

Basic Requirements of a Scope of Work

A scope of work (SOW) sets forth requirements for performance to achieve project objectives. It should be clear, concise, accurate and complete. Please consider that while the following questions may not apply to all types of services, they are often present in a good SOW and should be considered when reviewing any SOW for completeness:

1. What needs to be done? What is the purpose of the work?
2. Who will do what? What are the roles and responsibilities of each party? Will the contractor's or University's equipment be used?
3. When should it be done? During what dates and times will the work be completed? There should be a schedule for contractor duties as well as University duties.
4. Where will the work be performed? Sometimes undeveloped land can only be described with an APN (assessor's parcel number) since no address exists.
5. Will reports or summaries be required by either party? What are the required deliverables? These can include theoretical models, computer software, drawings, documentation, reports or other data.
6. Are there project milestones? Project milestones are set dates for certain tasks to have been completed.
7. What is the payment schedule? For example: monthly in arrears (after that portion of the work has been completed) based on the number of hours worked, payment upon receipt of deliverables, payment upon achieving certain milestones, etc. Pre-payment is generally not allowed. Remember that the payment process cannot be started until the agreement has been signed by both parties (University and Contractor).
8. Is it anticipated that additional work will result from the outcome of the project? Some types of contracts (e.g. consultant agreements) require future work to be described in the original agreement as there is a California Public Contract Code prohibition against "follow-on work". Good contract management includes forecasting the entire length of a project and its associated costs so as to avoid going over required public bidding thresholds.
9. Who will own the work product resulting from the service provided? The general rule is that the University owns the work, including any resulting copyright.
10. Once you have defined a scope, be sure to obtain several informal quotes for the work so that you can provide reasonable cost justification for selection of a particular vendor.