

Request for Tender for Student Contact Centre Services for Atlantic Technological University 8492118 clarifications updated

6th August 2026 numbers 13 to 51 added

	Clarification Request	ATU Response
1.	Please provide the estimated volume of inbound and outbound calls, along with the anticipated average handling time for each?	In 2025, 3,283 inbound calls were received to ATU Sligo campus, and 8,800 outbound calls were made to enquirers / applicants. Call handling times: Inbound: Talk time average 3 mins 21 seconds; Wrap time: 30 seconds; Average handle time 3 mins 51 seconds. Outbound: Talk time average: 1 minute 19 seconds; Wrap time: 30 seconds; Average handling time: 1 minute 49 seconds
2.	Can ATU please confirm whether this activity is currently conducted by an incumbent, or is this work being done in-house?	This application support activity is currently being carried out by an incumbent external provider in ATU Sligo Ash Lane campus. In ATU Galway / Mayo, ATU Donegal and ATU Sligo St. Angela's campus, it is currently carried out by internal Admissions teams.
3.	We note that the application volumes per month are included. Please could ATU provide the historic contact volume and handle time per application. E.g. number of calls/emails per application and the length of time it takes to process.	In 2025, 3,283 inbound calls were received to ATU Sligo, and 8,800 outbound calls were made to enquirers / applicants. 50,242 emails were handled (combination of incoming and outgoing emails) for ATU Sligo, with 7,000 applications processed in ATU Sligo in the same year. However, please note that this level of handling activity reflects activities associated with the outgoing contract which included a wider scope of recruitment activities. The average number of calls / emails per application is not available. Handling times per application are not available
4.	Could you provide the estimated number of contacts per application.	This information is not available.
5.	Could the ATU confirm whether they require services delivered onshore in Republic of Ireland or whether near-shore location would be acceptable	Off-shore solutions are acceptable, once the processing of data takes place within the EU / EEA and all the demands of the service requirement are met.

6	Appendix 3, 4 and 5 Could you please confirm that these appendices are provided for information purposes only, do not form part of the submission, and are intended to be completed after the contract has been awarded?	Yes, we confirm that the Draft Services Contract, Draft Framework Agreement and Data Processing Agreement are for information purposes only at tender stage. They will be completed by the successful tenderer.
7.	Appendix 2 Pricing Schedule Appendix 2 Pricing Schedule appears to request both an FTE and a transactional model for billing. In order to accurately calculate the costs can you supply the AHT and Volumes across transaction type for each month and any anticipated forecasted movement on these through ATU automation/innovation for the duration of the contract?	ATU does not have metrics on average handling times or anticipated forecasted movement.
8.	3.3.5 Scalability and Peak Demand Management - The service must be capable of scaling operations to meet significant fluctuations in demand, particularly during peak recruitment periods (May through September). Query re. date for Springboard applications.	The Higher Education Authority (HEA) determines the recruitment opening date for Springboard programmes annually. This is usually done with short notice to providers like ATU. While a single intake in September is envisaged annually, we cannot predict the exact recruitment opening dates. For costing purposes, we indicate an April recruitment opening date for Springboard for a September intake (as per 2026) which was earlier than previous years. Where Springboard recruitment opens earlier for recruitment, however, available places will typically fill earlier. The requirement for peak demand resilience and scalability to meet required service levels should be noted.
9.	Can you confirm how many FTE currently deliver the service?	ATU does not have metrics available on FTE for delivery of the current service.

