



## **SASKATCHEWAN REAL ESTATE COMMISSION**

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# **O F F I C I A L**

## **SASKATCHEWAN REAL ESTATE COMMISSION REGISTRATION EXAMINATION SPECIFICATIONS**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL MARCH 2010**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document constitutes a Request for Proposal (RFP) and is an invitation for competitive, sealed bids to provide real estate examination development and administration services as set forth herein. The bidder will be hereinafter referred to as the examination provider.

It is the intent of this RFP to establish a contract for professional examination services of real estate registration candidates for the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission). This RFP describes minimum requirements for the development and administration of real estate examinations for those seeking a Certificate of Registration to trade in real estate in Saskatchewan.

#### **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

##### **A. SCOPE OF WORK**

The overall intent of the Commission is to ensure that candidates entering the real estate industry are competent to act as real estate registrants. The primary objectives of the Commission are to provide a professional occupational registration examination service for real estate candidates, and to determine competency standards for registration.

##### **B. BACKGROUND**

The Commission has statutory pursuant to Sections 23(1)(a), 23.1(1) and 24(1) of *The Real Estate Act* and Bylaws 301.3, 301.5, 302.1 and 302.6, to require that, as a condition for registration eligibility, candidates first pass an examination.

Examinations are currently developed and administered by the Association of Saskatchewan REALTORS®.

The following is a summary of the number of candidates who took the salesperson and broker real estate examinations each calendar year from January 2004 – October 2009.

	<u>Phase 1</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Comm</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>P.M.</u>	<u>Broker</u>
January 2004 – December 2004	177	41	5	1	3	18
January 2005 – December 2005	223	96	9	7	2	60
January 2006 – December 2006	261	107	4	14	8	14
January 2007 – December 2007	376	155	50	44	8	24
January 2008 – December 2008	360	227	66	47	21	26
January 2009 – December 2009	315	146	42	43	18	31

### **C. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

It is the intent of the Commission to evaluate all proposals in a standardized and objective manner. For this reason, proposals that do not conform to the format specified in this RFP may not be accepted.

The proposal and one copy with supporting documentation plus an example of salesperson and broker examinations, whether mailed or hand-delivered, must arrive at the Commission’s address on or before 4:30 p.m. CST on May 14, 2010.

Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission  
 237 Robin Crescent  
 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
 S7L 7M8

A duly authorized officer of the bidder must sign proposals. The proposals and accompanying documentation become the property of the Commission and will not be returned.

It is the responsibility of each bidder to ensure that the proposal is delivered at the proper time and place. Proposals not delivered as specified will not be considered.

### **D. METHOD OF AWARD**

An evaluation committee, known as the Examination RFP Task Force, will review and evaluate the proposals using evaluation criteria developed from the RFP covering all categories identified in this RFP. The Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission members will make the final decision. The successful bidder will be the one who best satisfies the requirements of the RFP based on the following:

- 20% Track Record/Company History in Performing Services
- 25% Test Development Process and Quality of Examination
- 25% Test Administration and Records Management
- 15% Security
- 15% Price

**E. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Issue Request for Proposals by	March 8, 2010
Bidders send any written questions for clarification by	April 12, 2010
Commission issues written responses to bidders by	April 19, 2010
Due date for proposals	May 14, 2010
Proposals opened	May 15, 2010
Commission Education Committee evaluates proposals	May 16 – June 4, 2010
Date of award by Commission	June 7, 2010
Notify unsuccessful examination providers by	June 9, 2010
Begin contract work	Upon Commission approval
First examinations administered	February 1, 2011

**F. METHOD OF PAYMENT**

All costs for performing the work required under the contract must be covered through examination fees collected by the bidder from the candidates. The Commission shall have no obligation to pay for any services provided.

**G. QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RFP**

If additional information is necessary to assist the bidder with these specifications, written questions may be submitted by mail, fax or email by the date indicated in the Schedule of Events to:

Al Jacobson, Executive Director/Registrar  
Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission  
237 Robin Crescent  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7L 6M8  
Fax: 306-373-2295  
E-mail: [ajacobson@srec.ca](mailto:ajacobson@srec.ca)

**H. FAILURE TO FULFILL**

If the successful examination provider fails to properly fulfill its obligations under the contract or violates any terms of the contract, the Commission shall have the right to immediately terminate the contract. Notwithstanding the above, the provider shall not be relieved of liability to the Commission for damages sustained by virtue of any breach of this contract by the provider.

## **I. MODIFICATIONS**

The contract may be modified only by written amendment executed by all parties hereto and approved by the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission.

## **J. CIVIL RIGHTS**

No person, on the grounds of handicap, age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin or any other classification protected by federal or provincial law, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the performance of this contract or in the employment practices of the examination provider.

