

**Early market engagement for the
Overseas Registration Examination for
overseas-qualified dentists who want
to practise in the UK**

Information pack for potential suppliers

Dated: 23 February 2024

Foreword

Theresa Thorp, Executive Director, Regulation Directorate



Our overarching objective is protection of the public.

One of the ways that we protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the public is to maintain a register of dentists who are suitably qualified and who meet the standards required to deliver high quality dental care in the UK.

Dentists must be registered with us to practise legally in the UK.

Diplomas in dentistry gained in the UK or the EEA (and Switzerland) are recognised for the purposes of registration in the UK. Those who qualify outside of these jurisdictions, first need to pass the Overseas Registration Exam (ORE). The ORE is designed to test the skills and knowledge of dentists prior to registration.

Demand for places on the ORE has been steadily increasing since it reopened following its suspension due to the infection prevention and control measures put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of candidates seeking a place on the ORE doubled from 2021 to 2022, and then doubled again in 2023.

These numbers are driving calls for additional ORE places, but we need to recognise that the drivers behind these increases remain unclear and may not be sustained over the medium to long term future. Our aim through this procurement is to ensure we can scale ORE capacity up and down in response to fluctuations in demand.

Stakeholders and candidates have highlighted to us the importance of holding the ORE in a range of locations and for the frequency of examination sittings to be increased. Low pass rates and the number of retakes also continue to contribute to the overall time it takes for candidates to successfully complete the ORE. We are keen to explore with potential providers ways in which we can introduce more flexibility for candidates and reduce the time it takes to pass the ORE. We look forward to hearing your ideas and potential solutions.

Finally thank you for your interest in this procurement. We are keen to talk to you about how we might innovate to deliver the scalability and flexibility we need, as we work to establish contracts for the delivery of the ORE from 2025.

Theresa Thorp
Executive Director, Regulation

Early market engagement for the Overseas Registration Examination for overseas-qualified dentists who want to practise in the UK

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Part 1: Introduction

1.1. Why are we engaging with the market early?

We issued prior information notices of our plans to undertake a procurement exercise for the Overseas Registration Exam (ORE) Part 1 in August 2023 and for Part 2 in September 2023. Thank you to those who have been in touch to learn more about this procurement.

We now want to engage with potential suppliers to:

- explore issues and any potential solutions available
- inform our thinking on the structure of the services
- assist with the development of invitation to tender documents.

This information pack has been put together to facilitate our early market engagement with potential suppliers. We will be conducting our engagement exercise in writing due to the level of interest we have received.

The scope of the contract beyond the requirement specified in this information pack is not definitive, and our thinking will evolve over the coming months as we approach the start of our formal procurement. Any information provided as part of our early market engagement should be considered indicative. While we have set the high level framework for the ORE in our [Rules for international registration of dentists](#), we have not yet determined the approach on solutions for scaling capacity, technical elements or the commercial approach.

Our [early market engagement schedule](#), including the activities we plan to undertake and relevant deadlines, is set out below.

1.2. Who can participate?

Our early market engagement exercise is open to all persons or organisations interested or potentially interested in managing and facilitating the ORE, including:

- public or private sector organisations
- existing suppliers
- potential new suppliers.

We understand that suppliers may not be in a position to provide the full service requirements, so we are also interested in engaging with persons or organisations that may be interested in participating collaboratively through membership of a joint venture, consortium or other partnership structure. As part of this early market engagement exercise, we are asking if you would be interested in collaborating with others and if you consent to us sharing contact details for this purpose. However, we are not in a position to facilitate any discussions or negotiations between potential suppliers or bidders.

Participation or non-participation in this engagement exercise does not confer any advantage or disadvantage on any person in respect of any procurement activity. However, the results of our early market engagement exercise may be used to shape and refine our procurement

proposition before any formal competitive process starts. Any costs associated with participation in this exercise will be borne by the participant.

1.3. What would we like you to do next?

Please review the details provided in this information pack, particularly the service delivery specification, and our responses to the questions that have already been raised with us by potential suppliers. You will [find these in Part 5 below](#).

We also pose a set of [specific questions for potential suppliers at Part 6](#). Your responses to these questions will help us to refine and develop our invitation to tender documents, and help to ensure that you will have the details you need to submit a detailed proposal. You will find these questions and be able to provide your response in the Expressions of Interest Form.

