

Tender questions and answers (answers correct as of May 2021)

About TEDI-London and our market for 2022

This is a partnership between the three universities, but are there other TEDI-London's around the world?

No, there is just one TEDI-London.

How big is your 2021 cohort?

We took a decision to push ahead with 2021 recruitment at the start of the pandemic as we were confident we could be successful. We have a small cohort for 2021 and a funnel of late applicants to follow up with – so numbers are still not finalised for 2021. We estimate in the region of 30-35.

Will King's College London validate your degree?

We've applied for New Degree Awarding Powers (NDAPS). As an interim measure while we await a government decision on awarding our own degrees, King's College London have established a process to consider validation of our programmes.

Are the local authority invested in it?

Yes, through the Canada Water Masterplan. We are partnered with British Land, they're a big industry investor in us and by investor we mean resource not money. As we have developed, they have talked to our students about opportunities in engineering, they have helped us with projects for our summer school students to work on, and we'll continue to foster that relationship with them with our cohort. So, the relationship with the local councillors is very much through and part of our relationship with British Land.

Do you have a five-year plan and what is your outlook beyond the next recruitment cycle?

We are soon to publish our five-year strategic plan. This is very much around upholding our values of diversity in higher education and bringing more diverse candidates into engineering. It's about rooting ourselves in the local community and having that community anchor as well as a global vision. It's also about our people. Our students are included within that, to make sure that they are global citizens and supported to be their very best.

When the Plus Alliance founded TEDI-London it was very much with a global vision. The ambition is for this to become a model of education rather than just a standalone institution.

You've projected 125 students for the next cohort do you know what the numbers are for two, three years on?

Around 500 is the maximum capacity that we can accommodate on our campus (in construction now, which is modular and temporary), so numbers are in the region of 125-150 per annum.

After five years, there is a decision point where we'll be deciding on our future and hopefully commissioning British Land to make our permanent home in Canada Water. In the original business plan, there are plans to upscale but obviously we'll have to make sure that the market can support an institution of more significant size.

Are the 125 students including international?

Yes for 2022 the ambition is 40% international, 60% domestic. But realistically it is possible this percentage will shift more towards domestic for 2022, given we are a new provider, and we still need to build reputation globally.

Does this year's intake mirror the types of students you're trying to bring in and do you think it's going to present a bit of a challenge saying to someone 'it doesn't matter if you don't have maths you can do this numeracy test' and then 'you can stand up and present your ideas in front of people' do you think that's going to put off certain students?

From the limited insights that we have from this year I'm very pleased to say no. Once we start to get into larger numbers then we'll obviously need to tweak and refine what we're doing but we are in a privileged position now because we're a single subject provider with just one course. We're able to support people - so for candidates that haven't done a lot of interviews over Teams, we're able to provide them 10 minutes with one of our recruitment officers to chat and get them comfortable with talking and sharing the screen. We've got the bandwidth to be able to support those students a bit more.

How important is the 50% female and mix of BAME students versus the target of 125? If the campaign were to produce 200 students but you didn't have the mix would you be happy with that or would it be a failure because you didn't get the audience mix that you're looking for?

We do need students for commercial reasons, however it's not a case of getting bums-on-seats. We would want the digital approach to this to be mindful of those targets and really be looking to achieve them as part of the strategy. Part of the success metrics is *quality* lead generation based on our target demographic.

Based on the last 12 months what lessons have you learned as a wider institution?

We have learnt a lot about the type of student that we're going to attract and we're starting to get an idea of their personas. Also, sometimes it doesn't matter how innovative you try and be, regulation is always there in Higher Education.

On a positive, the market is ripe for new providers. The levels of interest we've had surpass what we expected. People are genuinely interested in what we're doing from an engineering education perspective – the idea of project-based learning and this new pedagogy is interesting to people.

The tender process**Are you able to let us know who else is pitching or is this not going to appear on normal tender pools?**

It's a public tender process, however, we haven't gone through any of the public tender portals because we're not a member of any of the organisations yet. However, we do need to make certain contracts over a certain monetary value available to public tender. To do this, we undertook desk research and found organisations that we thought would be able to respond to the brief and have previous experience in the area and sent it to them directly. In addition, we've also made the opportunity available publicly on our website and promoted it through social media. It's a non-traditional tender process for a non-traditional organisation, but for all intents and purposes it is a public tender.

Will everyone who submits be pitching?

Possibly, depending on the standards of the proposals.

Is there a brief for what you want people to present?

We don't expect more than a short presentation on the original proposal to the panel, which will be myself (Marketing Director), Jessica (Digital Marketing Officer) and (most likely) our Chief Finance Officer. It's the opportunity to talk about the proposal, talk about account management, the day-to-day running and to ascertain cultural fit with us, the rest of the team and how we operate.

For the proposal, we encourage you to answer it in a way that you're confident with. The key part is the media strategy. 50% of what we're looking for is the strategy and approach that you're going to deliver.

This contract**Are you looking for a supply of one year just for this campaign?**

It's a one-year contract. If it works well we can start thinking more long term and we will be doing more business-as-usual contracts as we as we grow.

Is this contract for this year's recruitment cycle?

Yes, we'll be looking to appoint the agency that we choose to go with from very early August which will give us about six weeks to embed, refine the media strategy, and get it to where we need it to be so that when the recruitment cycle kicks off in September, we're ready to go with our campaign.

There will be pulses of activity that are tied to both the UCAS deadlines and the life cycle of key decisions for people who sit out of the UCAS deadlines. We're fully aware that even though we want to be non-traditional, until we've built reputation, we are going to be a traditional recruiter in terms of attracting school leavers, as well as looking to other markets.

