Listed below are vendor questions that were received prior to the requested deadline and their corresponding answers to RFB# AA16-RH-5059 – Contract: Undergraduate Admissions Viewbook Development for the University of Massachusetts Amherst per the following specifications or approved equal.

The bid opening date will remain as originally scheduled for – August 28, 2015 @ 1:00 pm EDT

**Question #1:** The scope of work outlined in the RFB includes research. Please tell us if you have completed qualitative and quantitative research in the last two (2) years and if so, the extent and focus of this work? We’d be interested in knowing when it was done, which audiences were researched, sample size, scope of competitive analysis, etc. Having a better understanding of this will help us make more informed recommendations in our proposal.

**Answer #1:** UMass Amherst has not completed research in the last two years. Formal research that specifically addressed undergraduate recruiting was in 2009, when the University hired Kane, Parsons & Associates to conduct a survey of undergraduate student prospects. Kane, Parsons & Associates was hired again in 2012 to conduct broader brand research with alumni, public stakeholders and campus leaders, students and prospective students, results of which informed development of the current UMass viewbook. Results of these projects will be shared with the vendor selected to fulfill this contract.

**Question #2:** Could you explain the “of approved equal” (Section – page 7 of RFB) Does this apply to us and this project and if you could please let us know what specification information needs to be included?

**Answer #2:**

Any reference to brand names and numbers in this solicitation is descriptive, but not restrictive, unless otherwise specified. Offers on equivalent items meeting the standards of quality thereby indicated will be considered, unless otherwise specified, providing the offer clearly describes the article offered and how it differs from the referenced brands. **Unless the respondent specified otherwise, it is understood that the respondent is offering a referenced brand item as specified in the solicitation.** The University will determine whether a substitute offer is equivalent to and meets the standards of quality indicated by the brand name referenced; and the University may require a respondent offering a substitute to supply additional descriptive material and a sample.

If items requested have quality guidelines of brand name or equal; the items offered must be equal to or better than the brands and model numbers specified as determined by the University of Massachusetts. The use of brand names in this solicitation are for the purpose of describing the standard of quality, performance and characteristics desired and is not intended to limit or restrict competition. Substantially equivalent products to those designated may be considered for award. “Or Equal” submissions will not be rejected because of minor differences in design, construction or features that do not affect the suitability of the product for its intended use.
Question # 3: For Section III (page 7 of the RFB) do you need a written response to each numbered item in each section, or by submitting a bid are we agreeing to these terms?

Answer # 3:

It is understood that by submitting a bid response your company is in agreement with all terms and conditions set forth in the RFB.

If your company is not in agreement with a particular term and condition you need to reference the section and state your company’s position with your bid response.

Question # 4: In section 3.6 (page 19 of the RFB) the address box states bids should be sent Attention: RFB AA15-RH-5059. However, the RFB number on the cover sheet and throughout the RFB is: AA16-RH-5059. Please confirm which number should be on the mailing label. Thank you.

Answer # 4: AA16-RH-5059

Question # 5: Reference: Section 1.5.3 D – Page 5: Given the length of our audited financial statements, can bidders provide these documents in electronic format only.

Answer # 5: Audited financial statements may be submitted in electronic format.

Question # 6: Reference: Section 3.2.6 – Page 17: On page 17 of the RFB it says to provide a point-by-point response to ALL sections of the RFP. Section 1.5 page 4 provides a clear listing of items to be placed in the response and the order, however, it does not say where to place a point-by-point response to 1.4 Scope of Work or any other sections included in the RFB. Please clarify.

Answer # 6: A point-by-point response to the referenced sections of the RFP should be included as part of the vendor’s response to item 1.5.1 E.

Question # 7: Reference: Section 3.2.6 – Page 17: On page 17 of the RFB it says to provide a point-by-point response to ALL sections of the RFP. Is it expected that the entire RFB be copied and each section responded to including starting form Part I Specifications 1.1 on page 2 on through, such sections as 1.5.4 Evaluation Rules 1.6, 1.7; each section under Part II Terms and Conditions, and etc.? Where should such responses be placed within the sections as noted in Section 1.5 – page 4?

Answer # 7: It is not expected that you would copy each section of the RFB. It is understood that by submitting a bid response your company is in agreement with all terms and conditions set forth in the RFB. However, if your company is not in agreement with a particular term and condition you need to reference the section and state your company’s position with your bid response. This can be attached as a separate piece of paper included in your bid response.
Question # 8: Reference: Section 1.4.1 F - Can the University provide additional detail on the types of “companion/related print and digital delivery pieces” to be included in the design guide “that can be used by University staff designers and outside vendors”? What types of or concepts for additional pieces does the University want included in the design guide?

Answer # 8: The types of pieces included in the design guide will be informed by the selected vendor’s research and recommendations. UMass will share an inventory of pieces traditionally prepared with the selected vendor. The design guide/design suite is not intended to include all pieces, however, but will include elements (e.g. word marks and graphics created for use in the viewbook), and information on color palette, typeface selection, and other design elements necessary to ensure compatibility of pieces created in-house or by other vendors.

