**Invitation to Tender (ITT)**

**Cashless Catering Solution, Hardware and Support Services**

**The Mead Educational Trust**

**Date of Issue:**

**2nd February 2026**

**ITT Contact**

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# Introduction

This tender is initiated by The Mead Educational Trust, a Multi Academy Trust comprising 15 schools and other central services in Leicester and Leicestershire, to procure a comprehensive cashless catering solution for our existing secondaries schools, including future schools, and the associated maintenance, support, consumables, and warranty. This tender is aimed at enhancing our operational facilities by refreshing our cashless catering services to meet the dynamic needs of our school environments.

This tender is aimed at awarding a contract for the outlined requirements through a capital procurement model and will be expected to pro-rata future growth and device needs across The Mead Educational Trust.

This tender refers to:

1) Cashless Catering Platform (Software Solution)

2) Cashless Catering Hardware

3) Cashless Catering Support & Maintenance

4) Warranty

(Please refer to Appendix A – ICT Requirements for further details)

**Service Overview**

The Mead Educational Trust is a growing Multi Academy Trust in Leicester and Leicestershire. This tender is proceeding due to the current solutions expiry of Summer 2026. All current contracts have been aligned to end August 2026. The new service should be a contract term of 3 or 5 years, invoiced annually. We request that all bidders provide options for both 3 and 5 year solutions as part of their tender submission.

# Objective of the ITT

The Mead Educational Trust invites qualified suppliers to submit proposals for the supply, support and management of our cashless catering solution as detailed in this ITT. The objective is to select a provider that can offer a cutting-edge, cost-effective, and efficient cashless catering solution that aligns with our goal of providing exceptional education and facilities to our students and staff.

TMET would like to invite qualified suppliers to respond to this ITT for the procurement and supply of hardware, software, professional services, and consumables. This ITT document sets out the requirements and the selection criteria to be used in evaluation and provides information regarding how the tender process will be managed.

The purpose of this ITT is to obtain professional, costed propositions and solutions for the required equipment and services.

Failure to comply with the following instructions may result in a bid not being considered.

## General Instructions

These instructions are designed to ensure that all proposals are given equal and fair consideration.

* Proposals must be comprehensive, addressing all requirements as laid out in this ITT.
* Bidders are expected to adhere to the submission deadlines and formats specified.
* The Trust reserves the right to accept any proposal in whole or in part and to award the contract to more than one bidder if deemed beneficial.
* Proposals must remain valid for a minimum of 90 days from the tender return date.
* **It is important that Bidders provide all the information requested in the format and order specified**. The inclusion of manufacturer’s marketing materials is not considered appropriate or sufficient.
* The Mead Educational Trust will not be liable for or pay for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the Bidder in the preparation of the Bid.
* The Mead Educational Trust reserves the right to cancel the tender process at any point.
* A Bid received after the due date and time for submission will not be considered.
* The Mead Educational Trust does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any Bid.
* No Bid will be deemed to have been accepted unless such acceptance has been notified to the Bidder in writing.
* Recipients of the Bid documents (whether they submit a Bid or not) shall treat the details in it as private and confidential. Any Bid received by The Mead Educational Trust in response to the invitation to Bid shall be treated likewise by The Mead Educational Trust.
* Pease examine all the Bid documentation and ensure that you return all the information requested no later than **06/03/2026**. Incomplete bids will be deemed to be non-compliant and eliminated from evaluation. Please email the completed declaration to gsmith@tmet.uk
* In the event of declining to Bid, Bidders are requested to inform The Mead Educational Trust.
* Please email the completed declaration to gsmith@tmet.uk
* **Tenderers should note that the award of the contract is expected during 1st May 2026.**

Whilst the information in this document has been provided in good faith, it does not purport to be a comprehensive review of all matters relevant to the requirements and neither The Mead Educational Trust, nor any of its employees or advisers accept any liability or responsibility for its adequacy, accuracy or completeness, nor do any of them make any representation or warranty, express or implied, with respect to the information contained in this document. Nothing in this document is or should be relied upon, as a promise or representation as to The Mead Educational Trust’s ultimate decision.

