

State of New Hampshire
Department of Education
Bureau of Adult Education

**High School Equivalency Testing Services
BAE-RFP-2016-111**

Addendum # 2 – Changes to RFP 6/10/2016

Change 1: Appendix D: Topics for Mandatory Narrative Responses

- **Corrects numbering**
- **Change to Topic 2, last bullet**

Action: Replace in its entirety.

APPENDIX D: TOPICS FOR MANDATORY NARRATIVE RESPONSES

Vendors must limit narrative responses describing the Software, Technical, Services and Project Management topics defined for this Project. The following table identifies specific topics for narratives. A page limit is identified for each topic. If a response to a topic exceeds the page limit, the State will limit its consideration to the prescribed page limit.

Topic	Page Limit
D-1 Proposed Project	
D-1.1 Description of Project	
Topic 1 - Test Format	2
Topic 2 - Alignment to Common Core & CCR Standards	8
Topic 3 - Portability of Test Results	3
Topic 4 - Accommodations	10
Topic 5 - Cost	3
Topic 6 - Cut Scores	3
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Topic 19 – Data and Process Quality Audits	3
Topic 20 - Standards	3
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D-2.3 Project Execution	
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Topic 28 - Status Meetings and Reports	2
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Topic 31 - Help Desk Support	2

D-1 PROPOSED PROJECT

This section provides a series of topics related to the proposed Project described in RFP.

D-1.1 Description of Project

Topic 1 – Test Format

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of available and planned Test Formats.

Response must include a description of the following:

- What delivery formats are available (i.e. paper-based, computer-based)?

- What languages are available?
- What accessible formats are available (i.e. large print, Braille)?
- What additional formats are available?
- What formats are planned for release during the period of the contract?
- How will test scores and demographic information be transmitted back to the State?

Topic 2 – Alignment to Common Core and College & Career Readiness Standards

Response Page Limit: 8

Provide a detailed description of how the Project is aligned with the Common Core and College & Career Readiness Standards.

The response must include a description of the following:

- Detailed description of the process used to align test items.
- Information on alignment for each content area, particularly the standards used for social studies and science.
- Summary results of any alignment studies

Topic 3 – Portability of Test Results

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of the process used to ensure that national acceptance of the proposed tests occurs for college, employers and the military.

The response must include a description of the following:

- Completed marketing campaigns and planned campaigns
- Established relationships with post-secondary, business or military associations used to promote portability of test results.
- Planned campaigns for increasing portability during the course of the contract.
- Any third-party studies evaluating the recognition or acceptance of this test and/or comparison to other high school equivalency testing services.

Topic 4 – Accommodations

Response Page Limit: 10

Provide a detailed description of how accommodations for examinees with disabilities will ensure equal access to testing services for all.

The response must include a description of the following:

- Any accommodations available without special permission from the Vendor and/or the State.

- The process for applying for accommodations including required medical documentation.
- The process for administering an exam with accommodations
- The average timeframe for an examinee to receive approval for accommodations.

Topic 5 – Cost

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of the cost structure.

The response must include a description of the following costs:

- Test fees and items included in the test fee
- Retesting fees
- Test materials
- Official Practice Tests
- Scoring
- Shipping (test materials, answer sheets, etc.)
- Professional Development/Training
- Test Center administrative fees
- Fee collection options

Topic 6 – Cut Scores

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of how cut scores will be determined for high school equivalency and for College & Career readiness indicators.

The response must include a description of the following:

- The process for determining cut scores
- How frequently are cut scores reviewed?
- What factors might influence a decision to change cut scores in the future? Is this anticipated?

Topic 7 – Test Item Development

Response Page Limit: 10

Provide a detailed description of how test items are developed, chosen for inclusion on the exam and the availability of multiple test forms

The response must include a description of the following:

- Please provide examples of test questions from each content area
- Number of test forms available for paper-based and computer-based
- Norming procedure for test items

Topic 8 – Supplemental Resources

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of supplemental resources available, particularly instructional materials.

