



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF BUSINESS-SCHOOL-BASED EXECUTIVE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

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1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

UNICON member schools seek evidence-based guidance on organizational structures of business-school-based executive education departments, how those structures align with a department's strategic direction (e.g., delivery model choices, operational maturity, functional integration, portfolio mix, and in-house staff vs contractors balance), and the outcomes of an organization's design decisions to inform staffing, reporting lines, and growth planning.

This project will inventory and analyze organizational structures across UNICON member schools and produce an actionable report, which will include considerations for departmental and school size, revenue band, strategic direction, and outcomes. The research will examine the drivers behind organizational decisions and the changes institutions are anticipating, providing readers with the context to interpret findings and apply them to their own organizational design decisions.

About UNICON

UNICON's aspiration is that its members are the most relevant, most successful, and most sought-after learning partners for leaders and organizations who want to improve their performance. Through participation in UNICON, the leaders, managers, and team members of its member organizations gain new knowledge, inspiration, new perspectives, capabilities for enhancing the effectiveness of their operations, and a global network of colleagues. They stay at the forefront of the industry and together help create the future of the Executive Education industry.

2. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

This Request for Proposals represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until Friday, September 25, 2026. Any proposals received after this date and time will be returned to the sender. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by UNICON and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

3. PROJECT SCOPE

This project will map and analyze organizational structures of executive education units at UNICON member schools to produce actionable benchmarks and guidance for organizational design and growth planning. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study will collect organizational charts, headcount, revenue bands, functional descriptions, staffing models, geographic scope, and recent restructuring activity from a representative subset of UNICON members, combine survey data with 10–20 semi-structured interviews and

document reviews, and deliver comparative analyses across unit size, revenue bands, reporting lines, Executive Education offerings, and functional groupings.

Deliverables include an inception report, interim brief, draft and final comprehensive report, an executive summary and slide deck, an anonymized dataset and codebook, and a webinar presentation. The contractor will follow agreed data security, consent, and IRB arrangements.

Additional questions and considerations for researchers:

- Population
 - UNICON member schools (subset as agreed). The contractor will be responsible for outreach to collect up-to-date organizational charts and supporting information.
- Data elements to collect
 - At a minimum: Unit headcount (FT/PT), annual executive education revenue (bands), organizational chart (roles and reporting lines), descriptions of key functions and responsibilities, geographic scope of programs, staffing models (centralized vs decentralized), and any recent restructuring activity.
 - Staffing model for digital/online course development: in-house instructional design or digital production team, and related structures or roles (e.g., instructional designer, video producer, LMS administrator)
 - Distinctions between university employees vs. contractors or vendors.
 - Relationship to other executive or professional education units at the institution (e.g., other schools, a university-wide office); if alongside others, how coordination, shared services, or differentiation is organized.
 - Supporting context for past or future organizational design decisions.
- Analysis dimensions
 - Unit size (headcount), revenue bands, triggers and thresholds associated with geographic team structures (e.g., revenue bands, headcount, program volume, regional office presence), reporting lines (e.g., reports to Dean, Business School, separate LLC), and functional groupings.
 - Employee vs. contractor staffing patterns by functional role
 - Multi-unit campus configurations and coordination models
 - Segmentation by school size (e.g., below \$5M, \$6M-\$15M, above \$15M)
- Methods
 - Mixed methods — structured survey, document collection (org charts, role descriptions), semi-structured interviews with selected schools (expected sample size: 10-20 interviews or as agreed), and comparative analysis. Quantitative summary tables and qualitative thematic analysis for governance/decision-making rationales.
- Exclusions
- The following are outside the scope of this project: research on non-UNICON institutions unless explicitly requested and approved; current or anticipated pricing, program fees, or revenue data beyond agreed historical bands; faculty or staff compensation or benefits data; vendor or supplier contract terms; enrollment or capacity levels; and forward-looking proprietary strategic or market plans. All data collection will comply with UNICON's Antitrust Policy and Procedures.