## **III. GENERAL CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. PERIOD OF CONTRACT**

The contract resulting from this RFP will commence upon receiving the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission's approval and will end June 30, 2014. The Commission shall have the right, at its sole option, to renew the contract. In the event the Commission exercises such right, all terms, conditions, and provisions of the contract shall remain the same unless mutually amended by the Commission and the examination provider.

### **B. CONTRACT TERMINATION**

The Commission may terminate the contract with the examination provider by giving written notice to the examination provider at least 90 days before the effective termination date.

### **C. EFFECTIVE DATE**

The examination provider acknowledges and understands that this contract is not effective until it has received the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission's approval and the examination provider shall not begin performing work under this contract until notified to do so by the Commission. The bidder is entitled to no compensation for work performed prior to the effective date of this contract.

### **D. COMPLIANCE**

The examination provider shall comply with all federal and provincial laws and regulations in performance of its duties under the terms and conditions of the contract.

### **E. BIDDER LIABILITY**

The examination provider shall be responsible for any and all injury or damage as a result of the examination provider's negligence involving any equipment or service provided

under the terms and conditions of the contract. In addition to the liability imposed upon the examination provider on account of personal injury, bodily injury (including death), or property damage suffered as a result of the examination provider's negligence, the examination provider assumes the obligation to save the Commission, including its officers, employees, and assigns, from every expense, liability, or payment arising out of such negligent act. The examination provider also agrees to hold the Commission, including its officers, employees, and assigns, harmless for any negligent act or omission committed by any subcontractor or other person employed by or under the supervision of the examination provider under the terms of the contract.

#### **F. SUBCONTRACTORS**

To ensure a reasonable control over all aspects of the contract, bidders will identify all subcontractors they intend to use if they are awarded the contract. All subcontractors will be subject to approval by the Commission. The examination provider is responsible and liable for the acts or omissions of any subcontractors.

#### **G. INSURANCE**

The examination provider shall understand and agree that the Commission cannot save and hold harmless and/or indemnify the examination provider or employees against any liability incurred or arising as a result of any activity of the bidder or any activity of the examination provider's employees related to the examination provider's performance under the contract.

#### **H. CONTRACTOR (BIDDER) STATUS**

For all purposes under this contract, the examination provider is serving exclusively as an independent body, including but not limited to tax responsibilities, control over the examination provider's own personnel, and use of the examination provider's own materials and equipment.

#### **I. COORDINATION**

The examination provider shall fully coordinate all contract activities with those activities of the Commission. As the work of the examination provider progresses, advice and information on matters covered by the contract shall be made available by the examination provider to the Commission throughout the effective period of the contract.

#### **J. PROPERTY OF COMMISSION**

All reports, documentation, and material developed or acquired by the examination provider as a direct requirement specified in the contract shall become the property of the Commission. This includes, but is not limited to, the examination question bank and all

examination reports requested by the Commission. The examination provider shall agree and understand that all discussions with the examination provider and all information gained by the examination provider as a result of the examination provider's performance under the contract shall be confidential and that no reports, documentation, or material prepared as required by the contract shall be released to the public without the prior written consent of the Commission.

#### **IV. PROPOSAL CONTENT AND FORMAT**

Proposals must address the items described below and must be submitted in the correct format described in IV. and V.

Any other information that the examination provider believes to be relevant to the proposal should be provided as an appendix to the examination provider's proposal.

##### **A. General Information**

1. Legal name of entity submitting the proposal
2. Name, address and telephone number of principal officer(s)
3. Legal status of organization (e.g., sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc.)
4. Location of the facility from which the examination provider would primarily operate
5. Name, mailing address, email address, telephone and fax numbers of contact person for official RFP communications.

#### **V. Specifications**

##### **20% for Track Record/Company History in Performing Services**

##### **A. Company History**

1. Provide your company history as it relates to testing and specifically to real estate testing. Include in this history any former company names and history. Track the real estate registration/licensing portion of your company (including times when the company was under different ownership) for at least the last ten years.

2. Provide the following information related to previous and current services/contracts performed by the examination provider's organization and any proposed subcontractors that are similar to the requirements of this RFP.

You must include, at minimum, the information requested in a., b. and c. below for all clients for whom you have provided or currently provide development and/or administration for registration/licensing examinations for the past five years.

- a. Name, address, and telephone number of client/contracting agency and a representative of that client/agency who may be contacted for verification of all information submitted;
  - b. Dates of the service/contract; and
  - c. A brief, written description of the specific prior services performed and the requirements thereof.
3. In order to demonstrate the examination provider's capability to manage the start-up costs associated with the contract, the bidder MUST either (a) specify the total of his/her company's revenue in its most recently completed annual fiscal period and MUST submit the most recently reviewed or certified financial statements indicating profits and losses, or (b) provide a financial statement indicating the company's net worth and a statement from a financial institution documenting the availability of credit.
  4. Supply the qualifications of personnel involved in test development, test administration, any subcontractors used and any others who would be involved in the work required in this RFP. This must be updated prior to any contract renewal.