	headcount model, we need to break down each activity where possible and understand the expected productivity per agent across the different work types.	documentation, as required by the application form, depending on the programme.
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13.	Can ATU please provide historical call and email contact volumes for the current or incumbent contract, ideally broken down monthly for the last 2 years.	Please see responses for No.1, No.3 and No.12 for ATU Sligo only. Note that the level of handling activity reported reflects activities associated with the outgoing contract which included a wider scope of recruitment activities. Please note the Scope of Services to be provided as detailed in the RFT.
14	What is the current or expected average handle time for phone calls and emails?	Please see response No. 1 for call handling times. The average handling time for emails is not available. Handling times per application are not available.
15	What proportion of enquiries typically convert to applications?	Conversion rate data from enquiry to application is not available.
16	How many contacts, on average, does a single applicant generate across their full journey, including enquiry, document chasing, status checks, and offer follow up?	This data is not available.
17	Can ATU indicate expected year on year growth assumptions for Years 2 to 4?	ATU envisages an expanded scope of programmes and applications may be handled by the Contact Centre over the lifetime of the framework, subject to performance review, business need and budget availability. Appendix 2 (Pricing Schedule) specifies the basis on which tenderers should submit their pricing in line with various volumes of applications annually. See also Year 1 programmes and applications in scope within the RFT.
18	Is there an expectation that ATU will provide any training content, subject matter experts, or trainer time, for example for programme or product knowledge, or is the Contractor	ATU will work with the successful Contractor during mobilisation to support knowledge transfer and familiarisation with relevant processes, systems and programme requirements as necessary. The

	expected to develop all training material independently?	precise approach to onboarding, training and knowledge transfer will be agreed with the successful Contractor during the implementation phase. Subject Matter expertise will be made available to the Contractor's key contacts, at the outset, to facilitate product knowledge, awareness of workflows, key admissions processes and links to relevant ATU policies. The Contractor must develop their own internal training materials and training programme.
19	Is there a minimum expected training duration or curriculum before an agent goes live, or is this left entirely to the Contractor to propose and justify?	No minimum expected training duration or curriculum is specified in the RFT. Tenderers must provide, as part of their proposal, a detailed mobilisation plan and a clearly defined go-live timeline, including critical path activities and resource allocation as per the requirements of the RFT. As part of this, tenderers should outline their proposed training programme and explain how agent readiness and service quality will be achieved prior to go-live, as part of their mobilisation plan.
20	Will ATU provide access to existing knowledge base content, FAQs, or scripts used by the incumbent, to accelerate mobilisation?	See response No. 18 above. ATU will make available relevant knowledge base content, FAQs and operational documentation that it owns and has the right to share, subject to applicable governance, security and data protection requirements. However, ATU cannot provide proprietary materials, scripts, tools, methodologies or other intellectual property developed and owned by the incumbent service provider or any third party where ATU does not hold the rights to disclose or transfer such assets. Tenderers should therefore assume responsibility for developing their own scripts, processes and operational artefacts as part of mobilisation and service delivery.
21.	Fully understood on the provision of working from home criteria from the Contractor side but does ATU have any restrictions or preferences regarding home working agents handling personal data and recorded calls, for	The RFT does not specify minimum physical or security safeguards relating to agents or locations. Tenderers must however address all RFT requirements relating to cyber-security, technical capacity, technical equipment and resources including any remote working operating models, in full compliance with the information security, data protection and any other relevant requirements specified in the

	example minimum physical or security safeguards, or prohibition on certain locations?	RFT, template ATU Data Protection Agreement and applicable legislation. Tenderers are responsible for implementing and maintaining appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure compliance with these requirements.
22.	What level of API or system access will be granted to the Microsoft Dynamics CRM, for example direct integration versus manual entry via a portal?	Contractors will be provided with ATU associate contractor accounts and have full licensed access to the ATU instance of MS Dynamics 365. A virtual desktop will also be used so no data ever leaves the ATU environment.
23.	Who owns and maintains the telephony and IVR platform. Is this ATU's existing system that we integrate into, or are we expected to provide our own telephony stack end to end	Tenderers should assume responsibility for providing and managing the telephony and IVR solution required to deliver the services described in the RFT. Any proposed solution should meet the functional, service, security, data protection and reporting requirements set out in the RFT.
24.	Is there an existing webchat platform on the ATU website we must integrate with, or are we expected to propose or provide one?	An existing webchat platform is in place on the ATU website, and the Contractor is not expected to propose or provide one.
25	What data migration support will ATU provide for historical applicant records at mobilisation, and in what format?	The Contractor will be provided access to and will operate within ATU's CRM Dynamics platform. Historical applicant data migration will not be required to provide the contact centre service.
26	Are there any existing integrations between the Springboard Application Management System and ATU CRM that we should be aware of, or is this a manual extract and upload process end to end?	ATU rely on daily manual exports from the Springboard AMS to a specific ATU SharePoint location. Thereafter, scheduled daily dataflows take over, to create or update applications in the ATU CRM. The Contractor will have access to the ATU SharePoint location through a virtual desktop.
27	Can ATU confirm the specific retention periods required for call recordings and applicant data, referenced in Section 3.7 but not quantified?	All data must be processed in line with data protection requirements as set out in the RFT and ATU data processing agreement. Call recording retention periods will be agreed with the ATU at contract stage.

