Request for Offer (RFO)

Provision of services to undertake an evaluation of the Australasian College for Infection and Control's (ACIPC) *Foundations of Infection Prevention and Control* course.

Contents

Schedule 1: RFO Details

Due Date

Offers will be accepted until **6 p.m. (AEDT)** on Monday 14 April 2025.

Lodgment of Offers

Offers should be lodged via email to office@acipc.org.au. You will receive confirmation via email.

Format of Offers

All offers are to be submitted via email with both a PDF and a word document of your offer. Offers should be no more than 15 pages, excluding appendices

Offers must include the information in *Schedule 3: Information Required for Offers*. Offers may include additional information.

Evaluation of Offers

The College expects offers will be evaluated within four weeks of submission.

Contracting the Successful Vendor

The College expects to contract the successful shortly after the evaluation has been completed.

Completion of the Review

The College anticipates a review will take 6 months from the signing of a contract.

Contact Officer

For questions relating to this RFO, please email:

Ben Thiessen
Executive Manager ACIPC
executive@acipc.org.au

Evaluation of Offers

ACIPC will consider the following criteria when evaluating offers.

- Scope
- Approach and Methodology
- Project Plan and Milestones
- Personnel
- Experience
- Cost

Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control Ltd
Level 6, 152 Macquarie Street, Hobart TAS 7000, Australia | ABN 61 154 341 036
P +61 3 6281 9239 | E office@acipc.org.au | W www.acipc.org.au

Schedule 2: Statement of Requirement

Introduction

The Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control (the College) is a not-for-profit organisation governed by ACNC and is the peak body representing Infection Control Practitioners in the Australasian region.

Information on ACIPC can be obtained from its website: www.acipc.org.au.

ACIPC is seeking to engage a suitably qualified organisation to provide services to undertake a review of its flagship education course, the Foundations of Infection Prevention and Control (FIPC), and relevant ACIPC policy and procedure that support the delivery of the FIPC course and report the findings for quality improvement purposes to the Board. The course was originally designed to provide foundational knowledge in infection prevention and control and outbreak management to healthcare workers in various healthcare settings. Over the past three years uptake of the course has predominantly been from staff in residential aged care.

It is common practice for education providers in Australia to conduct external reviews of their courses to ensure quality assurance and continuous improvement, comply with regulatory standards such as the Higher Education Standards Framework, and demonstrate accountability to TEQSA. These reviews leverage independent expertise to assess course design and delivery while incorporating feedback from stakeholders. Additionally, external reviews help align courses with the institution's strategic priorities and ensure financial viability. Overall, this process is essential for maintaining high-quality, relevant educational offerings that meet the evolving needs of students and the broader community relevant to the educational offering being evaluated.

ACIPC identifies in our Strategic Plan (Actions 4.3 and 4.4) that it is imperative that our course offerings are evidence-based and relevant to the intended audience to ensure ACIPC continues to be recognised as a valued source of expertise and training needed to limit the spread of infectious diseases. The rapid growth of student numbers with a change in employment focus from acute care to aged care, and changes to IPC practices over time, are additional prompts for ACIPC to review the FIPC course.

This evaluation aims to determine if the course is effectively equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement safe IPC practices in their workplaces. It will also assess if the course content, delivery, and assessments demonstrate alignment, and are meeting the needs of external stakeholders. These stakeholders include higher education providers offering credit for FIPC in postgraduate degrees and employers across diverse areas of the health and other sectors supporting their staff's IPC education. The evaluation's goal is to identify areas for improvement and to explore opportunities to strengthen, adapt, or create new courses.

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Context

Aged Care Sector Changes:

In 2020 the Royal Commission undertook an aged care quality and safety review. Part of the review included infection prevention and control (IPC) practices across the industry, as well as the management of COVID 19 outbreak prevention, preparation, and management. The Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report highlighted the need for heightened IPC practices and expertise within the residential aged care setting. A series of recommendations were provided, including the call for all residential aged care facilities to have one or more trained IPC officer as a condition of accreditation. The aged care advisory body proposed training requirements to be at a passed level of AQF8. Link:

https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2021-03/final-report-volume-5.pdf

To meet the demands of the COVID 19 pandemic and industry accreditation requirements, the turnaround time for providers to have allocated and trained IPC officers (titled: Infection Prevention and Control Leads (IPC leads)) in their facilities was very short. There was a sudden extensive demand for IPC courses at level AQF8 to upskill every aged care facility across Australia.

ACIPC Response:

ACIPC was running a well-established online IPC foundations course (FIPC) suitable for all healthcare workers, across all disciplines. The College moved swiftly into providing hundreds of FIPC courses, facilitating all courses with IPC experts, and supporting thousands of students. High levels of student intake were maintained throughout the pandemic and continues to do so today. To date, the College has seen 5000+ candidates successfully pass through the course.