Required Deliverables:

1. Inception report (2–3 pages): detailed methodology, data collection instruments, sampling plan, and data security/consent approach. Due 3 weeks after contract start.
2. Mid-project interim brief (5–8 pages): preliminary findings, response rates, initial themes. Due at 10 weeks.
3. Draft final report (comprehensive): full dataset descriptions, analysis, typologies, case examples, recommendations (40–60 pages). Due at 18 weeks.
4. Executive summary and slide deck (10–15 slides): for stakeholder briefings. Due with final report.
5. Dataset and codebook (CSV/Excel + documentation): to enable benchmarking. Due with final report. The vendor should be prepared to recommend whether or not the data be anonymized.
6. Final presentation and member engagement: A 60–90-minute webinar for all UNICON members to present findings and Q&A, scheduled within 8 weeks of final report delivery, followed by a facilitated working session (half-day, in-person or virtual) designed to support member interpretation of findings and exploration of implications for their own organizational contexts. The working session format and agenda will be proposed by the contractor in the inception report.
7. Benchmarking self-assessment instrument: A structured diagnostic tool enabling member schools to map their own organizational structures against the research typologies and identify positioning relative to peers. The instrument will be delivered in an accessible format (e.g., Excel or equivalent) with a user guide, and will be designed for repeated use as organizations evolve. All data inputs will remain local to the user and will not be shared with or visible to other members.

Scope boundaries and exclusions

- The study will be limited to UNICON member schools (no non-UNICON institutions unless explicitly requested and approved).
- Financial details will be collected only in agreed revenue bands; proprietary or granulated financial breakdowns will not be requested or reported.
- The project will not conduct detailed analyses of individual faculty workloads outside their roles within the executive education unit.
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Data protection, ethics, and permissions

- The contractor will implement secure data transfer and storage procedures and treat submissions as confidential. Public-facing deliverables will use anonymized data unless otherwise authorized.
- Interviewees will provide informed consent.
- Ownership of the final deliverables will be with UNICON; authors may use with citation.

Assumptions

- Participating schools will provide current organizational charts and basic data in a timely manner following outreach.
- The client will provide an agreed list or priority list of UNICON members to approach.

- The contractor will have reasonable access to interviewees and will schedule interviews within the project timeline.
- Any changes to scope (e.g., larger sample, additional geography-based analyses) will be managed via change order and may affect budget and timeline.

Success criteria

- Achieve the agreed sample size and a minimum response rate of participating schools (to be defined in the inception report).
- Deliver all reports and supporting materials on time and within budget.
- Produce actionable typologies and recommendations that are validated with at least three participating schools during the draft review stage.
- Provide an anonymized dataset and clear documentation enabling member schools to benchmark their organizational structures against peers.

4. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND PROJECT TIMELINE

Request for Proposal Timeline:

All proposals in response to this RFP are due no later than September 25, 2026.

Evaluation of proposals, including vendor presentations, will be conducted from September 28-October 9, 2026. If additional information or discussions are needed with any bidders during this time period, the bidder(s) will be notified.

The selection decision for the winning bidder will be made no later than October 12, 2026 and the Contract will be negotiated and finalized by October 23, 2026.

Notifications to bidders who were not selected will be completed by October 23, 2026.

Project Timeline:

Project must be completed by March 31, 2027.

5. BUDGET

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the project scope. If the organization or individual responding to the RFP must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements contained herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposal. All costs included in proposals must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work. The budget is USD \$10,000 to \$20,000, inclusive of all expenses.

NOTE: All costs and fees must be clearly described in each proposal.

6. BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS

Bidders should provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration:

- Researcher (or firm's) history and background
- Experience with and/or knowledge of business management education
- Overview of the proposed approach
- Credentials and qualifications of the individual(s) who will perform the work.
- References and client list with written permission to contact.
- Overall cost, and if appropriate, description of how staff time and other costs are billed.

7. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

UNICON will evaluate all proposals based on the following criteria. To ensure consideration for this Request for Proposal, your proposal should be complete and include all of the following criteria:

- Experience in similar assignments
- Resource/capacity to perform the required work.
- Experience with business management education
- Qualifications of the individual(s) who will perform the work.
- References
- Timeframe for completion of the project
- Cost
- Intangibles

Each bidder must submit their proposal electronically by September 25, 2026 using the submission form below.

Submit your proposal using the UNICON RFP submission form:

<https://cfjba.share.hsforms.com/2x5ofKUpBRJCaRYip10wRuw>