Question # 9: Reference: Section 1.5.1 I – The RFP mentions that the Supplier is to “Provide detail of all associated costs, including advertising, events, commissions, fees and trade opportunities in defining proposed budget”. Is the University open to value-added proposals for additional marketing services to include advertising, event management or other types of marketing and trade services that will utilize the creative assets and further benefit the University?

Answer # 9: The details provided in response to Section 1.5.1 I should be limited to those costs specifically related to services to be provided within the scope of the RFP.

Question # 10: Reference: Section 1.4.7 – The RFP mentions that “The University will award contracts for production of print pieces separately. The vendor awarded this contract will work with print vendors as directed by the University to ensure successful productions of all pieces”. Does this mean that proposals for print production are not to be provided as value-added components in the RFP response and that the Supplier should only submit such proposals, if requested?

Answer # 10: Correct. The response to this RFP should not address printing costs.

Question # 11: Other than high quality work, what qualities are you looking for in an external partner?

Answer # 11: We seek a to partner with a firm possessing the qualities that best position them for the successful execution of the services outlined within this RFP.

Question # 12: Does UMass Amherst have a budget range for the project (including the research, viewbook design, travel piece design, the digital viewbook and design guide)?

Answer # 12: This is a competitive bid process. The university has not established a fixed price for services, but will be selecting a firm based on both quality of proposal and pricing structure.

Question # 13: Do you expect the vendor to implement the digital viewbook on behalf of UMass Amherst? If so, do you have a preferred CMS?

Answer # 13: Vendors are not expected to implement the digital viewbook, but may choose to include implementation in their proposal. The CMS used by UMass Amherst is Drupal. It is conceivable, however, that a vendor may make a strong recommendation that another system is better suited for use with digital viewbooks. In such a case, the vendor may want to include provision of digital viewbook implementation services. A digital
viewbook developed in a CMS other than Drupal mus be developed and implemented to interact easily with the UMmass Admissions Drupal website.

Question #14: While research will likely inform the length of the print viewbook, do you have any estimates or preferences on the length of the viewbook at this time?

Answer #14: Our expectation is that research will inform all elements of the print viewbook, including page dimensions and page count. Additionally, it is our expectation that all aspects of the print viewbook, including content and length, may be influenced by an execution plan that stresses synergy between the print and digital delivery versions. For reference only, the current UMmass Amherst viewbook is 24 pages, 9” x 12”.

Question #15: In Section 1.4.3 – F – UMmass Amherst requests: “specific dates for completion of all major phases of the project to ensure this deadline is met”. Due to the indefinite state date of this project, we cannot provide exact delivery dates for all phases. However, we can provide a more general workflow calendar that will ensure the project is completed by July 15, 2016. Is that acceptable?

Answer #15: Yes. The more definitive the proposal can be, given uncertainties, the better. Any plan submitted must be clearly structured to ensure completion by the July 15, 2016 deadline.

Question #16: Do you have any existing market research that might prove useful as background for this work?

Answer #16: See the response to Question #1 above.

Question #17: Please clarify section: 1.4.2-C of the proposal on page 4 which mentions “editing/adapting … material provided by University staff”? How much content might we expect staff to provide and how much will we need to write?

Answer #17: Vendors should assume that content to be provided by UMass staff will be limited to the factual (e.g. lists of academic majors, admissions deadlines, statistics) and should be prepared to generate all other content.

Question #18: In section 3.2.6 in bold type it states that failure to respond to all points may be grounds for rejection. How much detail is requested? There are over 150 separate items which will make proposal responses rather lengthy. Please advise.

Answer #18: It is understood that by submitting a bid response your company is in agreement with all terms and conditions set forth in the RFB.

If your company is not in agreement with a particular term and condition you need to reference the section and state your company’s position with your bid response.

Question #19: If we move forward with a web app, what server, hosting or programming language requirements/limitations should we be aware of?
Answer #19: Traditionally, UMass websites are hosted internally and developed in Drupal. However, per the response to Question #13 above, the university is open to vendor recommendations regarding development of the digital delivery viewbook. Should research suggest development of a mobile app, we will look for the selected vendor to provide recommendations on how that app should be developed.

Question #20: Would the web app need to integrate with any existing web presences? Or could it live on its own domain name and hosting server?

Answer #20: A web-based digital delivery viewbook should be hosted on UMass.edu.

Question #21: What content management system requirements should we be aware of?

Answer #21: Drupal is the preferred CMS of UMass Amherst.

Question #22: What accessibility requirements would the digital viewbook need to comply with?

Answer #22: UMass Amherst is committed to accessibility for all persons. The digital viewbook should be compatible with this commitment to the greatest extent accorded by existing technology.

Question #23: What is the anticipated budget for this project? How will this budget be allocated toward costs for agency fees, production and incidentals? If a budget has not been determined, how much did UMass Amherst allocate toward developing the last viewbook?

Answer #23: A specific budget is not set for this project. The RFB asks vendors to provide a detailed plan for services to be delivered to include a pricing structure for these services. UMass Amherst will consider vendor proposals on a number of criteria of which proposed costs will be a significant factor.