The FIPC course was considered fit for purpose to meet the training needs of the IPC leads in aged care, with IPC risks in aged care considered low and reviews into the needs or capabilities of IPC in residential aged care limited prior to the COVID 19 pandemic. Internal FIPC Course evaluation suggests that students acquired thorough foundation IPC knowledge and obtained confidence to share with their teams. However, this feedback also requested information on application to the residential aged care setting. In response, the College added further sections to course modules, providing specific aged care content. Short practical films were also developed and installed into the course - linking theory to aged care practice. Yet, the question still stands as to whether the FIPC course is fully equipping IPC Leads with the knowledge and skills required to implement safe IPC practices in the aged care setting.

Since 2020 the national IPC lead role requirements have evolved, becoming more specific. To date these role requirements aim to be customised to meet the needs of the individual facility and capability of the IPC lead. Details can be found here:

https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/infection-prevention-and-control-leads

Infection Prevention and Control Leads (agedcarequality.gov.au)

Stakeholders:

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It is clear that not all stakeholders in the FIPC course are linked to the aged care sector. Students enrolling into the course continue to represent the broader health community coming from public and private health services, community-based health care such as general practice and dentistry, amongst others. There may also be stakeholders who are not in traditional health areas but require IPC knowledge such as tattooists. ACIPC is cognisant that the FIPC course learning outcomes and material must meet the needs of a diverse student population. As graduates of the FIPC course take the knowledge and skills developed through the course into their workplaces ACIPC is keen to understand if the needs of employers are also being met.

The College recognises tertiary providers of IPC courses within Australia as key stakeholders for the FIPC course as they generally provide recognition of prior learning for students who undertake further higher education following successful completing of the FIPC. Such institutions are required to report back to their internal governance bodies and are also open to audit by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), on credit they provide for their program of study. This is an important quality control as commonwealth supported places are provided for students in some universities. Such institutions and the College need to be confident that that the FIPC maintains the standard of an AQF level 8 course.

Given the profound, rapid, and ongoing change in student demographic the College wishes to ensure the FIPC continues to be recognised internally and externally as a flagship course for beginning IPC practitioners, employers, and other stakeholders.

Activities

- Gather feedback from key stakeholders, such as students, ACIPC members, healthcare facilities, regulatory bodies, higher education providers, and subject matter experts through appropriate methods to identify education and training needs for ICPs.
- Analyse the collected data to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and potential areas for resource and course development/improvement in meeting the needs of various stakeholders.
- Identify barriers/challenges and enablers for students to successfully participate in the FIPC course.
- Provide recommendations to inform the development of an education strategy.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing ACIPC Foundations of Infection Prevention and Control course materials, structure, delivery methods, and assessments against AQF Level 8 standards, current best practices, industry standards, and stakeholder requirements, while maintaining its relevance and practical applicability.

It is proposed that the course review will examine core set of elements:
1. Student learning and growth
2. Curriculum
3. Assessment approaches and design
4. Student experience and engagement
5. Teaching quality
6. Supporting ACIPC Policy and Procedures

The College provides an indicative outline of themes and questions that should be answered by the

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review. Note this is non exhaustive and will be negotiated through the contract process. It is important that all outputs/recommendation can be stratified by stakeholder such as acute care IPC staff, aged care IPC Staff, Aged Care IPC lead, employers, higher education providers.

Theme	Example questions to be answered

Student Learning and Growth
 	
The needs and preparedness of individual students and cohorts are understood and accounted for.
 	
Student learning is accessible and inclusive.
	o Does the FIPC course reflect an understanding of the learners (Multicultural, ESL, EN/new Grads/RN without Uni qualifications, organisation push to do the course for compliance=lack of engagement) and the context in which they are learning (online) and applying FIPC course knowledge? (organisational factors impeding the translation of knowledge into practice improvement- what is the real scope for such a course to effect IPC change in various settings (Aged care, acute care, community, other settings). (How?)
	o What is known about current and future learners in the FIPC course? How are the students supported to learn effectively? What is known about the students that excel in the FIPC course or those that struggle to succeed (academic considerations – not external factors)?
	    • How is it known that a student's learning (knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, dispositions) has developed across the life of the course?
	o What is known about students who deferred, had 1 or more attempts at the course, or did not complete successfully?
	o Are the course aims and processes made transparent to potential and current students?
	o Are students supported to succeed?
	    • How is the need for any additional learning supports identified?
	    • What opportunities are provided for early, formative feedback on progress?
	o Are students provided with a safe space in which learning can occur?
	    • What options are provided for students to exercise choice, advocate, or collaborate in the learning environment?
	    • Are students provided with access to information and learning resources in multiple formats so they can choose alternatives?