## Tender Response

Actions required:

**Tenderers to email gsmith@tmet.uk within 7 days of receipt of the ITT Documentation, by the 9th February 2026, if you intend to bid.**

**Your tenders should comprise the documents asterisked below and be emailed to: gsmith@tmet.uk by the 6th March 2026.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Appendix E: Tender Response\* | Tenders should respond to all questions indicated |
| Appendix D: ICT Matrix / Pricing Table\* | Complete the pricing table (ICT Cost Matrix). |
| Appendix C: Bidder Declaration\* | Complete and Sign |
| Additional Information\* | Include any other information you might feel will support your tender. Any separate documents should be listed. (This is optional) |

## Evaluation criteria

The Bid process will be conducted in a manner that ensures Bids are evaluated fairly to ascertain the most advantageous Bid using the following criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| Compliance with Technical Requirements | 30% |
| Cost Effectiveness | 30% |
| Service and Support | 30% |
| Sustainability and Environmental Impact | 10% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

Bidders should note that the overall weightings for each criterion are fixed. Details of criteria are:

### Compliance with Technical Requirements – *Weighting 30%*

* Bidders must respond to the specific software and hardware requirements as stated in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the IT Requirements (Appendix A). Responses should detail how the proposed platform manages student accounts, MIS integration, MiFare ID authentication, and Point of Sale (POS) functionality.
* Bidders should indicate any areas of additional value they are able to bring to this project, such as integrated kitchen management tools, pre-ordering apps, or advanced nutritional analysis, over and above the requirements detailed in Appendix A. The Mead Educational Trust will utilise any Value-Added offerings to enhance the catering experience for our students.

### Cost Effectiveness - Weighting 30%

* Bidders should complete the Cost Matrix (Appendix D), detailing pricing for a complete working solution including all software licensing, hardware units, installation, and ongoing maintenance for all 6 schools specified in this tender.
* The evaluation will consider the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) over the 36-month or 60-month contract term. Any added value items bidders wish to quantify through the Cost Matrix should be clearly itemised below the "bottom line" figure.
* Bidders must confirm that their pricing is inclusive of data migration costs from the legacy system to ensure a seamless transition for the August 2026 go-live.

### Service and Support – Weighting 30%

* Bidders are requested to provide detailed responses in relation to the offered support model, including Helpdesk availability, Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for onsite hardware repair, and the supply chain for consumables (e.g., card readers or receipt paper).
* Please note: The inclusion of manufacturer’s marketing or sales material is not considered an appropriate or sufficient response.
* Bidders should outline their Project Management approach for the implementation phase. Bidders must state their acceptance that any sub-contractors used for installation or cabling must be agreed upon by The Mead Educational Trust and managed directly by the Bidder’s assigned Project Manager.
* Bidders are requested to provide details of two reference sites (preferably Multi-Academy Trusts) where a similar cashless catering solution has been implemented.

### Sustainability and Environmental Impact – Weighting 10%

* Bidders are requested to provide information on the environmental impact of the offered hardware (e.g., energy consumption ratings of POS terminals).
* TMET values an active approach to electronic waste (e-waste) disposal. Bidders should outline their policies for the sustainable decommissioning of legacy hardware and their commitment to reducing paper waste through digital receipts or online-only parental portals.

## Evaluation of Bids

The evaluation process will be conducted to identify the most advantageous tender. Bids will be assessed to ascertain those that represent best overall value and the highest likely quality of output during the contract, not necessarily the lowest price submission.

Proposals will be evaluated by The Mead Educational Trust centrally, with a variety of roles on the evaluation board.