The Expressions of Interest Form also asks if you have any further questions for us. If you have questions, please include them in the Form so that we can respond by the deadlines that have been [set out in the schedule below](#).

1.4. What will happen next?

Please complete and submit the [Expression of Interest Form](#) online, including any questions you have for us, and return it by **10:00am on Monday 11 March 2024**.

We will respond to any questions raised by Wednesday 20 March 2024.

Our full [schedule is in Part 2 below](#).

Part 2: Early market engagement schedule

Our early market engagement schedule is below, including the activities we plan to undertake and the relevant deadlines. We cannot provide any extensions to the deadlines provided.

The indicative engagement and procurement timetable is set out below. We anticipate that the formal procurement will commence in April/May 2024.

Date issued	Activity	Deadline
18 August 2023	Issued Prior Information Notice (PIN) on the Delta e-Sourcing portal for the ORE Part 1.	Closed
29 September 2023	Issued PIN on the Delta e-Sourcing portal for the ORE Part 2.	Closed
23 February 2024	Early market engagement information pack issued to potential suppliers with request to provide responses to questions in Part 6 and any remaining questions for the GDC, using the Expressions of Interest Form .	10:00am 11 March 2024
12 March 2024	The GDC to provide responses to the questions received from potential suppliers. These will be shared with all potential suppliers who have submitted a completed Expressions of Interest Form.	20 March 2024
21 March 2024	The GDC to issue a call for any further questions or points of clarification from potential suppliers, and these have been submitted by the deadline.	10:00am 28 March 2024
2 April 2024	The GDC to provide responses to any further questions or points of clarification from potential suppliers ahead of the procurement opening. These will be shared with all potential suppliers who have submitted a completed Expressions of Interest Form.	9 April 2024

Part 3: Service delivery specifications

3.1. Purpose of the Overseas Registration Examination

All holders of a diploma in dentistry from outside the UK, EEA or Switzerland, must first pass the Overseas Registration Examination (ORE) before being eligible for registration. Registration allows a dental professional to legally practise dentistry in the UK.

The ORE is an assessment of competence. It provides assurance that an individual has the necessary knowledge and skill to practise dentistry safely.

3.2. Our strategic aims and objectives

Our strategic aims for our procurement are to:

- ensure that those being added to the register have the requisite knowledge and skill, by maintaining the standards required of candidates
- deliver effective, robust and timely exams from the start of 2025.

We have a number of objectives underpinning our next ORE procurement, which are to:

- ensure public safety is not compromised
- maintain public confidence in the dental profession
- scale ORE capacity in response to fluctuations in demand
- maximise ORE capacity through efficient service models (we will be operating the ORE on a full cost recovery basis, and will be looking for bids that will ensure the cost per candidate does not become a barrier or prohibit participation)
- provide as much flexibility as we reasonably can for candidates
- secure value for money for fee payers.

We want to explore ways that the ORE can be administered, structured and/or delivered differently to achieve these aims and objectives.

3.3. Applying to become a candidate, and booking a place

Anyone who wants to sit the ORE first needs to apply to become an ORE candidate.

Individuals are asked to complete an application form and will need to pay an application processing fee (from 9 March 2024) to complete the process. We carry out checks at this stage to ensure applicants have an appropriate overseas qualification, relevant clinical experience, and that they meet our standards of good character and [English language competence](#). The process typically takes around 21 working days, but can take longer during periods of high demand.

When the application process has been completed, successful applicants are put onto the ORE candidate list and can book onto the next available ORE Part 1 sitting. The booking window currently opens around six weeks before a sitting is due to take place.

We currently operate ORE bookings on a first come first served basis, but because demand is outstripping the supply of places, candidates are not always successful in securing a place at the time they would like to sit the ORE.

Not being able to secure a place on an ORE sitting can impact the time limits once a candidate completes a first attempt at ORE Part 1. Therefore, we are considering how we can better manage the pipeline of demand with potential suppliers.

While we currently operate the booking process, including opening the window and communicating with candidates, it is not necessary for us to be administering ORE bookings. We would be interested in hearing about options from potential suppliers to take on the administration of booking places on the ORE, particularly where the service would support the management of demand and capacity of the ORE.

3.4. ORE requirements

Skills and knowledge requirements

Our Council sets the [Rules for the ORE](#).