Is this a domestic campaign?

Yes. This brief is about domestic students. We would need a non-exclusivity clause in the contract as we may need to bring in some international marketing at some point, but for now that sits separately until we understand those markets better, etc.

Do you anticipate that the campaign activities run largely in the UK or would you be looking to attract people from the EU or further afield?

This is a UK contract. We're leveraging overseas expertise in-country. There may be opportunities for discreet international programs of advertising to support events perhaps, but that's not part of this contract.

Are you opinionated about fee models?

We need to be proving to the Office for Students that we're spending student fees wisely and responsibly. Value for money is about an agency that understands us, understands what we're trying to achieve, and we understand that value for money isn't always the cheapest option.

Do you have an idea of schools you want to attract that we can layer in or we need us to go away and do a piece of desk research on that?

We've focused very much on London and the southeast now. We see that as the strategy for next year and potentially the year after as well. Any activity outside that geographical location, would be covered by traditional UCAS fairs, but in terms of digital advertising it is London and the southeast.

Does the brief include clearing for 2022?

To be confirmed. The admissions process we have now does require a student to take part in a project and interview before being made an offer – which is a barrier to making offers on A-Level results day. In the future what we are exploring is to hold an assessment centre event the day after A-level results day – so for interested candidates we can invite them to an assessment centre with the view of being able to make an offer the next day during Clearing. We're still working through what that might look like for 2022, as we are still holding admissions online for 2021.

Previous activity**Do you have an incumbent agency?**

Yes, we do have a media agency at the moment who have done a great job for us. However, we do need to make sure we have the right partner for 2022 - we are looking at a new set of challenges and opportunities for recruitment for 2022.

In terms of your creative assets, would you anticipate us having to create everything associated with campaign creative, or is that all going to come from your creative agency?

We do a bit of a hybrid at the moment. It really depends on best use of resource and what the creative asset is for. If it's a simple image and piece of text, we can do in-house or the media agency can undertake, if we need something that is a bit more creative, then we lean towards the creative agency to deliver it.

Do you have a student record system is that linked to your CRM?

Yes

Would there be an opportunity to build a landing page for these campaigns?

Yes, the previous digital advertising campaigns we've run have landing pages and we build those in-house.

Do you have enough audience data so far to create personas?

A lot of what we've done is brand building and brand awareness so we have some idea but as you can imagine, the 2021 recruitment was an unusual year, so it'd be very difficult for us to confirm personas. We've got an idea of where the proposition has landed but we can't go as far as saying we've got personas yet.

Have you done any social media paid advertising before and which channels were the most effective for you?

Yes, we tried it across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. It largely depends on the audience targeted, but for our traditional school leaver audience for example we found most engagement and click throughs from Instagram.

Are you doing anything offline, and would you be interested in considering that as part of the proposition?

As you'll see from the strategy, local engagement is huge for us, for which something like outdoor advertising suddenly becomes important. However, if we're not getting huge amounts of footfall through Canada Water station for example, then it's not practical for us to do it. So, it's not a no but it's just got to be built in with agility in mind in case, for example, we go into another lockdown.

How have you been delivering activity previously?

We have done our activity completely online, a mix of digital marketing to create leads to the website. It's difficult to say how successful that has been as a lot of that activity has been brand awareness.

Have you geo-targeted previously?

We have just targeted London and the Southeast with our digital-paid activity to date.

Have you targeted teachers?

We have until now focussed our paid advertising on our student audience and used our organic email and events more for teacher engagement.

What is the customer journey from the ads?

We are sending them to our site. Ultimately there are many points they can go from there to inform their decision making, but in terms of data capture they can sign up for our comms, events, or use our enquiry form and live chat. Their data then goes into our CRM.

Have you had any insights into why people haven't followed through and declined?

It normally comes down to our newness, so that's where we need to lean into our Founders and first cohort of students to reassure.

Have you had access to live campaign reporting previously?

Yes

Based on the last 12 months of running digital activity what are some of the key lessons you have learned?

The value of insights and being able to closely look at performance of ads. We've gotten a lot better at that as time has gone on and we have more sophisticated lead measurements in place. Also thinking about the whole customer journey, and the value of refining your messaging and creative for each campaign and audience.

Account management and relationship with agency**How do you like to work with your agency?**

Regular catchups have been very helpful to keep on track with the project and review performance. Our briefing is collaborative - we have a lot of market knowledge at TEDI-London but very much want our media partner to make recommendations for channel strategy.

Is HE specialism important from your agency or is it one of many factors?

In the brief we have indicated HE as being a scoring factor. Understanding the traditional market will help us differentiate as part of the job is to excite our non-traditional student audiences.

What would you describe as the right cultural fit?

We are a marketing team of two. It's about understanding that we're small, agile and it's a balance of what you can expect from us in terms of what we can deliver. Chemistry is important to us as a team.

For your preferred agency, if you had to put 'value for money,' 'education specialism' and 'account management care' in order of importance where would you put them?

Value for money, account management, and then education specialism. As Marketing Director, the value for money is the top priority. Then account management is important because our Digital Marketing Officer manages most of this work alone and we need an agency that's going to work with her and understand that we are just an operational team of one. The education specialism is important but mainly so that you can understand how we're *different* to the traditional education markets.

What would be the one non-negotiable thing that an agency absolutely has to have?

Expertise. Ultimately, we're seeking a skill set that we don't have in-house/ or the resource to manage in-house successfully.

Transparency is also key. We need an agency that understands that we need support in being able to justify one of our biggest spends internally. [Paid media] is not necessarily our area of expertise so we need transparency on what the agency is doing and achieving that we can confidently communicate back.

TEDI LONDON