The response must include a description of the following:

- Vendor provided materials (i.e. Free/Paid Practice Tests, Study Guides) currently available or anticipated during the course of the content
- Vendor endorse materials currently available or anticipated during the course of the contract
- How the Vendor will ensure supplemental resources, particularly instructional materials, are available prior to any major changes in test format, question type or content changes?

Topic 9 – Official Practice Tests

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of Official Practice Tests and how the Product will meet legal requirements for examinees under 18 in the state of New Hampshire.

The response must include a description of the following:

- How items for the Official Practice Tests are developed
- Number of forms of the Official Practice are currently available
- Schedule for issuing additional Official Practice Tests
- Restrictions on access to the Official Practice Tests
- Alignment of Official Practice Tests to actual test
- Available formats (i.e. paper-based, Braille, etc.)
- How the Vendor will ensure that Official Practice Tests are available prior to any major changes in test format, question type or content changes.
- Any studies or research that demonstrates the Official Practice Tests are a predictor of success on the actual test

Topic 10 - Computer-Based Testing System Requirements

Response Page Limit: 8

Provide a detailed description of the computer-based testing system requirements including any specific requirements for correctional settings.

The response must include a description of the following:

- What technology is required to provide computer-based testing?
- How will the Vendor work with the existing computer-based testing infrastructure?
- How does the product meet the requirements of NH Department of Information Technology requirements? See also D-2.

Topic 11 – Professional Development/Training

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of professional development and/or training provided to state staff, test administrators and adult education instructors.

The response must include a description of the following:

- Vendor requirements for each role (state administrator, test administrator, proctor, etc.) including any certification process or training requirements
- Any training provided, delivery system (in person, online)
- Any professional development opportunities offered

Topic 12 – Timeframe

Response Page Limit: 8

Provide a detailed description of how the Vendor will meet the January 1, 2017 start date.

The response must include a description of the following:

- Tasks to be completed by the Vendor and tasks to be completed by the State
- A plan for smooth transition from previous contracted services to the new Product

Topic 13 – Vendor Experience, Vendor Company Qualification

Response Page Limit: 8

Provide a detailed description of the Vendor's experience in operating similar projects and how the Vendor will meet the requirements of State, federal and local laws and statutes with regards to data collection, reporting and privacy.

The response must include a description of the following:

- Experience with similar projects
- Experience with this Product
- Technical skills
- Involvement in any litigation
- Protection of data
- Problem resolution
- Quality control and oversight

D-1.2 Software Components

Topic 14 – Solution, Deliverables, and Services Offered

Response Page Limit: 8

Provide a detailed description of specific components of the Solution offered, including the Deliverables and Services the Vendor is proposing to offer the State.

The response must include a description of the following:

- How the overall engagement will occur;
- Include a graphic workflow of the process;
- How input data errors will be handled;
- Identify timeframes for performing implementation milestones;
- The process & validation to be employed to for asset research, including response times;
- The resources to be employed, including both State and Vendor by milestone;
- The time commitment required for both State and Vendor resources;
- The communication plan to be employed; and a detailed summary of the specific Deliverables, and proposed method of presenting the Deliverable to the State.

Topic 15 – Data Use

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of the mechanism and tools included in the proposed System to enable the specified data sharing between the Vendor and the State.

- What type of interface/mechanism/tool and frequency is proposed for the State to exchange data with the vendor? Explain the process.
- What type of interface/mechanism/tool and frequency is proposed for the Vendor to exchange data with the State?
- What form of data is being returned? Include a sample of returned information.

Topic 16 – User Friendliness and Usability Features

Response Page Limit: 10

The State values software that is compatible with its intended user's ability to use it easily and successfully.

Provide a detailed description of the following:

- To what extent is the Product intuitive, based on the likelihood that the user has experience other applications with similar graphic user interfaces?

- How efficient is the software in terms of the number of operations required to perform basic tasks?
- In what ways does the Vendor's proposed training process support the application?
- How many hours of training are required to make a new user fully functional with the system?
- Please include screenshots of various system features including examinee registration, test scheduling, testing and results.