The Rules set out the requirements for both parts of the ORE. You will find a summary of these requirements below. In short, candidates are expected to demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills required to pass a UK diploma in dentistry.

The outcomes that UK graduates must be able to demonstrate can be found in [Preparing for practice: Dental team learning outcomes for registration \(2015 revised edition\)](#).

The outcomes are disaggregated into four domains. The outcomes are designed to be integrated and support each other, so some outcomes will appear in more than domain.

The domains are:

- Clinical.
- Communication.
- Professionalism.
- Management and leadership.

You will find the outcomes for dentists on pages 16-26 for all four domains. These are the learning outcomes that candidates are currently expected to demonstrate.

The standards and outcomes included in [Preparing for practice \(2015 revised edition\)](#) have also been recently updated following public consultation. The ORE is mapped against the learning outcomes for dentists, so it will need to evolve during the life of the next contract to reflect the updated standards and outcomes. The [Safe Practitioner Framework](#) contains the updated standards and will come into effect in September 2025. The revised Framework includes learning outcomes and introduces behaviours for dentists.

Please review the learning outcomes for dentists, as they form the basis for the assessment undertaken through the ORE, including those in the Safe Practitioner Framework.

Structure and content requirements

Our Rules also set out requirements for the structure and content of the ORE.

The Rules state that the ORE shall be in two parts.

ORE Part 1 must be a written examination (computer-based) comprising of:

- clinically applied dental science
- clinically applied human disease
- aspects of clinical dentistry, law and ethics
- health and safety.

ORE Part 2 must be:

- an examination on a dental manikin
- an objective structured clinical examination that tests candidates' clinical skills
- an examination designed to test candidates' diagnostic and treatment planning skills
- and a medical emergencies examination.

Attempts and time limits for candidates

The Rules set out the number of attempts and time limits for candidates.

Candidates have five years to pass the ORE. The time limit is calculated from when a candidate first attempts the ORE Part 1. Candidates currently pay an examination fee for each attempt at the ORE, and you will [find the current fee levels on our website](#).

Candidates also have the following number of attempts:

- ORE Part 1 four attempts
- ORE Part 2 four attempts, but a candidate may also have one further attempt at the medical emergencies examination if they are within their five-year time limit.

Intellectual property

The intellectual property of the ORE Question Bank is vested in the GDC. It is important to ensure that the questions do not enter the public domain. The current size and scope of the Question Bank currently provides several questions for each requirement.

Potential suppliers will need to think about how the Question Bank will be regularly reviewed, updated, and refreshed when submitting bids for this procurement, particularly in reference to the introduction of the Safe Practitioner Framework.

3.5. Flexible contracts to allow for future reform

While the ORE requirements are set out in Rules, our Council has the powers necessary to amend or reform them, subject to consultation with stakeholders. Therefore, we are interested to hear from potential suppliers if further flexibility is needed in the Rules if we are to meet our aims and objectives for this procurement exercise.

The ORE is governed by Rules and provided under contract. The Rules and contracts therefore need to be consistent with one another. This inter-dependency can act as a barrier to change, progress and development of our policy. We are therefore considering ways in which we can build flexibility into future rules and contracts to enable changes in policy within the contract lifespan.

3.6. Capacity requirements

We currently have more candidates eligible to sit the ORE than we have places.

Managing high levels of demand is made more difficult by the ORE pass rate. Over recent years the pass rates have been around 50% for all candidates, however this has increased over the last 12 months (see further details below).

We are looking at ways in which we can reduce the time it takes between applying to become a candidate and successfully completing the ORE. We are looking to potential suppliers for approaches that may reduce the time it takes a candidate to succeed without compromising standards, to ensure we are able to maximise capacity.

Table 1: Current ORE pass rates

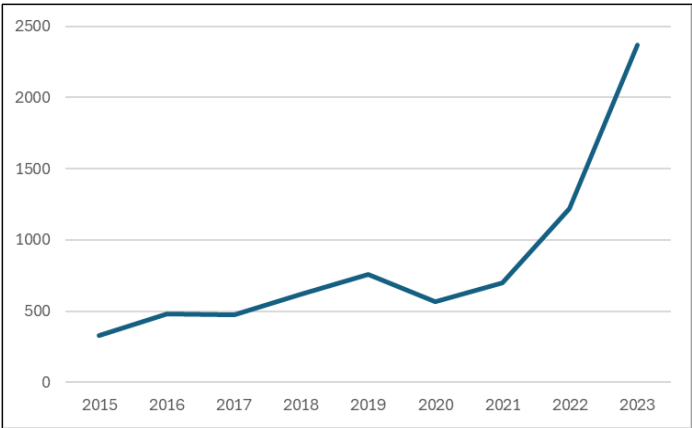
ORE Part 1		ORE Part 2	
April 2023	74%	January 2023	74%
August 2023	72%	April 2023	57%
		November 2023	63%

We publish the [results of each ORE diet](#) on our website.

