



UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

PROCUREMENT POLICY

Incorporating Sustainable Purchasing

Policy Statement

The University of East Anglia is committed to obtaining value for money for all its non-pay expenditure whilst recognising the opportunity to use this expenditure to contribute to its carbon reduction plan¹ and wider sustainability objectives.

This policy supports and is predicated on the University's Corporate Plan. Effective procurement will meet the needs of the University's teaching and research activities and contribute to the financial sustainability of the University. The goods, services, works and utilities we buy impact directly on our objective of becoming an exemplar of good practice environmentally.

The University is committed to sustainable procurement which means only purchasing goods that are genuinely needed and buying items or services whose production, use and disposal both minimise negative impacts and encourage positive outcomes for the environment, economy and society.

The University's procurement policy, therefore, is:-

1. To support the teaching and research community, directly or through central support services, by meeting legitimate procurement needs in a timely and cost effective manner;
2. To ensure that purchasing is carried out in such a way as to obtain maximum value for money by minimising cost (including processing costs), and maximising value added benefits through price reduction or avoidance, risk control and added functionality, consumables or services and the use of whole life costing methodology;
3. To ensure that proper consideration is given to the environmental, corporate and social impacts of purchases;
4. To protect the University's reputation and legal obligations by ensuring that all business dealings are conducted in a fair and transparent manner and to the unimpeachable standards expected when dealing with public funds.

This document sets out the key principles and procedures to be followed by all staff involved in procurement on behalf of the University.

Responsibilities

As *Accounting Officer* for the University, the Vice Chancellor is responsible for all University expenditure, including research grants. The authority to commit expenditure is delegated to Heads of Spending Units who may then nominate Authorised Signatories² to place orders on behalf of the University.

Authorised signatories are responsible to the Head of the Spending Unit for ensuring that all purchases are made in accordance with this policy and such procedures that are from time to time in place.³

The Purchasing Office is responsible for developing procurement strategies and procedures that benefit the University as a whole and will advise the Executive Team on the effectiveness of existing policy and procedures.

Key Purchasing Principles

1. Before any purchase is made a clear need must be established. This principle applies to all purchases, but is particularly important when considering expensive purchases such as equipment or vehicles. Purchases might be avoided by sharing with others, using similar existing equipment, or by renting. Avoiding a purchase not only saves money but also saves natural resources and reduces environmental impacts.
2. Having established a need, the next step is to specify the requirement. In doing so users should (a) avoid over-specifying; and (b) consider whether a more environmentally friendly option is available.
3. The Purchasing Office has appointed a number of *Preferred Suppliers* who cover a range of commonly purchased goods and services. These have been selected, through a competitive tendering process, usually on a national or regional basis. They represent good value for money and their selection takes into account the University's sustainability objectives and legal obligations (including the EU Procurement Directives⁴.) Purchasers must use *Preferred Suppliers* wherever possible and there is no need for further competition.
4. Where there is no suitable *Preferred Supplier* purchasers should comply with the following:-
 - a) For purchases with an estimated value of £20,000 or more, you must inform the Purchasing Office as soon as the need has been established. They will advise you on the most appropriate course of action to comply with this policy. This is likely to include a sealed bid tender process (which the Purchasing Office will conduct on your behalf). In the case of goods or services in excess of £173,934 or estates works over £4,348,350 the purchase will have to be advertised in compliance with the EU Directives⁴.
 - b) For purchases between £5,000 and £20,000 you must obtain at least 3 written quotes and place the order with the company offering the best value for money. You must keep a copy of all quotes together with a written record of how the best value offer was decided.
 - c) For purchases below £5,000 there is no formal requirement, but you should use existing suppliers if possible.

If exceptional circumstances apply, for example if you need equipment spares that are only available from one supplier, then you must agree any waiver of normal tendering requirements (as set out above) with the Purchasing Office. To do this you should complete the form [Restricted/Single Tender Request Form](#) get this signed as approved by the Dean or

Head of Spending Unit and forward onto the Purchasing Office.

5. All purchase orders must be issued through the University's Finance System and be authorised by means of a Purchase Requisition signed by an appropriate Authorised Signatory, or through the e-procurement system.

6. Once an order has been placed the Authorised Signatory (or their nominee) is responsible for ensuring that both the supplier and the University comply with their respective obligations. If a significant variation is required, the advice of the Purchasing Office should be sought. If the price is to be amended the order should be amended (additional financial approval having been obtained, if necessary).

Sustainable Procurement

Sustainable procurement is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works or utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation but also to society and the economy, while minimising damage to the environment.

When inviting tenders, the specification should include appropriate requirements to improve sustainability during production, distribution, use and ultimate recycling / disposal. Tenderers should also be encouraged to put forward more sustainable alternatives where available.

In any purchase a balance has to be struck between cost, environmental impact and social impacts (often referred to as corporate and social responsibilities - CSR). The balance will vary from purchase to purchase and will be decided, ultimately, by the budget holder. However, the University's policy is that full consideration should be given to all these factors. The following table shows the key issues to consider:

Environmental issues	Social Issues	Economic Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on soil, water and air pollution • Use of raw materials (including packaging) • Use of energy • Use of water • Waste and by-products (including final disposal) • Protecting habitats and biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting fair employment practices • Promoting workforce health and welfare • Fairtrade and ethical sourcing practices • Encouraging a diverse base of competitive suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole life costing • Achieving value for money • Ensuring suppliers agreements are competitive and fair to promote business viability • Supporting social enterprise and improving local skills

Probity

It is of the utmost importance that officers, employees and agents conduct the University's business affairs in a fair and transparent manner. The University has separate policies in relation to fraud⁵ and bribery⁶ which apply to procurement activities. Appendix B from the Anti-fraud and corruption policy provides guidance on the gifts and hospitality and is appended to this policy.

It is, of course, illegal to discriminate against any potential supplier on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, disability or religious belief. Indeed the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a legal obligation on the University to ensure that we promote equal opportunity in our suppliers and contractors.

The Role of the Purchasing Office

The Purchasing Office will:-

- * in consultation with relevant users, develop and review appropriate strategies for key commodity areas. This includes the appointment and management of Preferred Suppliers for common purchases of goods and services. These strategies will address the four objectives of the policy statement set out above.
- * work with key suppliers to deliver value for money and to improve sustainability wherever practicable.
- * work with budget holders on significant one-off purchases to ensure best practice is followed and the University's legal and policy obligations are met.
- * provide training and guidance on best practice and legal requirements to those members of staff with purchasing responsibilities.
- * work with HE sector bodies and the wider public sector to share experience, promulgate best practice and maximise on the University's spending power.
- * provide an annual report, including key performance indicators, regarding the effectiveness of the University's procurement processes.

Breaches of Policy

The University requires all members of staff to comply fully with this policy. Any breach or suspected breach of procedure, policy or law should be reported to the Registrar and Secretary under the University's whistle blowing policy⁷.

Policy Review

The University's Sustainability Board will review this policy every 3 years.