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University of Suffolk

Procurement Policy

Purpose and application

This document sets out the Procurement Policy of the University of Suffolk. It applies to all purchases and invitations for tenders. The policy binds all employees of the University of Suffolk (“the University”) in any situation where they are involved in a purchasing or other procurement process.

This policy is consistent with the University’s vision and other University of Suffolk policies including the Procurement Strategy and Financial Regulations.

Advice on purchasing matters can be obtained from procurement@uos.ac.uk.

Scope

This policy relates to the management and control of all expenditure, in respect of the acquisition of goods and services across the institution and in all departments and applies irrespective of the source of funding for a purchase. This policy applies to all employees of the University, including temporary staff. It is a responsibility of all budget holders to ensure that their staff are aware of, and adhere to, this policy.

Adherence to this policy is both an individual and a corporate responsibility. Wilful breach of this policy, or unauthorised departure from the procedures derived from it, is a serious matter which may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the [University of Suffolk Disciplinary Procedure](#).

Equality

The University of Suffolk is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to opposing discrimination and promoting equality. The University also has a strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity to all potential suppliers. For further information please refer to the [University of Suffolk Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

Freedom of information

The University has a legal duty to comply with the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA). As part of the obligations under the FoIA it may be necessary for the University to disclose information relating to procurement activities. For further information please refer to the [University of Suffolk Code of Practice for Managing Freedom of Information Requests](#).

Objectives

This policy commits the University and every individual involved in the procurement management process to use their best endeavours to deliver purchasing and contract activities that:

- Secure maximum value for money (VfM), in line with the University’s [Value for Money Policy](#)
- Minimise risk, including compliance with all relevant legislation
- Encourage transparency, fairness and non-discrimination, in line with the University’s [Anti-Corruption Policy](#)
- Ensure ethical, environmental and socially responsible processes and transactions

- Maintain the University's ability to exploit appropriate technological, commercial and organisational developments as they arise
- Actively consider sustainability and equality/diversity issues

In pursuing these objectives, the University also requires that procedures and processes are in place to ensure that:

- Competitive bidding and tender processes are performed
- Suppliers are appropriately selected and authorised for use
- Supplier relationships are managed for financial and non-financial performance
- Goods and services are purchased only with proper authorisation
- Goods and services received are correctly recorded
- Payments are only made for goods and services received
- Goods and services received are fit for purpose and take account of any specific needs of diverse groups at the University for whom they are intended

It is important that the initiator of any procurement activity involve the Finance and Planning department at an early stage to ensure optimum value for money is obtained in terms of price, quality specification and delivery. Every attempt must also be made to effect standardisation where practical.

Confidentiality

Prices and other commercially sensitive information available to University members of staff are confidential and must never be divulged to any person or organisation outside of the University.

Commercial information is often acquired by the University through membership of a consortium or by collective bargaining in conjunction with other regional organisations to achieve economies of scale and greater bargaining power. The continuing success of these ventures is reliant on the confidentiality of the information within these agreements being strictly preserved.

Product information and costs should never be divulged to a competitor and must never be used as the basis for a "one-off" purchase.

Regulations and thresholds

The procurement of goods, services and works is required to follow specific regulations and processes dependent on the value of the purchase. These requirements are on a statutory or governance basis and will be decided by quoted value thresholds.

The EU Public Procurement Directives ("the Directive") and the processes detailed within these must be followed where the full contract value excluding VAT for the contract period is estimated to exceed:

- £189,330 purchases of goods or services;
- £4,733,252 for purchase of works.

The Public Contracts Directive sets out procedures which must be followed before awarding a contract to suppliers (i.e. providers of works, supplies or services) when its value exceeds set thresholds.

These thresholds apply to the value of the contract throughout its duration (not the annual value) including any possible extensions. If you purchase multiple successive contracts of the same type, the threshold applies to the aggregated spend of these contracts over a 12 month period. Or if you have a rolling contract with no end date or you cannot calculate the total value of a contract then the threshold applies to the aggregated spend on the contract over a 4 year term.

Please see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for further information or contact procurement@uos.ac.uk.

All purchases below the EU thresholds will follow the ethos of the Directive. Purchases between the below expenditure bands will be treated as follows:

£50,001 - £189,330

Where an existing framework agreement that has been competitively tendered is available through an approved purchasing consortium the framework must be used in place of a competitive tender. Only in exceptional circumstances will a competitive tender outside of a framework be approved.

If there is not a suitable framework available and the total contract spend is estimated to exceed £50,000, these purchases will be treated as competitive tenders and advertised on Contracts Finder in addition to other recognised and appropriate methods.

£25,001 - £50,000

For goods and services between the value of £25,001 and £50,000, the Finance and Planning department will guide the sourcing department with regards to obtaining written quotations from at least three suppliers. The Finance and Planning department must be notified in advance of the written quotes being requested in order to support guide the process. Care should be taken in drawing up the request for quotation document with respect to:

- Specification and general requirements
- Usage figures
- Quality standards
- Terms and conditions
- Special delivery requirements

Where quotations have been sought it is essential that documentation is retained at least until such time as the purchase order is approved to provide evidence that due regard has been given to considerations of economy, efficiency and effectiveness for all purchases. Please see the finance forms section of [MySuffolk](#) for a University Request for Quote template.