The number of dentists being applying to sit the ORE each year are set out in Table 2 below. Please review these numbers in combination with pass rates and the Rules on the number of retakes allowed when considering capacity requirements.

Table 2: ORE Applications 2015 to 2023 Figure 1: ORE applications 2015 to 2023

Year	Applications
2015	329
2016	483
2017	477
2018	621
2019	761
2020	569
2021	696
2022	1,217
2023	2,366



Further to the figures set out in Table 2 above, our candidate list (those who have applied to sit the ORE but not yet passed or timed out) as per 1 February 2024 was 2,480 (this figure excludes around 1,000 applications that are still in process i.e. not yet completed the

application process). Of the 2,480 people on the candidate list, around a third of them have passed ORE Part 1 and are eligible to book a place on ORE Part 2. Not all candidates will want to book a place when a sitting is scheduled, even when eligible. Candidates do not always apply for registration immediately after passing the ORE; some do not apply for registration at all. There is no time limit to apply for registration.

ORE diets were suspended in March 2020 and reopened in January 2022 due to the infection prevention and control measures put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. It meant the loss of 1,400 places for ORE Part 1 (seven sittings at 200 places) and 576 places for ORE Part 2 (four sittings at 144 places).

In response to this, we worked with the current consortium supplier to increase ORE capacity for 2023 and 2024. ORE Part 1 places were increased from 200 to 600 places at each sitting from August 2023. We have held one sitting of the ORE Part 1 since it was increased, and there will be a further sitting of 600 candidates in April 2024. We are also increasing the number of ORE Part 2 sittings from three to four in 2024.

Demand for the ORE is currently high, and we expect this to continue at least in the short term. It is more difficult to predict demand over the medium to long term, as it is likely to be influenced by a number of factors, including:

- government policy in relation to NHS dental services in all UK nations
- policy [proposals for the introduction of provisional registration for dentists](#) (although our current expectation is that provisional registration would operate in parallel with the ORE rather than displace it)
- professional qualification recognition through international trade agreements
- immigration levels and requirements (such as minimum salary levels).

Further, dentists (and some other healthcare professionals) with an international diploma in dentistry obtained in the European Economic Area (EEA) (or Switzerland) will have that qualification recognised for the purposes of registration under the current near-automatic recognition arrangements (also referred to as “standstill arrangements”), which were continued following the UK’s exit from the EU.

The standstill arrangements were reviewed in 2023, and [extended for a further five years](#). Ending the near-automatic recognition arrangements is a decision for the UK government, but were they to end, the result would be a significant increase in demand for the ORE.

Due to the unpredictability of demand, we are looking to explore with providers ways in which the ORE can be scaled up and down in response to fluctuations in demand. We are particularly interested in exploring with potential suppliers how we might achieve flexing scale and frequency of sittings i.e. more frequent but smaller numbers per sitting, in response to the need for capacity changes.

Our estimates, based on current demand, for this procurement are:

- ORE Part 1 up to 2,000 places per year.
- ORE Part 2 between 600 and 1,500 places per year.

3.7. Associated services within service scope

Our current ORE contract includes the provision of associated services.

We would like to know if there are any further details we can provide about the purpose or current approach to these services that will assist with the production of comprehensive tenders from potential suppliers, or if there are additional services needed.