		Responsibility for determining appropriate retention periods rests with each business area in the university and will be based on the purpose for which the records are processed.
28	Will ATU nominate specific approved sub processors in the Schedule to the DPA, or is this entirely for the Contractor to propose?	The Contractor will identify and list any sub-processors in the Schedule to the DPA. These must be approved by ATU. Any additional sub-processors not listed in the Schedule must be approved in writing by the ATU.
29	What format or mechanism does ATU expect for the access log referenced in the DPA, for example a real time system or an exportable report, and how frequently must it be available?	The DPA does not specify a format for the access log. The log should be made available to ATU upon request. For further details see section 3.4.1 of the DPA.
30	Does ATU have a preferred or mandated data export format for applicant records, referenced under Award Criterion D, or is this open to Contractor proposal	ATU does not mandate a specific data export format under Award Criterion D. Tenderers should describe the formats it proposes for exporting data. Export formats should be industry-standard and commonly used to facilitate data portability and migration. Tenderers should outline the export options available, any limitations, and how data can be provided to ATU at contract end or upon request. Note that the Contractor will be provided access to and will operate within ATU's CRM Dynamics platform containing applicant records. Tenderers should propose any other data export format in line with data protection and information security standards required by the RFT.
31.	Are there service credits or penalties tied to KPI underperformance, for example missed CSAT, data accuracy, or response time targets	ATU has not specified a service credit or financial penalty regime linked to KPI performance measures. However, ATU expects the successful Contractor to achieve and maintain a high standard of service delivery and to meet the performance requirements set out in the RFT. Extension of the annual contract will include consideration of the annual performance of the Contractor in meeting agreed service levels and KPIs.

32	What is the expected service level for escalations to ATU staff, including Online Student Advisors, Springboard Coordinators, and Assessors. Is there a target response time from ATU's side that we can rely on for our own SLA and KPI commitments?	ATU has not specified or mandated response times for escalated queries requiring input from ATU staff, including Online Student Advisors, Springboard+ Coordinators, Assessors, Admissions staff, or academic programme teams. Tenderers should assume that such escalations will be referred to the appropriate ATU personnel through agreed processes and that response times may vary depending on the nature, complexity, and timing of the query. Any service level or KPI commitments proposed by the tenderer should clearly distinguish between activities under the Contractor's control and those dependent on responses from ATU personnel. Detailed operational procedures and escalation workflows will be agreed with the successful Contractor during implementation.
33	Can ATU confirm whether the Irish language requirement, minimum one agent, is expected to be a dedicated Irish speaking resource available at all times, or available on an on call or escalation basis?	ATU does not require the Contractor to maintain a dedicated full-time Irish-speaking agent continuously available for all interactions. However, the Contractor must ensure that applicants who wish to communicate through Irish can access an appropriate Irish-language support service. Tenderers should describe the arrangements they will put in place to provide timely Irish-language support and to meet any applicable obligations arising from the Official Languages Acts and associated requirements applicable to services delivered on behalf of ATU.
34	Page 12 references an expanded scope of programmes and applications being handled by the proposed contact centre, subject to performance, need and budget. Does ATU envisage an increased budget in this instance and if so, should the provider reference this in Appendix 2?	The Pricing Matrix in Appendix 2 is the basis on which tenders will be evaluated and must be completed in full in accordance with the requirements set out in the RFT. Volume bands of applications to be handled are included here which will reflect possible future growth for pricing purposes. Tenderers should not assume any increase in the Contract Value or include additional pricing for such potential expansion beyond the pricing requested in Appendix 2.