Topic 17 – Documentation

Response Page Limit: 8

Describe and provide samples of the available documentation supporting the System and the asset verification Service. Will it contain technical specifications, troubleshooting tips, and technical contact information?

Topic 18 – System Platform

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of the interfaces and the System components used for processing.

- Describe the software platform that your system operates on (code base, database, etc.). If any of the platform components are third party, or proprietary, please note. Indicate if the State will need to purchase licenses.
- Include details of the proposed software Solution including the database management system, licensed software suggested for data retrieval and reporting, proposed approach to developing any custom-built software components.
- Discuss plans for anticipated future release of System software. Address any impact on System users or interfaces.

Topic 19 – Data and Process Quality Audits

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of how State staff will track status of the data submissions and follow to view a record of:

- administrative actions: Login, Logout, Password reset, IP address, batch file transmission;
- data submission including user, date, time, and IP address;
- users viewing validations by date, time, file, IP address;

- users viewing completeness measures by date, time, file, IP address;
- users making corrections by date, time, file, record, element, and IP address.

Topic 20 – Standards

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of how the proposed Solution complies with established standards.

- Describe the degree to which your solution complies with information technology standards mentioned on the State of NH web site: <http://www.nh.gov/doi/internet/vendors.php>
- The proposed Solution must comply with Open Standards and Open Data Formats as mandated by RSA 21-R (HB418 2012).
- Is the proposed application considered Open Source Software?
- Is the data available to the State in an Open Data Format?

Describe the compliance with privacy and confidentiality standards, such as HIPAA, NIST, etc.

Topic 21 – Meetings and Reports

Response Page Limit: No Limit

Provide a detailed meeting and report schedule which will serve the needs of State Project leaders and will evaluate reports produced.

At a minimum, the State expects the following:

- **Introductory Meeting:** Participants will include key Vendor staff and State Project leaders. This meeting will enable leaders to become acquainted and establish any preliminary Project procedures.
- **Kickoff Meeting:** Participants will include the State and Vendor Project teams. This meeting is to establish a sound foundation for activities that will follow.
- **Status Meetings:** Participants will include Project leaders from the Vendor and the State. These meetings, which will be conducted at least twice monthly, will address overall Project status and any additional topics needed to remain on Schedule and within budget. A status report from the Vendor will serve as the basis for discussion.
- **Special Meetings:** Need may arise for a special meeting with State leaders or Project stakeholders to address specific issues.

- Exit Meeting: Participants will include Project leaders from the Vendor and the State. Discussion will focus on lessons learned from the Project and on follow-up options that the State may wish to consider.

The State expects the Vendor to prepare agendas and background for and minutes of meetings. Background for each status meeting must include an updated Work Plan. Drafting of formal presentations, such as a presentation for the kickoff meeting, will also be a Vendor responsibility.

Vendor shall submit reports in accordance with the Schedule and terms of the Contract. All reports shall be prepared in formats approved by the State. The Vendor's Project Manager shall produce reports related to Project Management as reasonably requested by the State. Vendor shall produce Project status reports, which shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Project status as it relates to Work Plan
- b. Deliverables status
- c. Accomplishments during weeks being reported
- d. Planned activities for the upcoming two (2) week period
- e. Future activities
- f. Issues and concerns requiring resolution
- g. Report and remedies in case of falling behind Schedule

Describe the process that will be employed. Be sure to cover the following:

- a. Timing, duration, recommended participants and agenda for the kickoff meeting;
- b. Frequency and standard agenda items for status meetings;
- c. Availability for special meetings; and
- d. Agenda for the exit meeting.

As an appendix, provide an example of a status reports prepared for similar Project.

D-2 TECHNICAL, SERVICES AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

This subsection provides a series of technical topics related to management of the Project that the State of New Hampshire will consider in selecting a Vendor to perform the work described in this RFP. A maximum length of response for each topic is defined.