The following are the associated services we currently envisage:

- **Management and oversight of contract delivery:** including written and data reporting on results, management and delivery, engaging with the ORE Advisory Group (see more below), security of the Question Bank and the design and delivery of strategies aimed at preventing cheating during exams, such as controls over the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI).
- **Candidate management services:** including the handling of candidate data with suitable data security arrangements, in particular for special category personal data, candidate feedback (on results and areas for improvement following an unsuccessful attempt), candidate verification, marking and provision of validated results.
- **Provision of materials and equipment:** including for computer-based assessment.
- **Provision of associated personnel:** including invigilators and suitably qualified examiners (appointment, training, calibration and review of performance) and actors (for role play).
- **Suitable venues:** including health and safety compliance, security for candidates, ability to make reasonable adjustments for those with additional need, and wellbeing facilities ([see more on locations below](#)).
- **Quality assurance:** including appropriate quality assurance mechanisms for every component and diet, validation of results, [policies and procedures relating to the management of candidates and examinations](#) e.g. compliance with examination rules and suspected malpractice, complaint handling (including an appeal process and an annual summary of complaints and appeals), candidate verification, late arrivals, unforeseen and mitigating circumstances, engagement with service users and candidates for quality improvements, and process auditing.

We have established an ORE Advisory Group to support improved delivery and the maintenance and consistency of standards associated with the delivery of the ORE, transparency and fairness. The ORE Advisory Group is responsible for scrutiny of the examination process, ensuring that it remains valid and appropriate, and provides guidance on regulation and policy development.

We would like any future supplier to work with the ORE Advisory Group to ensure the continuous improvement of the examination. The Group meets three times a year, and we would require attendance at least one meeting per year.

Working with the ORE Advisory Group would include:

- responding to Chief External Examiner recommendations and any reasonable changes to aspects of the examination identified by the ORE Advisory Group
- reporting any changes to data reporting relating to performance, as specified by the ORE Advisory Group
- provide clarification or assurance on any matters relevant to the examination
- Being prepared to demonstrate that the standards of the examination are appropriate.

We have not yet made any final decisions on associated services. We have posed some [questions about associated services in Part 6](#).

Any guidance you can provide on any further details needed or limitations would be helpful to ensure our invitation to tender is specific and clear.

3.8. Locations

We require our future suppliers to provide suitable locations for the provision of the ORE. Venues should be fully accessible, or able to facilitate reasonable adjustments if requested. Appropriate health, safety and insurance arrangements are required.

The ORE Part 1 is a computer-based assessment, so we are open to ideas and proposals about how this might be delivered online in a range of locations, both in and outside the UK. We would like to explore the security and anti-fraud arrangements that would need to be put in place to ensure that this model of delivery does not compromise the integrity of the ORE.

All ORE Part 2 sittings will need to be held in the UK.

3.9. Estimated total contract value

We are providing a range for the contract values because they are based on historical demand and our estimates for demand for the ORE over the short to medium term. We are, of course looking for value for money, but we also need to ensure that in passing costs to candidates we are not making the ORE prohibitively expensive. We plan to operate the ORE on a full cost recovery basis moving forward, which will mean that examination fees paid by candidates will need to cover the costs of delivery. The total value indicators below exclude the costs associated with the processing of applications and the operation of the booking process (see details at section 3.3)

The estimated contract values are as follows:

- ORE Part 1: £1-£2 million over five years.
- ORE Part 2 is £6-£10 million over five years.

We do not require any potential suppliers to provide an indication of costs as part of this early market engagement exercise, but when tendering for the ORE we would like to see a full breakdown in costs from bidders. We want to avoid examination fees becoming a barrier to entry to the UK dentists' register.

We do not currently pay Value Added Tax (VAT) on examination services because the current suppliers are qualifying organisations and therefore not liable. This exemption may not apply to all organisations or persons that intend to submit bids for this procurement. It is the responsibility of suppliers to liaise with the relevant tax authority on any VAT liability.

3.10. Contract duration

We would like to explore optimal contract length as part of this early market engagement.

3.11. Number of lots in this procurement

This procurement will consist of two lots:

- Lot 1: ORE Part 1 computer-based
- Lot 2: ORE Part 2 practical clinical skills

Bidders will be able to bid for Lot 1 or Lot 2 or both. Bidders will need to form a suitable bidding organisation that can deliver all of the relevant lot requirements. This could be a sole supplier, consortium, partnership, joint venture, lead and sub-contracting or other arrangement, as deemed suitable by the bidding organisation (see more at section 1.2).

3.12. Piloting new or novel approaches to structure

We are considering piloting some elements of the ORE, based on the outcome of our recent engagement with stakeholders ([see Part 4 below](#)), which may include but are not limited to:

- potential alternative structures for the ORE (number of parts/components)
- separation of components of the ORE Part 2
- separation of the dental manikin component.