## **B. Performance**

1. Experience and reliability of the bidder's organization is considered subjectively in the evaluation process. Therefore, the bidder is advised to submit any information that documents successful and reliable experience in past performances, especially those performances related to the requirements of this RFP.
2. Give details if you have had any contract terminated for any reason other than expiration of the contract.
3. Give details if you have failed to perform, in a timely manner, on any services for which you contracted.
4. Have you ever been late in beginning testing on the date for which you contracted? If yes, give a detailed explanation.

5. If the bidder is not directly involved in some aspect of the work to be performed, describe the nature of the relationship and the duties of the subcontractors.

## **25% for Test Development Process and Quality of Examinations**

### **A. Job Analysis**

1. Give the date your last real estate job analysis was conducted.
2. How many survey forms (job analyses) were sent to out and to whom?
3. How many individuals responded?

### **B. Examination Construction**

1. Saskatchewan requires a multiple-choice examination for the salespersons' examinations in each of the specialty areas: residential, commercial, farm and property management consisting of 100 questions with four possible answers per question.
2. Saskatchewan requires a multiple-choice examination for the brokers' examinations consisting of 100 questions with four possible answers per question.
3. How many items do you propose to develop for the bank of questions for each pre-registration examination?
4. The examination becomes the property of the Commission. This is a requirement and a bidder's response to this RFP will mean agreement to this.
5. Describe your plan for the Commission to review questions before they appear on examinations administered to Saskatchewan examination candidates.
6. Describe your plan for the Commission to review any items which undergo revisions prior to the items being included on examinations administered to Saskatchewan examination candidates.
7. Describe how you ensure the accuracy of questions and the correctness of the keyed response.
8. Describe any procedures in place for tracking changes in course material that affect examination content.

9. Describe your plan for ensuring that there will be no questions on the examinations that are contrary or not applicable in Saskatchewan.
10. How quickly can changes be made to test items and placed on an examination?

**C. Examination Item Development**

1. Describe method of developing test items.
2. Describe methods used to ensure that test items are not biased.
3. Describe method of pre-testing items.
4. Are all items pre-tested before they appear on the examination?
5. Give the number of active items in the item bank for each Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission content outline for both the salesperson's and broker's examinations.

**D. Technical and Statistical Examination Analysis**

1. Explain your method of developing statistical data on each examination item.
2. Explain your method of equating examination forms.
3. Provide reliability figures from real estate programs provided to organizations with whom you currently contract.

**E. Passing Score Studies**

1. Describe services for conducting studies on the most appropriate passing score for the salesperson's and broker's examinations.
2. Provide your company's policies on how often a passing score study should be done for real estate examinations and what would prompt the need.

**F. Review of Examinations**

**Provide 2 sample copies** of a real estate salesperson and broker multiple-choice examination recently used in any jurisdiction within the last year. Also provide the answer keys for each examination. If these are mailed, they will be kept secure and confidential and returned to the bidder upon completion of the review. If these are not mailed, provide a secure link through which the questions may be accessed. Only the Examination RFP Task Force and any Commission members who so request will review them. If you prefer a signed affidavit to ensure confidentiality by reviewers, please include the affidavit with your response to this proposal.

## **25% for Test Administration and Records Management**

### **A. Examination Delivery**

1. Candidates are allowed up to 3 hours to complete an examination.
2. Describe plan to deliver, under secure conditions, real estate registration examinations by electronic testing in at least four locations that would be most accessible to the population base of Saskatchewan.
3. Describe any limitations on availability of testing sessions for Saskatchewan real estate candidates.
4. List any other centers outside of Saskatchewan where the Saskatchewan real estate examinations would be administered if you are the successful examination provider.
5. Provide the times of the day the test centers would be open for examination administration to Saskatchewan candidates.

### **B. Electronic Testing System**

1. Provide a detailed description of bidder's electronic testing system.
2. Describe the method that the bidder uses to evaluate the appropriateness and usability of the computer based testing system.
3. Describe your plan to make available to passing candidates at the examination site a score report.

**C. Candidate Handbook**

1. Describe plan for producing a candidate handbook containing all of the information needed for testing and any other information specified by the Commission.
2. Describe methods of distribution particularly describing how it will be made available to potential examination candidates, schools and instructors.

**D. Candidate Registration**

1. Describe methods available for scheduling examination candidates.
2. Describe how each procedure works.
3. Describe procedures for notification to candidates of their scheduled examination.
4. Describe procedures for rescheduling failing candidates.

**E. Candidate Inquiries**

Describe services that the bidder can provide to respond to examination candidate inquiries and to resolve candidate concerns in a timely, efficient and responsive manner.

