



The University Caterers Organisation



**GUIDANCE FOR LACA MEMBERS  
USING THE TUCO FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR:**

Supply & Distribution of  
Grocery, Frozen and Chilled Products



The University Caterers Organisation

TUCO is the leading professional membership body for 'in house' caterers operating in the higher and further education sector.

We are committed to advancing the learning and developing of catering and hospitality teams, and work to provide quality standards, advice and information to those working in the sector.

TUCO is committed to driving the health and well-being agenda on behalf of its members, and is at the fore of sustainability best practice.

Our procurement team work to secure the best possible value in all framework agreements, demonstrated by purchasing volumes in excess of £140m per annum.

This Framework covers the Supply and distribution of Grocery and Chilled Foods for LA's and other organisations who meet TUCO membership criteria (Lot 6), Frozen and Chilled Foods for LA's and other organisations who meet TUCO membership criteria (Lot 7), Chilled Foods for LA's and other organisations who meet TUCO membership criteria (Lot 8), Vegan & Vegetarian foods for LA's and other organisations (Lot 9) and Grocery, Frozen and Chilled Foods for LA's and other organisations who meet TUCO membership criteria (Lot 10).

The purpose of this framework agreement is to deliver an efficient and compliant route to market for participating public bodies, by minimising resource and providing value for money.

The scope of commodities covered in the framework are as follows:

- › Canned and dried fruit & vegetables
- › Baking products
- › Rice & pasta
- › Sauces
- › Beverages
- › Any other grocery food / ingredients
- › Meat, poultry & Fish
- › Chips
- › Vegetables
- › Bread / Patisserie / Vienoiserie
- › Any other Frozen food / ingredients
- › Cheese / Milk / Bacon / Cured Meats /
- › Sandwich Fillings
- › Any other Chilled food / ingredients
- › Specialist Vegan & Vegetarian food and ingredients
- › Ancillary items

The benefits of using this Framework:

- › It is free to use for members.
- › Eliminates the need for organisations to individually undertake their own full procurement exercise, which saves time and resources.
- › Simplifies the process and removes the cost to public sector bodies in procuring the services and providers.
- › Legally compliant framework agreement developed within the EU public procurement regulations.
- › Consistent terms & conditions of contract.
- › Opportunity for further savings through further competition.
- › TUCO regularly audit the nominated suppliers to assist in the management and reduction of food safety risks.



Call-off from this framework agreement is by means of i) direct award ii) combination ranked and further-competition and iii) further-competition Members will determine the correct lot to use when placing a call-off contract from the framework agreement by assessing their requirement against the available lots.

Members can choose how many suppliers they wish to award to as long as this is made clear at the start of the process.

**i. Direct award without re-opening competition.**

If the framework agreement sets out all the terms governing the provision of the works, services and/or supplies concerned and all the objective conditions that are required to make a decision for award of the specific contract, then awarding the contract without re-opening competition amongst the parties to the framework agreement is possible. In this instance, the choice of provider(s) must be based on the objective criteria laid out in the procurement documentation

**ii. Mixture of direct award and mini-competition.**

Should all relevant questions have been asked at tender stage and Institutions require price only, they should:

Utilise the scores achieved by suppliers at award stage of the tender process.

Discard the 'Price' scores achieved at award stage.

Carry out a benchmarking exercise of institution shopping basket.

Members are required to contract with the highest scoring Supplier(s).

The procurement documents for the framework agreement must set out objective criteria which will be used to determine whether a specific contract will be placed following a reopening of competition or directly on the terms set out in the framework agreement, so it is clear and transparent for all users and suppliers. The procurement documents should also specify which terms may be subject to the re-opening of competition. For example, a direct award could be for those suppliers allocated to provide goods to a specific region and the accompanying objective criteria for selecting to re-open competition could be:

1. the contract exceeds a set financial threshold
2. the quantity of products required is over a certain level
3. the contract has particularly complex requirements

**iii. Mini-competitions.**

When the framework agreement does not include all the terms governing the provision of the works, services and supplies concerned, the contracting authority must organise a 'mini-competition' between the providers which are party to the framework agreement.

**Please contact the Category Manager to discuss further.**