



Subcontracting Procedure 2024-25

**(for the delivery of Teaching, Learning and
Assessment)**

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Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 Aim and Scope

As part of the College Strategy to provide high quality learning experiences to students and to bridge identified skills and provision gaps, the College will seek to identify high quality training providers who are able to meet the needs of local, regional and national priorities across key priority groups. This procedure applies to all subcontracting arrangements for which Wirral Metropolitan College claims public funding for students whose provision is delivered by a partner organisation (known as the subcontractor) on behalf of the College.

This document sets out the College's procedures for the selection, appointment and management of subcontractors, and is informed by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Subcontracting Standard: Subcontracting assurance arrangements for all post-16 providers, and all relevant funding guidance, including the European Social Fund (ESF) and successor organisations.

1.2 List of declared Subcontractors and Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers

The Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, also known as the RoATP, is a register of apprenticeship providers that have passed the standards expected by the ESFA through the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway and are eligible to be invited for future invitations to tender for the delivery of apprenticeship services.

It is a funding requirement that all subcontractors in the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) supply chain with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 or above are on the declared list of subcontractors, in accordance with ESFA Funding Rules for Further Education and training providers.

Section 2 – Due Diligence

2.1 Due Diligence checks

The College will undertake a full Due Diligence check on potential subcontractors prior to awarding them a contract to deliver education and training services. This check meets ESFA standards and will request information such as:

- Copies of annual financial accounts
- Credit checks for Training Providers
- Details of the teaching / delivery staff
- Details of awarding body accreditation
- Details of policies and procedures
- Details of Insurance Policies:
 - Employer Liability Insurance
 - Public Liability Insurance
 - Professional Indemnity Insurance

- Details of the Directors and the ownership of the organisation
- Details of the organisations UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN)
- Trade references
- DBS / Vetting and Barring Service approval for Delivery / Contact Staff
- Details of Ofsted Inspections either direct or indirectly

- Details of other Quality Standards held e.g. ISO / IIP
- Details of Registration with the Information Commissioners Office
- Details of Safeguarding policies and procedures
- Details of the Continuous Professional Development policies, procedures and processes

2.2 Matrix Accreditation

In accordance with ESFA guidance, the College must provide high quality and easily accessible information; advice and guidance in helping learners understand the opportunities and support available to them about education, training or connected matters. All subcontractors will be expected to hold Matrix Accreditation or be working towards Matrix Accreditation and following the Gatsby Careers Education Standards within six months of the commencement of any contract with the College.

Section 3 – Ongoing Due Diligence

3.1 Contract quality and delivery management

Subcontractor performance will be monitored on an ongoing basis and feedback will be provided at periodic contract performance meetings. The frequency of these meetings will depend upon the performance of the subcontractor. To ensure that the subcontracted provision meets the standards set out in the Education Inspection Framework and the expectations of the student and the employer, Wirral Metropolitan College will undertake:

- Performance Reviews of provision by making announced and unannounced visits to the premises where delivery is taking place to continuously improve the quality of education
- Observation of teaching, learning and assessment (including scrutiny of student work) where delivery is taking place
- Monitoring of attendance evidence, IAG, reviews, accreditation and achievement
- Student Voice activity
- Verification of student authenticity
- Data analysis
- Health and Safety, audit and quality trail, including enrolment, progression and destination data and any safeguarding issues
- Internal verification (where agreed in the subcontract)
- Contract review meetings with relevant College Managers and Employer Services
- Annual Due Diligence review and updating of policies and procedures

3.2 Performance Improvement Plans

Where performance falls below the standards required, subcontractors will be issued with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), which will detail the improvements to be made and the time scales required to achieve them. Support will be provided to help subcontractors to continuously improve and enhance the quality of education.

If a subcontractor fails to meet the necessary improvements within the agreed timescales, it may be necessary to implement contract termination procedures.

Section 4 - Requirements for enrolment training and checking accurate enrolments by subcontractors (ESFA contracts only)

4.1 Enrolment training

Each subcontractor will have an MIS link person, who will undertake enrolment training with the relevant subcontractor's staff, within 4 weeks of commencement of the subcontract.

4.2 Checking enrolments

Periodic meetings will take place between the MIS link person and the subcontractor to check the accuracy of enrolments, and to address any enrolment issues. These meetings will also identify any CPD needs regarding enrolment training for the subcontractor's staff.

Section 5 - Requirements for monitoring student existence (ESFA contracts only)

5.1 MIS checks

MIS staff will conduct termly spot checks of registers against actual students to confirm existence and record and retain this information.