		Tenderers should submit pricing based on the volumes and pricing structure set out in Appendix 2, including the specified application volume bands. The maximum aggregate value of the contract, including all possible requirements over the four-year term, is €1,160,000 (excluding VAT). Should ATU require services materially beyond those provided for in the contracted scope and pricing structure, any such requirement would be addressed in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Agreement and the RFT, including where applicable through a Supplementary Request for Tender.
35	Where practical, are images/ illustrations permitted within responses?	Yes, images / illustrations are permitted within tender responses for the purposes of enhancing information provision, workflows etc.
36	Could ATU identify which application tasks are undertaken by the provider and which remain the responsibility of ATU?	The application tasks to be carried out by the Contractor are outlined in the RFT and encompass enquirer and applicant engagement and the associated administrative and support activities from initial enquiry through to offer acceptance. Other admissions and application-related functions, particularly those requiring academic, regulatory or institutional authority, will remain the responsibility of ATU. The service will operate in close collaboration with ATU's Admissions and Recruitment teams, ensuring that applicants are appropriately guided, supported and, where necessary, referred onwards to academic and internal support teams. All decisions relating to eligibility, entry requirements, equivalency assessments, admissions approval and the application of the ATU Access, Transfer and Progression Policy will remain the sole responsibility of authorised ATU staff. The Contractor's role is confined to applicant engagement, administrative preparation, communication management and applicant support activities. ATU and the Contractor will work together during the mobilisation and implementation phase to agree the detailed operating model, workflows, service boundaries, escalation routes and referral processes. The service will be a seamless experience for prospective students throughout the admissions journey.

37	Eligibility of an offshore BPO Can a BPO company outside EU/EEA participate in the tender, provided that all requirements are met and the necessary certifications are available?	Tenderers from outside the EU/EEA may participate in the procurement process, provided they fully satisfy all the selection criteria at Section 5 of the RFT. Please note the Minimum requirement to remain eligible in the competition: The Tenderer shall ensure that all Personal Data (within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR)) processed in the performance of the Contract is hosted, stored, and processed exclusively within the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA). Failure to comply with this requirement shall render the Tender non-compliant and may result in exclusion from the competition and/or termination of any resulting Contract.
38	Pricing Model Is it permissible to propose a fee structure based on FTEs instead of a fee per application?	Tenderers must complete and submit pricing in the format prescribed in the RFT. Accordingly, pricing should be based on a fee-per-application model. Alternative pricing structures, including FTE-based pricing, are not permitted and will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.
39	Application Fee Payment Criteria The tender states that "<i>The Fee per Application will be payable in respect of applications which are submitted to ATU in the previous calendar month.</i>" Could you please clarify whether the fee applies to: 1. All applications submitted to ATU, or	The 'fee per application' is in respect of all applications submitted to ATU during the relevant period. The fee is intended to cover the full range of services and activities undertaken by the Contractor in supporting prospective applicants including enquirers and managing the application process up to offer acceptance stage. As the assessment of eligibility and approval of applications remains the responsibility of ATU, payment of the fee per application is not contingent upon an application being approved, deemed eligible, or ultimately progressing to enrolment.

