

TENDER PROCESS FOR HR SUPPORT

1. Introduction

Cambridge SU is seeking proposals from suitably qualified and experienced HR consultancy providers to deliver comprehensive external HR support.

As a registered charity and the representative body for students at the University of Cambridge, Cambridge SU requires these services to be tailored to comply with relevant charity regulations, legal standards, and sector-specific governance requirements.

2. Background

Cambridge SU represents and supports over 24,000 students at the University of Cambridge. We operate within a unique regulatory framework and are committed to strong governance, risk management, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

We are seeking an external HR partner to work effectively alongside our internal HR Coordinator and Senior Management Team (SMT). The service must complement our existing internal HR function, with the level of external advice flexing according to our organisational needs.

About Cambridge SU

We are a relatively small team of 28 spanning full-time, part-time, permanent, and student roles, supported by an annually elected team of Sabbatical Officers. Our new CEO started in April 2026 so we are navigating a period of change. In addition to this we have also recently launched our People & Culture Plan as well as a new EDI Strategy, which is focused on improving diversity, inclusion, and overall organisational performance.

3. Scope of Services

The appointed provider will deliver practical, responsive, and specialist advice across the following areas:

- Employee Relations & Advice Line: Day-to-day guidance on employment law, complex HR matters, employee relations, disciplinary and grievance processes, performance and capability, and absence management.
- Policy & Legal Compliance: Updates and advice on changing employment legislation, HR best practices, and guidance on employee contracts, handbooks, and HR policies/procedures.

- Strategic & Operational Support: Ad-hoc assistance with organisational change, strategic HR projects, contract reviews, and specialist training as required.
- Occupational Health Referrals: End-to-end support with the process in line with organisational policies.

4. Deliverables

The key deliverables for this engagement include (but are not limited to:)

- Access to a responsive advice line/advisory service for the HR Coordinator and SMT.
- Review and updating of employee contracts, staff handbooks, and key HR policies.
- Support with complex case management, including disciplinary, grievance, and capability procedures.
- Strategic briefings/updates on upcoming changes to UK employment legislation.
- Tailored HR support that accounts for the charity sector and student union environment (e.g., sabbatical officer structures).

5. Compliance and Standards

The service provider must ensure that all services:

- Fully comply with UK employment law, ACAS codes of practice, and charity regulatory frameworks.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all employee data and organisational matters, in compliance with UK GDPR and Data Protection laws.
- Align with Cambridge SU's Procurement Policy and Procedures.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by our selection panel (Director of Operations, CEO, HR Coordinator, and a Trustee) based on the following criteria:

- Experience and expertise: Demonstrated experience in providing similar levels of support and advice.
- Contextual awareness: Knowledge of the unique context of working within the sector e.g. role of Sabbatical Officers.
- Cost: Competitive pricing for the services outlined.

7. Submission Requirements

Interested firms and individual consultants are requested to submit a proposal including:

1. Scope of Services: Overview of how your service will meet our requirements and work alongside our HR Coordinator.
2. Key Personnel: CVs and qualifications of the primary advisors who would handle our account.
3. Sector Experience: Relevant case studies or examples of working with charities, higher education bodies, or Students' Unions.
4. Cost Proposal: A comprehensive cost breakdown, including annual retainer/subscription costs, advice line fees, legal insurance coverage options, and hourly/daily rates for ad-hoc consultancy work.

8. Submission & Key Contacts

Proposals should be sent to Oli Gray (Director of Operations) oli.gray@cambridgesu.co.uk

Proposals should be submitted by **5pm** on **Monday 28th September 2026**.

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact Oli.

9. Confidentiality

All information provided in this tender document is confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties without the prior written consent of Cambridge SU.