D-2.1 Security and Protection of Data

Topic 22 - System Security and the Hosted Environment

Response Page limit: 6

Provide a detailed description of the security design and architectural features incorporated into the proposed System. At a minimum, discuss the following:

- Describe the System assurance provisions incorporated into the proposed System. At a minimum, discuss the following:
 - a. What process or methodology is employed within the proposed System to ensure Data integrity?
 - b. To what degree does the approach rely on System assurance capabilities of the relational database management system (RDMS)?
 - c. If multiple databases are employed, what extra procedures are employed to ensure synchronization among databases?
- Discuss your company's practices pertaining to the following security testing:
 - a. The identification and authentication methods used to ensure that users and any interfacing applications are identified and that their identities are properly verified.
 - b. The authorization methods used to ensure that users and client applications can only access Data and services for which they have been properly authorized.
 - c. The immunity methods used to ensure that unauthorized malicious programs (e.g., viruses, worms and Trojan horses) do not infect the application.
 - d. The methods used to ensure that communications and Data integrity are not intentionally corrupted via unauthorized creation, modification or deletion.
 - e. The methods used to ensure that the parties to interactions with the application cannot later repudiate or rebut those interactions.
 - f. The intrusion detection methods used to ensure the detection, recording and review of attempted access or modification by unauthorized individuals.
 - g. The privacy methods used to ensure that confidential Data and sensitive communications are kept private.
 - h. The System maintenance methods used to ensure that unauthorized System maintenance does not unintentionally disrupt the security mechanisms of the application or supporting hardware.
 - i. The testing methods conducted to load and stress test your System to determine its ability to withstand Denial of Service (DoS) attacks.
 - j. Your software patch schedule employed to protect the Software from new security vulnerabilities as they arise.
 - k. The ability of your System's software to be installed in a "locked-down" fashion so as to turn off unnecessary features (user accounts, operating System services, etc.) thereby reducing the software's security vulnerabilities and attack surfaces available to System hackers and attackers.

Topic 23 – Backup and Recovery

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of the backup and recovery processes used to protect mission-critical Data.

- The State seeks a sound backup and recovery provision as part of the Solution. Describe the tools used for backup and recovery of applications and data. Describe the impact of the proposed backup process on the operation of the System. Also, address the following:
 - a. Use of and method for logging and journalizing;
 - b. Single points of failure and recommended approaches for their elimination; and
 - c. Approach to redundancy.
- Will the Solution include an option to have the collected data stored at the Vendor's site in addition to sending results along to the State? What is the proposed retention schedule?

Topic 24 – Assurance of Business Continuity

Response Page Limit: 3

Provide a detailed description of the business continuity plan that mitigates risk to the State.

- Vendors are asked to provide information on their business continuity plan in the event that their hosting site becomes unavailable.
- Discuss necessary planning for moving operations to a remote site if the hosting site is incapacitated.
- What is the recovery time objective and how will your company continue to meet federally required response metrics?
- The State believes that additional Software license fees solely related to redundancy for assurance of business continuity would be inappropriate. If the Proposal differs from this standard, describe and provide rationale for the difference.

D2.2 Coordination with State Personnel and Training

Topic 25 – Roles and Responsibilities - Preparation of State Staff on the Project Team

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of how the Vendor staff will interact with the State project manager during all phases of the project.

Describe the roles and responsibilities of Vendor staff and State staff during pre-implementation, Implementation, and operational phases of the engagement. Include the amount of time required

of each staff member and when their time is needed during the implementation and operational phases of the project.

Topic 26 – Transition Services

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of transition services provided upon future termination of the Contract. Address the activities described in RFP Section H-25.14.4: Termination Procedure.

- Describe the handling of State Data during the transition phase.
- Provide a sample of a transition plan that you have developed for other clients.

D2.3 Project Execution

Topic 27 – Implementation Approach

Response Page Limit: 5

Provide one or more feasible implementation plans and user readiness. For each plan provided:

- Identify timeframes for major milestones, including timing for discontinuing legacy Systems;
- Discuss cost implications of the plan, including impact on maintenance fees; and
- Address the level of risk associated with the plan.