	1. Only applications that are approved and deemed eligible? We ask this because the final decision regarding eligibility and assessment remains the responsibility of ATU	
40	Average Handling Time (AHT) Could you please provide an estimated Average Handling Time (AHT) for each of the following channels? 1. Application processing 1. Chat interactions 1. Email handling	See responses to questions No. 1, 3 and 8. Average handling times for application processing or emails is not available. Please refer to the scope of services and service levels as required by the RFT and note the application tasks to be carried out by the Contractor as outlined in the RFT which encompass enquirer and applicant engagement and the associated administrative and support activities from initial enquiry through to offer acceptance. Social media interactions include webchat, Instagram and Facebook. Please see the RFT for volumes of inbound social media messages to be handled in terms of chat interactions (200-400 annually).
41.	In order to accurately calculate the fee per application, the AHT across applications, emails and calls would be required, You have clarified the calls AHT. Could you please confirm whether we may make an assumption regarding the AHT for applications and emails and include this within our response or alternatively ATU provide assumptions for use?	See Response No's 1, 3, 8 and 12. Tenderers should make assumptions on the average handling time for applications and emails and are expected to apply their professional experience, judgement and knowledge of similar contracts when drawing assumptions and developing their pricing proposals.

	We understand that this assumption can be reviewed and refined in consultation with ATU if required.	
42	Pricing Schedule The Pricing Schedule requires tenderers to submit a fee-per- application model. As application processing activities may vary significantly in complexity and efforts, and the average number of calls/ emails / contacts per application, or handling times per application, cannot be provided, can the ATU provide a set of assumptions around application processing for all bidders to use when calculating their pricing. i.e. - Number of emails per application - Number of inbound calls per application - Number of outbound calls per application - Number of webchats per application - Number of social media messages per application - Time to process an application form This will ensure all bidders are using the same data to calculate the application processing	ATU will not be providing prescribed assumptions or notional volumes in relation to application-processing activities beyond the information already provided in the RFT and associated clarifications. The fee-per-application pricing model has been specified to capture the full range of activities associated with supporting prospective applicants and processing applications. Tenderers are expected to apply their own experience, assumptions and professional judgement when developing their pricing proposals. To ensure fairness and consistency, all tenderers should base their submissions on the requirements and information provided by ATU in the procurement documentation and clarification responses.

	AHT and the ATU will be able to do a fair “like for like” comparison [Reason: To facilitate a “like for like” pricing comparison, FTE calculation]	
43	Section 5.3 Technical Equipment and Resources Section 5.3, subsection “Technical Equipment and Resources”, item 1 states that all calls must be recorded and that ATU representatives must be able to listen to recordings and listen live for quality monitoring. Section 3.7 also requires that only calls necessary for agreed purposes are recorded and that excessive or continuous recording is avoided where not necessary or proportionate. Can ATU confirm whether the requirement is for all inbound and outbound calls under the service to be recorded by default, subject to transparency notices, retention controls and pause/resume controls for financial information, or whether ATU expects selective recording only for defined call types or purposes? [Reason: System requirements, GDPR clarity]	Sections 5.3 and 3.7 outline the requirement for recording calls and the limitations of such recording activities. Section 3.7 below specifies that call recording should be limited to specific documented purposes e.g. quality monitoring, training, complaint investigation, audit and regulatory compliance with unnecessary or disproportionate recording avoided.