The purpose of any pilot would be to understand actual or potential impacts of making changes to the exam on public protection, the integrity of the examination, examination capacity and the candidate experience.

Part 4: Options stakeholders would like us to explore

4.1. Invitation for views from our stakeholders

We invited views and evidence during our consultation on new rules for international registration held from 4 July 2023 to 26 September 2023. Stakeholders were asked to provide their views, supported by evidence where possible, on questions about:

- the structure of the ORE
- the components of the exam
- the number of times a candidate can sit the exam
- candidate readiness.

Most of the responses were based on opinions and anecdotal evidence, but they do provide an indication of the areas that we can explore to either improve candidate experience or support capacity improvements.

The options raised by stakeholders that have potential and merit exploration through this early market engagement are set out below. We have also posed some questions about these options in Part 6, and would welcome views or guidance from potential suppliers on the validity of these potential changes to the structure and delivery of the ORE.

4.2. Retaking ORE Part 2 components, rather than the whole exam

The current ORE Part 2 is delivered over four consecutive days, and is broken down into four components:

- An operative test on a dental manikin
- An objective structure clinical examination
- A diagnostic and treatment planning exercise
- A practical examination of medical emergencies

You can find out [more about the current ORE Part 2 components](#) on our website.

You will also find [guidance on the consortium](#) website.

Stakeholders have suggested that capacity and efficiency could be improved if candidates were permitted to take each component separately.

The question posed by our stakeholders is could the ORE Part 2 be delivered in a way that would allow candidates to retake the specific components not passed, rather than a full retake. We would like to explore this with potential suppliers.

Key considerations include:

- How likely is it that people who failed a component, would ultimately succeed?
- How might this impact the cost of delivering the ORE Part 2?
- Would we need to change time limits?
- How would we manage a fluctuation in demand for certain components of the exam?

- Would this impact quality of the assessment or standards required?
- Would this reduce the need for retakes?

4.3. Delivering the ORE in three rather than two parts

It has been suggested that the “test on a dental manikin” could be used as a gateway for the ORE Part 2 i.e. all candidates to pass this component before moving on to the others. This could create a three part ORE, with candidates required to pass the “test on a dental manikin” as a requirement before moving on to the remaining components of the ORE Part 2.

Of course, this would not be the only way to create a three part ORE. As set out above, there is the potential to amend our rules over the medium to long term, so we are also interested in other ways in which the ORE could be structured in future.

Stakeholders have expressed some concerns about a three part ORE, particularly the impact of this on costs and the time it might take to complete. Other stakeholders have suggested that a three part ORE might help candidates to succeed more quickly, supporting capacity improvements.

We are interested in exploring how and to what extent we can achieve flexibility in the structure of the exam to achieve our strategic aims and objectives for this procurement.

Key considerations include:

- How might this impact the cost of delivering the ORE?
- How might this effect demand for ORE Part 2 (or a new part 3)?
- Would we need to change time limits?
- Would this impact quality of the assessment or standards required?
- Would a three-part ORE improve candidate experience?
- Would it improve efficiency by reducing resits?

Part 5: Responses to questions from potential suppliers

5.1. The Part 1 PIN is already published. Is a potential supplier required to submit any documentation as part of the pre-procurement exercise for the ORE Part 1?

There were no required documents to submit as part of the initial PIN notification.

5.2. Could the GDC provide recordings, transcripts or slide decks of vendor discussions for ORE Part 1 pre-procurement discussions, if any?

There are no such records, but we will be publishing the full list of questions and answers provided as part of our early market engagement to all potential suppliers.

5.3. Could the GDC share responses to vendor queries, if available in the public domain, as part of the pre-procurement exercise for the ORE Part 1 tender?

Once the deadline for the submission of potential supplier questions has passed, we will consolidate and publish our responses. All interested potential suppliers will be notified.

5.4. For the ORE Part 1, the PIN mentions that the contract will not be divided into lots. Can I assume that the GDC will not be open to separate ORE Part 1 procurement into two separate tenders – one tender for the Test Centre Network Provider (supply of exam venues, material, personnel, equipment, candidate management, etc.) and the other tender for the Test Delivery Engine (application for delivery of the ORE and Remote invigilated exams)?

At this stage, we are open to discussing how best to structure the contract for ORE Part 1 and Part 2, whether that be in lots, in a group/consortium or as an individual supplier. As part of the early market engagement, we are looking for recommendations or options to inform our thinking on how to structure the invitation to tender ([see section 3.11 above](#)).