£10,001 - £25,000

For goods and services between the value of £10,001 and £25,000, the sourcing department will obtain quotations from at least three suppliers. Care should be taken in drawing up the request for quotation document with respect to:

- Specification and general requirements
- Usage figures
- Quality standards
- Terms and conditions
- Special delivery requirements

Where quotations have been sought it is essential that documentation is retained at least until such time as the purchase order is approved to provide evidence that due regard has been given to considerations of economy, efficiency and effectiveness for all purchases. Please see the finance forms section of [MySuffolk](#) for a University Request for Quote template.

Up to £10,000

The requisitioner must carry out an informal value for money assessment adhering to the principles of this policy.

Splitting of purchase orders to avoid any threshold is not permissible.

Electronic ordering

Official purchase orders shall be issued for all goods and services except where there is a specific exemption from raising orders as detailed in the University Financial Regulations. In addition, where the purchase is for goods or services of a low value not exceeding the relevant transaction limit, it is expected that use will be made of a University procurement card. Regulations for staff covering the issue and use of corporate procurement cards can be found in the University of Suffolk Purchasing Card Policy.

Single supplier

Single sourcing occurs when only one supplier exists that is capable of supplying against a particular requirement. Single supply is a situation which is to be avoided if at all possible. In some cases, particular attention to the broadening of specifications or the adoption of new specifications will result in more suppliers being able to satisfy a requirement. Where use of a single source is inevitable, care should be taken to ensure value for money is being achieved by checking the supplier's price list and terms and conditions. Special negotiations should be conducted and a Single Supplier Justification form must be completed and submitted for approval by the relevant budget holder and the Finance and Planning department prior to placing an order.

A copy of the Single Supplier Justification form is available on [MySuffolk](#).

Ethics

Persons engaged in any aspect of procurement on behalf of the University shall never use their authority for personal gain and shall seek to uphold and enhance the standing of the University by:

- maintaining an unimpeachable standard of integrity in all their business relationships both inside and outside the University;
- fostering the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible;
- supporting and promoting equality and diversity, and rejecting business practice that conflicts with the University statutory equality duty;

- optimising the use of resources for which they are responsible to provide maximum benefit to the University; complying with both the letter and the spirit of the law and with all contractual obligations incurred by or on behalf of the University of Suffolk;
- rejecting any business practice that may reasonably be deemed improper;
- actively monitoring to ensure that modern slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any parts of the University's operation or its supply chain. (See [Modern Slavery Statement](#)).
- declaring personal interests which may or may reasonably be deemed by others to impinge upon impartiality in any matter relevant to purchasing duties and keeping separate the affairs of the University and those of private life;
- reporting actual or suspected incidents of anti-competitive behaviour that could affect prices or markets;
- support, protect and where possible preserve anonymity of 'whistleblowers';
- reporting all offers and actual gifts of more than intrinsic value, returning those that are delivered with a polite refusal and advise that such offers may exclude the supplier from future tenders.

Contracts

All orders for goods, services or works whether verbal or written constitute a contract. It is a first requirement that all contracts for supply will be entered into using the University's terms and conditions. Where this is not possible, a written copy of the suppliers prevailing terms, conditions and warranties must be provided to and approved by the Finance and Planning department prior to placing the order.

It is the responsibility of the sponsoring department to provide the Finance and Planning department with a copy of all signed contracts, to be held centrally. Working copies of these documents may be issued at the discretion of the Purchasing Manager to relevant departments.

Tenders

All tenders run by the University must be sponsored by the department that will be the ultimate user of the contract. Under the lead of the Finance and Planning department, the sponsoring department shall provide staff that have the expertise to develop the technical specification and support the tender action. The sponsoring department, with the guidance of the Finance and Planning department, is responsible for setting the evaluation criteria for tenders and for any contract negotiations.

The sponsoring department shall nominate a suitable member of the departmental management team to undertake the day to day management of any contracts and contractor performance following the award.

Standardisation

Wherever possible faculties and departments should liaise and coordinate with the Finance and Planning department to achieve standardisation of those products which will produce benefits in negotiating the most competitive terms, achieve value for money and simplify arrangements for repair or service. Fragmentation of ordering amongst a wide range of suppliers for similar goods, services or works is counterproductive and reduces the effectiveness of procurement.

Ordering and payments

The University will not be liable to pay for any supply of goods, services or works that is not:

- approved by the appropriate budget holder,
- within the budget holder's delegated budget and
- the subject of an official University of Suffolk purchase order. Purchase order numbers should be clearly stated on the invoice.

In a circumstance where all of the foregoing criteria are wilfully breached, resulting in the University being committed to unauthorised expenditure, this may lead to a disciplinary action being taken against the relevant member of staff. The University may hold the originator of the order liable for the payment as a personal debt.

Where a new contract is awarded, the goods, services or works shall be initiated by the issue of one or more official University purchase orders. Each variation to contract, when approved by the Purchasing Manager, shall also be initiated by the issue of one or more official University purchase orders.

The University will normally make payment 30 days after the invoice date. This will only be adopted where the invoice states a valid University of Suffolk Purchase order number and the purchase order has been correctly receipted. Failure to comply with these requirements will place the University in dispute with the supplier and will cause delay in payment.

Leasing of equipment

Commitment to leasing of equipment is discouraged. Departments or faculties contemplating the use of this form of procurement must consult with the Finance and Planning department prior to embarking on any agreement with a supplier.

Leases are legally binding contracts that run for long terms and are almost impossible to discontinue before the initial term has expired without incurring exceptional and financial penalty to the University. The use of lease contracts is permitted only after prior approval by the Director of Finance and Planning.