44	Section 3.6 Is there an existing knowledge base to use as a starting point for further development? If yes, is this hosted within MS Dynamics or on another platform? If on another platform, which platform? [Reason: Knowledge Management Resource Planning]	ATU will work with the successful Contractor during mobilisation to support knowledge transfer and familiarisation with relevant processes, systems and programme requirements as necessary. The precise approach to onboarding, training and knowledge transfer will be agreed with the successful Contractor during the implementation phase. Relevant documentation and information available to ATU will be provided where appropriate and where ATU has the right to share such materials. This information is not solely hosted on CRM Dynamics.
45	Training Can ATU clarify the approach to initial and ongoing training -specifically: a. What onboarding, knowledge transfer and training support will be provided by ATU during mobilisation? E.g. Train the Trainer sessions, Subject Matter Expert support, etc. Are documented process guides, FAQs, application-processing workflows and training materials available, or will these be required to be developed during implementation? c. What is the current / expected duration of the initial training [Reason: Training Resource Planning, Implementation Timelines]	ATU will work with the successful Contractor during mobilisation to support knowledge transfer and familiarisation with relevant processes, systems and programme requirements as necessary. The precise approach to onboarding, training and knowledge transfer will be agreed with the successful Contractor during the implementation phase. Relevant documentation and information available to ATU will be made available where appropriate and where ATU has the right to share such materials. Tenderers should describe their proposed approach to onboarding, knowledge transfer, training, documentation development and ongoing staff competency management as part of their response. ATU has not specified a required duration for initial training. Tenderers are expected to propose and justify a training period and approach that will ensure personnel are fully prepared to deliver the services from go-live. The Contractor must develop their own internal training materials and training programme for the staff and agents on the ATU contract. Tenderers should outline their proposed training programme and explain how agent readiness and service quality will be achieved prior to go-live. Contractors must propose its mobilisation plan, as per the requirements of the RFT.

46	Customer Feedback How is Customer Feedback / customer experience currently collected/ measured, or is this a new requirement requiring a new solution? [Reason: System requirements, pricing]	The RFT does not prescribe a specific customer feedback or customer experience measurement solution. Tenderers should outline their proposed approach to the collection, measurement and reporting of customer feedback and customer experience metrics, including any tools, methodologies and reporting capabilities that form part of their proposed service delivery model and pricing, as required in the RFT under KPIs. Tenderers should note the requirements to include their approach and methodology that will be deliver the SLA /KPIs (response times, CSAT, conversion support) under Award Criterion A.
47	Is email processed within Microsoft Dynamics? And if not, where is it processed and is reporting available? [Reason: Reporting, Systems requirements]	Email is processed within MS Dynamics.
48	What system is used for social media messaging, or is there a requirement for a new system/solution? [Reason: Systems requirements, pricing]	There is no requirement for a new social media system. Social media used includes webchat, Instagram and Facebook. Please see the RFT for volumes of inbound social media messages (200-400 annually).
49	Can you please advise if an opportunity to discuss the contractual terms will be included in the published timeline? I see nothing specific mentioned. Will there be an opportunity to discuss and potentially agree to amend the provided terms and conditions or are suppliers expected to agree to the terms as-is?	The draft contract published is the standard services contract prepared for the Office of Government Procurement by the Chief State Solicitor's Office. Suppliers are expected to agree to the terms as published. No amendments can be made to the published contract at tender stage.
50	The RFT states that all interactions and applicant data must be recorded and managed within ATU's Microsoft Dynamics CRM environment. Could ATU please confirm whether the required Microsoft Dynamics user	Contractors will be provided with ATU associate contractor accounts and have full licensed access to the ATU instance of MS Dynamics 365. A virtual desktop will also be used so no data ever leaves the ATU environment.

	licences, Dataverse capacity, database storage and file storage associated with contractor personnel will be provided by ATU? In the event that additional Dynamics licences, Dataverse capacity or associated platform costs are required to support service delivery, please confirm whether these costs are to be borne by the Contractor and included within the tender pricing, or whether they will be provided by ATU as part of the existing CRM environment.	We confirm that no additional Dynamics licences, Dataverse capacity or associated platform costs are required to be procured by the Contractor to support service delivery.
51	With reference to Section 5.2 of the Request for Tender, we note the requirement for the following minimum insurance limits: Employer's Liability – €15 million Public Liability – €15 million Cyber Insurance – €3 million Could you please clarify whether the required insurance limits of €15 million for Employer's Liability and €15 million for Public Liability are fixed requirements, or whether these limits could be revised?	As per clarification and correction issued on 05/08/2026 the insurance levels required for this tender are €13 million Employer Liability, €6.5 million Public Liability, €1.5 million Cyber Insurance.