a particular industry? Provide examples where possible to show your organisation's capacity in sourcing and managing similar services. *(3,000 characters)*

Attachment E – Career Transition Assistance *(extract)*

Respondents bidding for Career Transition Assistance (CTA) will need to address the following selection criteria in their response.

Tailored services capability

Respondents must address this criterion and associated questions and provide supporting information for each Employment Region selected, in which they are bidding to CTA. Respondents will be able to reuse and edit responses to allow adjusting of similar responses to different Employment Regions.

Selection Criterion 2

Character limit: 14,500

Weighting: 40 per cent

This criterion seeks information about the Respondent's approach to tailoring and adapting its service model to meet the diverse needs of CTA Participants to achieve outcomes within the specific Employment Region for which it is bidding. Respondents should refer to Appendix 3 – RFP – Career Transition Assistance (Statement of Requirements) when responding to this criterion.

In this Employment Region:

2.1 Describe how your organisation will tailor your service model and delivery approach to ensure core components are delivered in a supportive group environment and guaranteeing access to suitable technology. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(2,000 characters)*

2.2 Describe how your organisation will tailor your service model and delivery approach to promote your service and attract eligible Participants. *(2,000 characters)*

2.3 Describe how your organisation will tailor your service model and delivery approach to help mature age people identify, explore and translate transferrable skills, and increase their confidence and employability. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(2,000 characters)*

2.4 Describe how your organisation will tailor your service model and delivery approach to work effectively with mature age Participants with varied needs, such as reduced mobility, to achieve identified goals. This should include how Participants from diverse backgrounds will be assisted in a culturally competent and effective manner. Provide examples and/or detailed case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(2,500 characters)*

2.5 Describe how your organisation's service model and delivery approach will ensure coverage and access to services across the entire Employment Region and how it will use in person, face-to-face and—where relevant—alternative service delivery methods to ensure Participants receive the best possible support to increase their employability. Provide examples and/or detailed case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(3,000 characters)*

2.6 Describe how your organisation's service model and delivery approach will be adapted to promote employment and training opportunities for Participants. This should include how your organisation might source and manage NWEP placements for eligible Participants.
(3000 characters)

Local knowledge and connections capability

Respondents must address this criterion and associated questions and provide supporting information for each Employment Region in which they are bidding to deliver CTA. Respondents will be able to reuse and edit responses to allow adjusting of similar responses to different Employment Regions or location(s).

Selection Criterion 3

Character limit: 12,000

Weighting: 40 per cent

This criterion seeks information about the Respondent's knowledge of the local labour market and economy, and its capacity to establish and/or use existing local networks and connections to create and support employment opportunities for CTA Participants in the Employment Region for which they are bidding. Respondents should refer to Appendix 3 – RFP – Career Transition Assistance (Statement of Requirements) when responding to this criterion.

In this Employment Region, describe how your service model and delivery approach will:

3.1 support work with other providers to achieve the desired outcomes of CTA. *(3,000 characters)*

3.2 identify and adapt strategies to changing circumstances in the region and local labour market to leverage current and future employment opportunities for Participants. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(3,000 characters)*

3.3 establish new and use existing connections with industry bodies and employers, and identify and meet employer and industry needs, including employers or industries that operate across the Employment Region to support the intent of CTA. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(3,000 characters)*

3.4 successfully use local resources and connections to provide a broader range of supports for mature age people, including those that foster and develop personal characteristics such as resilience. Provide examples and/or case studies to show the effectiveness of the approaches described in your response. *(3,000 characters)*

Attachment F – Validation and Clarification Request

This request form must be completed by the ***assessor*** *if verification or clarification of information in a response is required. Once the form is completed it must be provided to the National Assessment Management Team for actioning. This form should only be used when:*

- *verification or clarification is likely to make a material difference to the ED selected by the assessor*
- *the information needed to verify or clarify the request has not already been made available to the assessor (for example, where claims can be verified using provided performance data)*
- *the issue has been discussed with the relevant moderator and the moderator has agreed that verification or clarification is needed. Moderator approval is needed before the Assessment Management Team/National Assessment Manager will consider the request.*

Once your request has been received, the National Assessment Management Team/National Assessment Manager will deal with each request on a case-by-case basis and provide a response to the assessor and moderator. The National Assessment Management Team/National Assessment Manager will aim to complete these requests in 2 working days. However, for complex requests requiring a Subject Matter Expert response, turnaround times may be extended.

Request Authorisation – to be completed by the assessor/Assessment Team

Authorised by	*Name*	*Signature*	*Date*
Assessor			
Moderator			

Respondents Details – to be completed by the assessor

Organisation name: Name of contact in organisation: Contact detail for organisation: Respondent number: Employment Region (if applicable): Specialisation (if applicable):

Question / Query – to be completed by the assessor / Assessment Team

Please describe your question providing as much detail as you feel necessary including the relevant program area that the request relates to (that is, JSA, DES, IEP, etc.). The National Assessment Management Team may approach the assessor or the moderator for further clarification if necessary.

For multiple requests, please outline each request and the relevant Program or Expertise Area in dot point form.

Program or Expertise Area (please state):

Response – to be completed by the Assessment Management Team

For all written responses received from Subject Matter Experts, Referees, or other parties, are to be provided to the assessor/moderator in this template. Responses are to be copied into this section or attached to this document. For all other responses – verbal or otherwise, a summary of the response must be included below and attach any supporting information.

Resolution details – to be completed by the Assessment Management Team

Name of research/organising officer	
Date request received by Assessment Management Team	
Method of response (web/email/telephone)	
Date of contact (if applicable)	

Response Authorisation – to be completed by the National Assessment Manager in consultation with Probity (if required)

Authorised by	*Name*	*Signature*	*Date*
National Assessment Manager			
Probity (if required)			
Probity Adviser (if required)			