5.5. Would the GDC be interested in using Remote Proctored delivery mode for ORE Part 1? If yes, what percentage could be remote proctored?

At this stage, we are open to remote proctored exams, if we can provide adequate examination security and ensure standards for public protection are maintained. We have not yet considered up to what proportion could be delivered this way, and are open to suggestions from potential suppliers.

5.6. For the ORE Part 1 tender, the per annum sittings will be between 400 and 1,200 and not more. It means, for a five-year contract, a maximum of (1,200x5) 6,000 ORE Part 1 could be sat through the new system. Is that assumption, correct?

When the PIN was published, the 1,200 figure was the expected upper limit of candidate sittings in a year. However, the current list of candidates eligible to sit the ORE Part 1 is almost 2,000. So, we are looking to have a flexible and scalable ORE capacity. We expect the numbers to remain high for the foreseeable future ([see section 3.6 above](#)).

5.7. Is a consortium allowed for the bid of the ORE Part 1 tender and ORE Part 2 tender?

Yes. There are no restrictions on who can bid.

5.8. When the Part 2 PIN is published, will a potential supplier be required to submit any documentation or be allowed to participate in vendor discussions as part of the pre-procurement exercise for the ORE Part 1?

We did not require any submissions from potential suppliers as a result of the publication of the ORE Part 2 PIN. However, we would like potential suppliers to now respond to the questions set out in [Part 6 of this information pack](#).

We would like to understand what elements or components potential suppliers are interested in delivering, particularly whether they are interested in the entire tender or just parts of it. When all potential supplier questions are received, we will issue consolidated response back to all potential suppliers.

5.9. Would the GDC only be looking to award one whole contract or whether part of the contract might be awarded to different groups?

Currently, the ORE Part 1 and ORE Part 2 have separate contracts. For the new services, no decision has been made.

At this point we are investigating whether contracts can be with individual providers for ORE Part 1, ORE Part 2 or both; or with several suppliers within a group and/or consortium to deliver. We are open to considering what is available and possible in the market.

5.10. Is it possible to use software solutions and tools already verified for our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes?

Potentially, although we would need to verify that the software meets our objectives, data protection regulations, and IT security requirements, as well as any other contract requirements. It can be included in our exchanges with potential suppliers.

5.11. How many applicants are waiting to sit ORE Part 1 and ORE Part 2?

Currently, the capacity for ORE Part 1 is 600 candidates over two sittings, and ORE Part 2 capacity is 144 candidates over four sittings (576 total candidates for 2024). Further details on capacity requirements and current demand for ORE places can be [found in section 3.6](#). Please note, the candidate list numbers provided at section 3.6 identify the number of candidates eligible to take part in each booking window; it does not mean that every candidate on that list is actively trying to book a place.

5.12. What kind of timescales are you looking at to try to work through backlog?

As soon as possible. As part of this early market engagement we want to identify any flexibility that will allow us to accommodate fluctuations in demand.

The suspension of the ORE means we have incomplete recent data. Therefore, we cannot confirm whether numbers will increase or decrease over the medium to long term beyond what has [been provided at section 3.7](#).

5.13. Finally, were there particular times of the year you wanted these to run or was there flexibility to set these to fit with us?

No. We are looking to ensure that we have flexibility in the number of sittings and overall capacity, depending on demand. Going forward, we would like to establish a closer relationship between ORE Part 1 and ORE Part 2 suppliers (if different) to improve candidate experience and to help manage the candidate pipeline.

5.14. Can you to share the documents that a vendor is expected to go through.

We have so far issued a PIN for ORE Part 1 and Part 2. The PIN included a separate briefing paper each part of the ORE. If you do not have these documents, we can resend them on request.

5.15. When is the last date to post the queries to you?

We are asking for responses to our [questions at Part 6](#) to be provided by 10:00am on 11 March 2024, but there will be a further opportunity to ask follow-up questions or points of clarification after that date. The deadline for follow-up questions is 10:00am, 28 March 2024.

See the [schedule for more information on the process and deadlines](#).

5.16. The GDC is currently in the early market engagement stage and this will be followed by tender being issued by the Council. Is that assumption, correct?

Yes. We will issue another notice when we are ready to tender. The formal start of the procurement will begin with the publication of a Contract Notice.