5.2 Quality checks

Quality staff will check student existence against registers when conducting lesson observations or learning walks and record and retain this information. Student survey of a sample of subcontracted provision will be conducted by Quality to check existence and this information will be recorded and retained by Quality.

Section 6 - Management oversight and reporting arrangements (ESFA contracts only)

6.1 Responsibilities

6.1.1 The Principal & Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for all matters involving the Subcontracting Procedure. This responsibility includes ensuring that audit and quality compliance matters are seen as an important priority for the College, addressed through comprehensive policies and procedures that are effectively implemented and appropriately resourced within the overall financial position of the College.

6.1.2 The Vice Principal Finance & Resources and Director of Quality of Education is responsible for ensuring that the College's Subcontracting Procedure is implemented if delivery of provision in their area is planned via a subcontractor. On programme responsibility includes:

6.1.2.1 validation of schemes of work and assessment

6.1.2.2 verification of evidence

6.1.2.3 formative and summative internal verification

6.1.2.4 course performance reviews

6.1.2.5 observation of student activities on site

6.1.2.6 lesson observations of staff

6.1.2.7 evaluation of student and employer feedback

6.1.2.8 ensure that any Safeguarding or Health & Safety issues are reported by exception in regular monthly meetings

6.1.2.9 ensure an assessment of ALS is in place where required

6.1.3 The Vice Principal for Student Experience will ensure:

6.1.3.1 undertaking the initial Due Diligence process relating to new partners

6.1.3.2 drawing up and agreeing all contracts and amendments

6.1.3.3 agreeing line communication for each partner

6.1.3.4 monitoring financial performance

6.1.3.5 conducting internal audits relating to document control

6.1.3.6 organising periodic contract review meetings

6.1.3.7 undertaking annual renewal of Due Diligence and updating of policies in year

6.1.3.8 ensure that any Safeguarding or Health & Safety issues are reported by exception in regular monthly meetings

6.1.3.9 ensure that ALS is put in place by the subcontractor when required

6.1.4 The Director for Management Information Systems & Information Technology is responsible for:

6.1.4.1 enrolment training for subcontracted staff and the checking of accurate enrolments by subcontractors

6.1.4.2 making monthly claims to the relevant funding body for starts, on programme payments and completions

6.1.4.3 providing funding calculations relating to each partner

6.1.4.4 claiming all completions that are registered through the College centre

6.1.4.5 ensuring that copies of all student certificates are copied and retained

6.1.4.6 carrying out spot checks of registers and student existence

6.1.4.7 carrying out spot checks relating to tests or exams

6.1.4.8 ensuring that invigilation is carried out in accordance with awarding body requirements

6.1.4.9 checking and ensuring that subcontractor is on The Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) for apprenticeships.

6.1.5 The Director of Quality of Education is responsible for:

6.1.5.1 conducting teaching, learning and assessment inductions with partner staff

6.1.5.2 ensuring lesson observations of subcontracted staff are conducted by the College staff or approved and trained staff of the subcontractor

6.1.5.3 ensuring that partners complete a Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan in line with the College process

6.1.5.4 including partner staff in any relevant training relating to delivery, pedagogy, assessment & feedback, progress monitoring, verification, inspection, EDI, safeguarding etc

6.1.5.5 monitoring in-year retention and achievement rates of subcontracted provision, and taking necessary action where these fall below the required standard

Section 7 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund subcontracts

Subcontracts which are funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will be managed by a dedicated member of staff, who will oversee all of the responsibilities outlined in sections 4, 5 and 6 above.

Section 8 – Fees and Charges

Details of the procurement process, and the fees and charges to subcontractors, can be found in the Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy (2024-25), which is published on the Wirral Metropolitan College website (www.wmc.ac.uk).

Section 9 – Contingency Plan in case of non-delivery

The College will attempt to mitigate non-delivery by maintaining a level of due diligence over sub-contractors to identify early signs of organisational failure. Effective quality processes are in place to ensure rigorous performance management and support measures are provided to reduce the risk of subcontract failure.

In compliance with the Education Skills Funding Agency and other funding agency rules that apply, if a subcontractor withdraws from the arrangement, or if a subcontractor goes into liquidation or administration, the College undertakes to directly manage and deliver the remainder of the agreed provision already being delivered. This delivery will be either through its existing structure or by transferring to another provider. Any provision planned but not yet started will be cancelled and the project closed.

If the College needs to withdraw from a sub-contracting arrangement, sufficient notice will be provided to allow sub-contractors to complete delivery of immediate provision. The College will provide support to enable sub-contractors to identify other sources of funding if possible, or take appropriate action to complete the project, or close the project at the earliest opportunity, without prejudice to currently enrolled students or staff.