**Scoring Definitions**

Each criterion will be scored using the following definitions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SCORE** | **DEFINITION** |
| 0 | Absent or does not meet the criterion. |
| 1 | Response has some major shortcomings and/or clear deficiencies, which on balance outweigh positive aspects of the response to the criterion. |
| 2 | Response has minor shortcomings and/or deficiencies, but on balance these are outweighed by the positive aspects that meet the majority of the criterion. |
| 3 | The criterion is fully met in all areas. |
| 4 | The response meets all aspects of the criterion and goes beyond them, adding significant value in a number of areas. |

## Questions and clarifications

If you have any questions or points of clarification about the contents of the Bid document or the services that are to be provided, please contact TMET by emailing [gsmith@tmet.uk](mailto:gsmith@tmet.uk). TMET will respond to all queries by using the template attached as ***Appendix B Questions and Clarifications Template*** by the date shown below to all bidders for transparency.

The Mead Educational Trust will not answer any questions received via telephone and will not answer any questions received after this date. Any questions received will be answered and circulated to all Bidders, although The Mead Educational Trust will not disclose the identity of the Bidder who asked the question.

**Clarifications deadline : 20/02/2026 @ 12pm**   
**Clarification response deadline: 25/02/2026 5pm**

## Completing Bids

Your Bid should be in the format required outlined above, contained within this document. Any comments pertaining to the information supplied by you may be made in an email and returned with the Bid. The Bidder Declaration (***Appendix C Bidder Declaration***) must be completed, signed and dated by a duly authorised representative on behalf of the Bidder.

## Submission of Bid

Please submit one electronic copy of the completed Bid document by email to gsmith@tmet.ukbefore **17:00pm** on **6th March 2026**

The electronic bid submissions will be held securely and only viewed after the deadline date.Any electronic bids received after these dates and times will not be considered.

## Timetable for Bid and award of Contract

The intended timetable is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 02/02/2026 | Invitation to Tender document and associated documents issued to selected companies and uploaded to TMET website. |
| 20/02/2026@ 12pm | Tenderers submit questions and comments regarding Tender documents. |
| 25/02/2026 @ 5pm | The Mead Educational Trust responds to questions and comments via email to all Tenderers |
| 06/03/2026 @ 5pm | Bidders submit Tender. |
| 12/03/2026 | Tenders are evaluated and suppliers are shortlisted. |
| 18/03/2026 - 27/03/2026 | Shortlisted suppliers are invited to demonstrate the new solutions to a working group consisting of IT, Catering, Operations and the Trust central team. |
| 15/04/2026 | Appointment of Preferred Bidder Review Contract Standstill period until contract award |
| 01/05/2026 | Contract Award |
| June 2026 onwards | Expected delivery of all hardware, consumables and accessories covered under this tender. Expected installation and configuration of software expected to be completed in advance of these dates. Training to be conducted prior to the summer holidays, and refresh/support during the first days back after the summer holiday. |

# Contract Value

## Capital and Revenue

All items contained within this tender are expected to be invoiced annually as part of the total contract agreement for the full solution covered by the awarded contract. The contract will be awarded for 3 or 5 years, depending on the chosen solution and contract term that the Trust decides when awarding the contract. All future additions and future TMET growth will be awarded to the winning bidder on the same terms – pro rata to the same end date of the TMET contract starting from 1st September 2026 + 3 or 5 years.

# Form of Response

**Bidders are required to develop a costed solution.**

Bidders should respond to each of the numbered elements below detailing how their solution will meet The Mead Educational Trust ICT Requirements, which will support its wider education vision. Bidder responses should be completed using a minimum font size of 11 and follow the numbering format provided. Bidders are requested to use the weighting criteria to assess the suitable length of their responses per section.

**Return proposals should include the following information in the Tender Response:**

* Bidder’s contact details including: organisation name; contact name; postal address; telephone number; facsimile number; email address.
* Written responses to Sections 1 to 4 of the Tender Response.

# List of Appendices

Appendix A: The Mead Educational Trust ICT Requirements – information for Bidder  
Appendix B: Questions and Clarifications Template - TMET to complete for all bidders  
Appendix C: Bidder Declaration - Bidder to complete  
Appendix D: ICT Cost Matrix / pricing – Bidder to complete  
Appendix E: Tender Response - Bidder to complete