Part 6: Questions for potential suppliers

The online Expressions of Interest Form asks you to provide some details about you and your organisation, including your contact details. It also invites you to respond to the questions that we have set out below. Providing as much detail as you can at this stage will help to ensure our invitation to tender is clear and comprehensive.

You can find details of how we will manage and store the data we collect, and your rights under data protection laws, in our [Privacy Notice](#).

Please respond using the online [Expressions of Interest Form](#) by 10:00am on 11 March.

Which ORE parts or associated services are you interested in bidding for?

- ORE Part 1
- ORE Part 2
- ORE in full (both Part 1 and Part 2)
- Administration of the booking process for ORE candidates
- Associated services ([as set out in section 3.7](#))

Are there any Associated services ([as set out in section 3.7](#)) that you would not be able to provide or would need to sub-contract? If yes, please select which ones:

- Management and oversight of contract delivery
- Candidate management services
- Provision of materials and equipment
- Provision of all associated personnel
- Suitable venues
- Quality assurance

Do you envisage needing to change any of the associated services ([as set out in section 3.7](#))? If yes, please specify the changes you think need to be made and why.

We want to explore options or approaches that may reduce the time it takes a candidate to succeed to support capacity improvements, without compromising standards, do you have ideas or options for any associated services that would assist?

Are there any ORE components, processes or associated services that you would want to test through a pilot exercise or wet run before finalising your approach?

Are you open to discussions about how to structure the ORE or to provide flexibility within any future contract to allow restructuring ([see section 3.5](#))? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Can you provide an estimate or range for your optimal contract duration?

How long would it typically take your organisation to mobilise a contract from award of a contract to commence delivering the services? When do you envisage first being able to run an exam if awarded the contract, and typically, what notice would you require to run an exam?

Would you be interest in tendering if the ORE contract were broken down into smaller contracts and/or lots? If yes, please provide details of which ORE components, processes or associated services you would like lotted.

Are you open to tendering with differing options for the delivery of the ORE, or for any future contact to allow restructuring while under contract? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Do you think generative AI technology will be offered as part of any solution? If yes, please provide further details.

If you are looking to bid as part of the group (consortium, sub-contracting arrangement etc.) would it be helpful if we published a directory of interested parties, so that you could connect with other interested parties?

Can you let us know the amount of Professional Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance your organisation currently holds?

What types of issues (please provide details) might constrain your organisation's ability to adjust capacity, by either increasing the frequency of scale of examination sittings? What limitations do you envisage in a flexible capacity model?

We are moving to being a 'paperless office' by 2025. Do you envisage needing any specifications for systems or processes if we were to move to paperless systems during the contract duration?

Are there any further details we can provide to help you to prepare for this procurement?

What, if any, questions do you have for the GDC about the procurement of the ORE?

Part 7: Meet the GDC team

7.1. Team leading this procurement



Erica Williams
Senior Procurement Business Partner



Rebecca Cooper
Associate Director, Policy and Research



Jon Harris
Associate Director, Registration

7.2. Contact information

We can be contacted using the [Delta e-Sourcing messaging service](#).

Please use this service to contact us as it ensures we have a full and complete record of our communications and engagement during this early market engagement exercise.

Part 8: Useful references

8.1. About the GDC

The General Dental Council is a public body established by statute.

We are the UK-wide regulator of around 115,000 members of the dental team.

Our primary objective is to protect the public. In pursuing that objective, we work to:

- protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and welling of the public
- promote and maintain public confidence in the professions we regulate
- promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for the dental team.

Our role is set out in the [Dentists Act 1984](#). It establishes our duty to maintain a register of dental professionals and establishes the criteria and routes to registration, including for those dental professionals who qualify outside the UK.

You will find our [Annual report and accounts 2022](#) on our website, where you will also find our [Corporate Strategy 2022-2025](#) and our [current costed corporate plan](#).

You can also find out [more about the GDC and our role](#) on our website.

8.2. Legislative framework

The following legislation frames the requirements for registration and the ORE:

- [Dentists Act 1984](#) (as amended) (Sections 16A, 19, 36CB, 50C)
- [The GDC \(Dentists\) \(International Registration\) Rules 2023](#) (from 9 March 2024)

8.3. Procurement type reference

The following reference has been used for previously issued PINs:

- 80000000 - Education and training services