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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

To ensure that the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) process in determining the use of funds for the purchase of goods and services is conducted in a publicly accountable manner to the benefit of the membership;

To outline the role and responsibilities in facilitating the expedient purchase of goods and services necessary to support the goals and objectives of SOGS; and

To provide the framework to seek competitive prices in a manner that is in accordance with the resolutions from council, and promotes free and open competition for all interested suppliers.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all documents related to the purchase of goods and services (as outlined below) that are prepared or processed by SOGS and/or the Grad Club.

3. Inclusions

This policy applies to the purchase of:

Goods and services estimated in excess of \$5,001 excluding taxes and/or shipping costs;

Goods and services of any price as determined at the discretion of council;

Goods and services identified in a competitive complaint from a supplier;

Goods and services requiring a "request for quotation" or "tender" as deemed necessary by government, university or contractual obligation.

4. Exclusions

Goods purchased for external resale; and

Goods and services valued up to and including \$5,001 not addressed by the inclusion rules above.

5. Sole Source

The supplier bidding requirement (as described below - Competitive Bid Requirements) is waived for the purchase of those goods and services only available from one lone supplier. Instead, a "sole source" form must be completed and submitted to the Executive and Speaker by the Requisitioner.

6. Existing Contracts

New bids are not required for the acquisition of goods and services covered by an existing SOGS contract. Should a Requisitioner choose not to use a supplier already under contract, the appropriate bid process must be followed.

7. Competitive Bid Requirements

It is the responsibility of the Requisitioner to ensure all purchases requiring competitive bids are compliant with the following:

Prices must be obtained from at least three sources;

Price quotations must be obtained using the method appropriate to the complexity and estimated cost of the good or service under consideration. These methods are included in item 8-10 inclusive:

8. Price Quotation

For purchases of \$5,001-\$50,001, price quotations must be solicited by the Requisitioner by phone, fax or E-mail. Price quotations must be documented

(including award justification) and forwarded to the Executive and Speaker. Requisitioners may contact the suppliers directly or enlist the assistance of the University of Western Ontario's Purchasing unit.

9. Request for Quotation (RFQ)

The Requisitioner is responsible for providing formal RFQ documents to all suppliers bidding on purchases with an estimated value of \$50,001 or higher. A list of suppliers invited to participate in a particular bid is maintained by the committee chair from whom the requisition is being solicited. Public calls must be advertised using the SOGS website as well as one or more standard advertising mediums (e.g. newspaper, Internet, trade magazine, etc.). Suppliers' responses must be sealed and forwarded to through the SOGS office to the Requisitioner.

Stamped with the date and time of receipt at the SOGS office, bid documents are opened only after the deadline has expired. The award committee (see below - Award Committee) evaluates the tenders and selects the bid that best meets the selection criteria. Once a decision is reached, the award committee forwards a formal award notice to all bidding suppliers.

10. Request for Proposal (RFP)

Due to the nature of some projects, it is impossible for the requisitioning departments to provide bidding suppliers with a specific list of goods or services to price. In such instances, bidding suppliers are asked to provide a detailed recommendation on how the project should proceed and a breakdown of the goods or services required. Proposals are accepted and reviewed according to the evaluation policy listed in the Evaluation of Award section (see below).

11. Documents

To ensure a level playing field, all RFQ and RFP documents must include a detailed description of:

- Goods or services to be purchased;
- Deadline date and time;
- E-mail, address and phone number of the Requisitioner;
- Terms and conditions of the bid; and
- Terms and conditions of subsequent purchase and payment.

12. Advertising of Pricing Requests

Only the Requisitioner has the authority to place advertisements for public calls for pricing requests.

13. Bid Deadlines

Upon receipt by the SOGS office, bids are stamped with the date and time. Responses received after the deadline are documented as "late" and either refused or returned to the bidder.

14. Opening of Bids

Any bids are opened in the presence of at least two people, including one from the requisitioning committee and one Executive member and/or Speaker. Suppliers participating in the public tender are permitted to attend. At this meeting, the contents of each bid are presented, and upon request, prices and bid specifics are revealed. No other requests for prices or bid specifics are entertained outside the opening meeting.

15. Evaluation and Award

The award of a requested bid must offer the membership of SOGS best mix of price, quality, specification compliance, terms, conditions, experience and reputation. The award is granted according to the discretion of the Award Committee. SOGS is not obligated to accept the lowest price bid. All qualifying bids are evaluated and the one that provides for best overall value is accepted. All bids and the rationale for accepting a bid is documented and retained by the requisitioning committee in the SOGS office for the purview of future Executive, Speaker and committee members.

16. Award Committee

All quotations and requests are created and reviewed by committee consisting of at least one representative from the Executive, members of the requisitioning committee, as well as one SOGS office staff member retained to advise on historical precedents. The requisitioning committee is the only one with voting rights, with the chair casting the deciding vote in event of a tie. The award committee reviews all responses and files its evaluation and final decision with the Executive and Speaker. The committee is responsible for determining, prior to the issuance of the tender document, the method by which it will be awarded. In addition, the committee determines the key measurement criteria for the bid - price, quality, specification compliance, terms, conditions, experience, reputation, etc.

For complex bids and those greater than \$100,000, a criteria weighting system is determined by the committee prior to advertising the bid request. Using this tool, the committee reviews and evaluates each bid, with the procurement awarded to the supplier with the highest score. Scoring summaries are appended to the bid package and retained by the committee.

17. Conflict of Interest

Any person involved in the public tender or evaluation process with a personal interest that may impinge or reasonably be deemed by others to impinge on their impartiality should immediately declare the conflict of interest, in writing, to the Executive and Speaker. The terms of a conflict of interest are explicitly outlined in the SOGS bylaws. This person should withdraw from the process and relinquish all further related duties to his/her supervisor or designate.

18. Vendor Protests

SOGS is responsible for maintaining a bidding process that is fair and equitable to all interested parties. If a supplier believes the bidding process has been comprised, he/she is invited to contact SOGS for possible investigation according to the parameters outlined below:

Suppliers must submit a written protest within 5 days of learning information applicable to the protest.

Once the grievance is filed, the Requisitioner, the Executive and Speaker shall be notified. Collectively, these parties decide if the procurement should continue. If the contract is not yet awarded, it may be held until the review is complete, unless the effect on the operation of SOGS is more costly than the expected cost of the resolution of the protest. For contracts already awarded, the Requisitioner notifies the supplier awarded the bid and if deemed able and necessary, may be asked to stop or hold the purchase until the review is complete. When necessary, legal counsel is consulted.

An informal investigation is launched by a member of the Executive or speaker if:

Additional information is required to make an informed decision; or
The protesting supplier provided substantive reason to believe the grievance is justified.

After reviewing the information gathered from the informal investigation, the President shall issue a written determination to all involved parties, after consultation with all concerned Executive, the speaker, committee chair, and if necessary legal counsel.

19. Jurisdiction

This policy is under the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee and maintained by the Policy Committee. The VP of the committee making the requisition is responsible to ensure all of the terms of this policy are enforced.