**F. Test Facilities**

1. Describe a plan for the bidder's operation of testing sites proposed in this RFP.
2. Describe candidate identification procedures.
3. Specify your methods for verifying candidates' eligibility to sit for an examination. **NOTE:** This assumes that the verification will be conducted at the examination site. The bidder will not be required to check any other registration/licensing qualifications.
4. Provide manual for test administrators at the test facilities.
5. Describe your training program for test administrators and the manner in which they are held accountable.

## **G. Special Administrations**

Describe your plan for accessing disabilities worthy of special accommodations and your plan for providing those accommodations.

## **H. Examination Scoring and Reporting**

1. Describe in detail your plan for scoring of examinations immediately after administration at each test site.
2. Include the reliability of the score and any possibilities that it may be incorrect.
3. Has any score issued at a test center by your company (or company under a previous company name) ever been incorrect? If so, give details.
4. Describe your procedure that provides failing candidates with a diagnostic assessment of their performance on the major topic areas of the examination on the score report issued at the test site.
5. The Commission reserves the right to determine what form the diagnostic assessment will take for failing candidates and also reserves the right to determine how scores will be reported on the score report for passing candidates.

## **I. Candidate Reports**

The Commission must approve the content of candidate score reports. Provide a sample score report. If you have one that appears on a registration application, please provide a sample. If sample score reports or the combined score reports and registration applications are dramatically different from one province to another, feel free to provide more than one sample.

## **J. Candidate Services**

1. Describe a plan for providing successful examination candidates with registration applications and instructions.
2. Include a description of additional post examination services which can be provided to candidates.

## **K. Reports to the Commission**

1. Describe a plan to provide candidate results to the Commission.
2. Describe a plan to the Commission, at least monthly, as to how many students took the examination along with the pass/fail rates of those students and any other information the Commission may deem appropriate.
3. Describe a plan to electronically provide, at least monthly, examination statistical data to the Commission. Provide a detailed explanation of the reports you can provide along with time lines for the receipt of those by the Commission.
4. Specify how you will collect the data needed in order to provide accurate pass/fail data to the Commission.

## **L. Education Meetings/Seminars and Other Meetings**

1. The examination provider must, upon request, attend Education meetings/seminars and make presentations. This will be at the examination provider's expense. Respond as to whether or not you will fulfill this requirement.
2. The examination provider must attend any Commission meetings when requested by the Commission. This will be at the examination provider's expense. Respond as to whether or not you will fulfill this requirement.
3. The examination provider will bear expense of any other meetings needed such as those needed to do item writing, conduct passing score studies, etc. Respond as to whether or not you will fulfill this requirement.

## **M. Appeal and Review**

Describe your policies and procedures for legal defense of examinations in the event of examination appeals or challenges to the validity of examinations developed by the examination provider. This includes formal (court action) or informal (out of court action) litigation or response to inquiries.

## **15% for Security**

### **A. Examination Quality Control and Security**

1. Describe methods for ensuring that examinations are developed and produced under secure conditions.
2. Describe any methods used to discourage cheating or other security breaches.
3. Describe methods utilized to discourage candidate memorization of material.
4. Describe methods utilized in testing repeat candidates to ensure they receive a different examination form.
5. Describe methods utilized to ensure that the transmission of the test forms to and from the host site (bidder's site) and the test site is secure.
6. How do you ensure security of examination materials throughout the test development and test administration process?

### **15% for Price**

The contract will be for approximately a four year period ending June 30, 2014, with the option to renew. Renewal will be totally at the option of the Commission. The initial contract period will run from the date the contract is awarded and Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission approval is obtained. The first examinations are to be administered on February 1, 2011. Given the information contained in this Request for Proposal, complete the attached "Pricing Page" information.

## **VI. OTHER RFP PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS**

### **A. General Terms and Conditions**

The Commission reserves the right to incorporate standard and Commission contract provisions into any contract negotiated as a result of proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

### **B. Preparation Costs**

The Commission shall not be liable for any costs incurred by bidders associated with the preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP.

**C. Right to Question**

The Commission reserves the right to question any response that is unclear to it or to the Examination RFP Task Force. However, neither the Commission nor the Examination RFP Task Force is under any obligation to seek additional information for incomplete answers.

**D. Right to Reject All Bids**

The Commission may, at any time and at its sole discretion and without penalty, reject any and all bids or terminate this RFP process. The Commission may later choose to reissue the RFP with any modifications it deems appropriate.

## **PRICING PAGE**

The bidder is to provide pricing and cost sharing structures including one or more of the following areas for examination development and administration services for a Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission on-line examination system:

1. Development of an examination question bank for all Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission pre-registration courses;
2. Development of a Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission branded examination website;
3. Development of an examination delivery system; and
4. Maintenance of the examination delivery system.