D2.4 PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMPETENCE

Topic 28 – Status Meetings and Project Management Reports

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of project management reporting.

The State believes that effective communication and reporting are essential to Project success. Describe the planned project management activities as they pertain to the three phases, planning, Implementation, and operations.

Describe how the following will be managed:

- Introductory Meeting;
- Kickoff Meeting;
- Status Meetings;
- Status Reports;
- The Work Plan;
- Letter of Acceptance; and

- Change Order Process.

As an appendix, provide an example of status reports prepared for another similar project. Names of the project and of any individuals involved may be removed.

Topic 29 – Risk and Issue Management

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of the proposed approach to timely identification and effective action on issues and risks.

- Describe the proposed approach to managing risks and issues. Include a sample tracking document.
- Highlight the methodology to ensure that the State staff is involved in the process.
- Provide a description of known risks and proposed steps to mitigate them.

Topic 30 - Work Plan

Response Page Limit: No limit

The State requires Vendors to present a thorough Project Work Plan in the Proposal addressing all work offered in their Proposal. The State will evaluate the proposed Project Work Plan contained in the Proposal to determine how well it will serve the needs of State Project leaders.

The State sees a Work Plan as essential to reaching a comprehensive agreement with a Vendor. Consequently, the State will seek to refine the proposed Work Plan during Contract finalization with the selected Vendor and to incorporate the refined Work Plan by reference into a Contract. In addition, the State will require the selected Vendor to update the Work Plan in consultation with the State during the term of the Project.

Provide a detailed summary of the following:

- Provide a preliminary Work Plan for the Planning and Implementation Phases of the engagement. Vendor's preliminary proposed Work Plan includes a description of the Schedule, tasks, Deliverables, major milestones, task dependencies, and a payment schedule. The Work Plan shall also address resource allocations (both State and Vendor team members). Include sufficient detail that the State will be able to identify departures from the Plan in sufficient time to seek corrective action. In particular provide information about staffing. Identify and discuss the following.
 - a. All assumptions upon which the Work Plan is based;
 - b. Descriptions of recommended roles by activity and time required for both State and Vendor members of the Project Team;

- c. Assignments of members of the Vendor's team identified by role to specific tasks; and
 - d. Critical success factors for the Project.
- Discuss how this Work Plan will be used and State access to Plan details including resource allocation. Also, discuss frequency for updating the Plan weekly and for every status meeting. Explain how the State will know whether the Project is on Schedule and within budget.

D2.5 Ongoing Operations

Topic 31 – Help Desk Support

Response Page Limit: 2

Provide a detailed description of support available to the State to help them with the process of uploading and receiving files and other aspects of data validation and correction.

- Describe support for the State to assist with the process of uploading files and receiving files. Include hours of operation, response times, problem classification, and escalation procedures.
- Describe your electronic problem tracking process and tools used.
- Describe how user account management will be handled.
- Describe how general support and maintenance skills are transferred to State technical support personnel for knowledge sharing.
- Describe how are support and maintenance issues are tracked detailing methodology and if any additional software is required.
- Describe process for maintenance of the general knowledge base.
- Describe any particular procedures required to handle escalation and emergency calls
- Detail the plan for preventive maintenance and for upgrade installations
- Detail the types and frequency of support tasks required

The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.

Change 2: Appendix H, Section H-25.5 Vendor Staff

Action: Replace 2nd paragraph

The Vendor's selection of a Project Manager will be subject to the prior approval of the State. The State's approval process may include, without limitation, at the State's discretion, review of the proposed Project Manager's resume, qualifications, references and background checks, and an interview. The Vendor's Project Manager must be qualified to perform the obligations required of the position under the Contract shall function as the Vendor's representative for all administrative and management matters. In addition, the State will have direct access to the Vendor's representatives authorized to make binding decisions. The Project Manager must be available to promptly respond during Normal Working Hours within two (2) hours to inquiries from the State, and be at the site as needed. The Vendor must use his or her best efforts on the Project.