

# Tendering for Growth: A Practical Guide for Bedfordshire Businesses

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Helping businesses win work on Universal Studios,  
Luton Airport, and other major local developments



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## Winning work starts here

No matter the size of your business or the scale of your ambition, tendering is a valuable route to growth, particularly now.

With major developments such as Universal Studios in Kempston Hardwick, the redevelopment of Luton Hoo and Luton Stadium, and the expansion of Luton Airport, Bedfordshire is fast becoming a hub for significant public and private contracts across a wide range of sectors including construction, infrastructure, logistics and environmental services.

In today's competitive environment, tendering is more than a way to find work. It is how you stay relevant and ahead of your competitors. However, success requires a clear understanding of the process, strong documentation, and a proven approach to health and safety and human resources compliance.

Whether you are new to tendering or looking to improve your results, this guide will help you approach opportunities with confidence. It provides a clear overview of how the tendering process works, what makes a winning bid, and the most common mistakes to avoid.

If you are unsure where to begin, worried about compliance, or simply want to compete more effectively, this guide is for you.

## Navigating the tendering process: What to expect and how to prepare

Tendering is not a one-size-fits-all process. The type of procedure you will encounter depends on the buyer, the sector, and the complexity of the work on offer.

Whether you're bidding for your first public sector contract or competing for work with national contractors, knowing which type of process you're in helps you plan effectively and avoid wasted effort.





## Common tendering processes

Understanding the tender route is critical. Below is a summary of the most frequently used approaches:

Tender Process	When It's Used	Typical Requirements
Invitation to Tender (ITT)	For detailed bids with compliance and delivery expectations	Method statements, case studies, policies, pricing breakdown
Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)	To shortlist suppliers before a full tender is issued	Finances, insurances, policies, health and safety documentation
Selection Questionnaire (SQ)	Used in public sector tenders as a modern form of PQQ	Structured responses on eligibility, compliance, capacity
Request for Proposal (RFP)	For flexible, creative or service-based projects	Narrative response, costings, innovative delivery proposals
Request for Quotation (RFQ)	For standardised products or services with clearly defined specifications	Simple pricing and qualification check
Expression of Interest (EOI)	To assess market interest before issuing full tender documents	Basic business information, relevant experience
Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)	For long-term contracts where suppliers can join at any point	SSIP or ISO credentials, onboarding documents, insurance
Any Qualified Provider (AQP)	When services can be compared on a standardised basis	Proof of qualifications and consistent service delivery

Each process requires a different level of preparation and knowing which route you are entering allows you to allocate time and resources accordingly.



## Are you ready to bid?

Before you begin any bid process, it is important to assess whether your business meets the minimum eligibility criteria set out by the buyer. These will vary depending on the nature of the contract and the sector, but most tenders will require certain standard information. This usually includes your turnover, financial standing, relevant past experience, references, and any industry certifications or accreditations.

## Are you ready to deliver if you win?

Once you have confirmed eligibility, the next step is to consider your capacity. Every tender outlines the buyer's expectations in terms of product, service or project delivery. It is essential to be realistic about whether you can meet those demands without overstretching your resources.

You should consider whether the size and scope of the contract is manageable alongside your existing commitments. You should also think about your operational resilience in the event of staffing issues or material delays. These are common challenges, and procurement teams are keen to work with suppliers who have a robust delivery plan.

## Is your pricing competitive and sustainable?

Your pricing needs to reflect more than just your costs. It should take into account your margins, the likely competition, and the value of the contract over its full term. Pricing too low may win the bid but could leave you exposed financially. Pricing too high could make your submission uncompetitive.

It helps to understand market benchmarks and speak to others in your industry.

## Do you have the right experience?

Experience counts for a great deal in competitive tendering. Buyers want evidence that you have delivered similar work successfully. This is why case studies, testimonials and examples of recent contracts are so important.

If your company is relatively new to tendering, you may still be able to draw on the experience of your leadership team or key subcontractors. In such cases, it is perfectly valid to highlight relevant experience from within your extended delivery team.





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