Curriculum Students are engaged in learning.	o Is learning situated within the contexts in which it is or will be applied (Aged care, acute care, community, other settings)?

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Curriculum is fit-for-purpose.	• Are students supported to actively connect their learning across the course (other courses, the program, the field, the 'real world')?
	 • Is the relevance of course learning outcomes demonstrated to students, and their alignment with associated program learning outcomes, completion attributes, and industry standards/requirements?
	 • Do students feel that the foundation principles of IPC taught can be applied in their setting – are the learnings and practices transferable? (Microbiology and immunology, Standard and transmission-based precautions, Healthcare-associated infections, Surveillance and audit, cleaning disinfection and sterilisation, Outbreak management, Antimicrobial Stewardship, Aseptic technique, Clinical governance, Staff health, IPC leadership and motivation, Assessment 3 - Practice audit)
	 o Does the curriculum (structure, sequencing, learning supports) enable students to progressively achieve the course learning outcomes?
	    • What evidence is provided by student performance and assessment outcomes in the FIPC course?
	 o Do the learning activities provide opportunities for interactions (with staff, peers, course materials) that support learning?
	 o Does the curriculum meet the IPC lead and aged care providers accreditation requirement? How can the course materials better influence organisational change to assist with these requirements?
	    • Do students feel that the additions of the aged care sections within some modules is sufficient to enable application in aged care
	 o Are the FIPC course methods, content, online delivery, learning activities, tools and resources, relevant, and up-to-date?
	 o Does the curriculum meet the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) criteria at an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 8?

Assessments processes and design	o Do the key questions and final assessment in the FIPC course enable students to demonstrate their learning?

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Assessment encourages and reinforces learning. Assessment enables robust and fair judgements about a student's performance. Assessment practices `are fair and equitable and give students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learnt.	• Does the assessment design allow for timely and constructive feedback to be given to students? o Are students provided with multiple opportunities to track their progress? • Are students provided with guidance on what constitutes academic or research misconduct and how to develop good practices in maintaining integrity? o What strategies are used to identify and address potential breaches of academic integrity? o Are strategies used to identify and address potential breaches of academic integrity appropriate and do they maintain the academic rigour of the course? o Are assessment items aligned with the course learning outcomes? o Does the assessment moderation process support consistency and quality in student feedback? o Does assessment process and design meet the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) criteria at an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 8?

Student experience and engagement
 	
Students are actively engaged in learning.
 	
Students positively perceive the quality of the course and their educational experience.
	o Do student performances and assessment outcomes demonstrate learning?
	o How do students perceive the quality of the FIPC course and their educational experience?
	    • Are opportunities provided for students to interact with each other, with the teaching staff, and with course learning activities in ways that support active learning? (Communication platform- announcements, Q&A, social space, private messaging)
	    • What kinds of formal and informal interactions are supported?
	    • Are there opportunities to connect international and domestic students?
	o Student evaluation – attachment 2 – does this meet the needs to fully evaluate the course and obtain useful feedback?

Teaching Quality
 	
Course management and teaching support effective learning.
	o Is the FIPC course well organised (e.g. administration, facilitated, LMS, communication and feedback)?
	o Do facilitators:
	    • communicate clearly and effectively?
	    • provide useful and timely feedback on student work and enquires?

	• focus student effort on productive learning activity? • encourages engagement and participation? • promote collaboration and active learning? • demonstrate respect for learners as individuals?
Supporting ACIPC Policy and Procedures	o Do the existing policy and procedures of ACIPC meet stakeholder needs and encourage student engagement? o Do the existing policy and procedures of ACIPC support the delivery of a high quality AQF level 8 educational course?

Review Requirements

The College will be responsible for assisting with access to test/live FIPC courses and providing any required previously obtained data to enable the FIPC review. However, the vendor's response should be to identify all suitable information and requirements for the investigation. It is expected that the vendor carefully considers and provide justification for the chosen requirements.

Approach

The College provides an indicative outline of suggested project activities below for consideration the of the vendor.

Project activity	Indicative Start Date	Indicative End Date
Step 1: Determine purpose and scope of review		
Core Review Elements: • Student learning and growth • Curriculum • Assessment approaches and design • Student experience and engagement • Teaching quality • Supporting ACIPC Policy and Procedures		
Step 2: Collate material for the review		
Data sources: • FIPC Course Outlines • ACIPC Policy and Procedure • Student Experience of Learning and Student Experience of Learning and Teaching (SELT) survey • Detailed FIPC Course Reports • Briefing to ACIPC at the commencement of the work • Stakeholder (students, employers, higher education providers, ACIPC members etc.) expectations, experiences, outcomes		

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Step 3: Analyse and reflect		
• Analyse data • Monitor for trends and issues • Identify opportunities to sustain, enhance or improve the educational quality of the FIPC course • Develop evidence-based recommendations and decisions for future course deliveries. • Findings briefing to ACIPC		
Step 4: Develop recommendations and plan actions		
• Refine initial recommendations. • Devise action plan to address recommendations • Prioritise actions according to importance and feasibility. • What is urgent? • What can be done now? • What requires long term planning and resourcing?		
Step 5: Document and report		
• A briefing to ACIPC on report • Provide a Course Review Report to ACIPC		
Step 6: Close the loop		
• Implement and evaluation planning • Identification of specific barriers preventing action • Provision of mechanisms to evaluate the impact of changes made • Finalise to ACIPC		

Offer Requirements

Prospective vendors are invited to submit their offers for the FIPC course review. Offers must include the following detail, as a minimum:

- Description of the planned project approach
- Detailed project plan with timelines and dependencies, including:
  - Stakeholder engagement
  - Main review phases
  - Briefing to ACIPC
  - Details of the project team, highlighting relevant experience and skills that make them suitable project team members for this review
  - Project team members' availability for the duration of the contract, including any planned leave and respective coverage arrangements from other staff
  - A short bio for each member and additional staff that may be called upon to work on

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the project

- o Estimated effort by the named consultants
- o Reference project(s) to support the offer
- o Contact details for nominated referees
- o Indicative costs by project phase
- o Travel estimates (if required / possible)

Schedule 3: Information Required for Offers

- Include the following information in your offer
- Offers may include additional information
- Offers should be no more than 15 pages, excluding appendices
- Supply both a PDF and a word document of your offer

Item	Required
Organisation	Organisation name: Postal address:
ABN	ABN: CAN/ARBN (if applicable):
Contact Person	Name: Position title: Telephone: Email:
Approach and Methodology	A detailed description of the proposed approach and methodology proposed to meet the objectives and scope.
Project Plan and Milestones	A detailed project plan with timelines and dependencies, including: o Stakeholder engagement o Main review phases o Key milestones o Briefings to ACIPC
Personnel	Details of the project leader, highlighting the relevant experience and skills that make them suitable to lead this project. Details of project team members, highlighting the relevant experience and skills that make them suitable team members for this project. Project team members' availability for the duration of the contract and coverage arrangements from other staff, if required. Include details of proposed backup personnel.
Experience	Provide examples of previous experience and performance on comparable projects that indicate the respondent's experience, capacity, and quality of work. Provide summaries of comparable projects.
Referees	Provide professional referees from previous contracts, including the referees' name, organisation, project name, and contact details
Conflicts of Interest	Include details of any conflicts of interest, including any potential conflicts that may arise.
Insurance	Include details on insurance policies held including workers' compensation, public liability, and professional indemnity.

Cost	Provide a total fee for the offer. The fee must be inclusive of all expenses that are required to successfully complete the offer, including but not limited to:
	• Travel, travel time, and transport fares
	• Software and communications costs
	• Accommodation and meals
	• Costs incurred in collecting and analysing information
	• Document reproduction
	• Document delivery
	The offer must include:
	• A breakdown of costs showing various stages, components and work times of personnel engaged in undertaking the project.
	• Proposed payment schedules

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Schedule 4: Terms and Conditions for the RFO

Prospective vendors are agreeing to the following terms and conditions when submitting an offer.

1. The Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control (ACIPC) is seeking offers for the provision of the services described in the Statement of Requirement.

2. Prospective vendors can submit offers that address the Statement of Requirement Required and include the Information Required for Offers.

3. ACIPC, at its discretion, may discontinue this RFO, decline to accept any offer, decline to issue any contract, or satisfy its requirement separately from this RFO process.

4. Each prospective vendor agrees that participation in any stage of the RFO is at their sole risk and cost.

5. If selected by ACIPC, a prospective vendor agrees to enter into a contract to provide the services in accordance with the RFO. The contract will include clauses covering intellectual property rights, privacy, confidentiality and managing information provided by ACIPC.

6. Acceptance of an offer will occur only when a contract is executed.

7. No commitment or contract exists until a contract is executed.

8. Each prospective vendor agrees to include all actual or potential conflicts of interest in their offer.

9. Each prospective vendor agrees to notify ACIPC immediately if new actual or potential conflicts of interest arise after they have submitted an offer.

10. Each prospective vendor warrants their offer has not been prepared with the assistance of employees or office holders of ACIPC without being declared in their offer.

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