



University of BRISTOL

Responsible Procurement Plan 2024-2030

1. Vision

- 1.1. The University of Bristol's [mission](#) is to make a positive impact locally, nationally and globally by addressing society's greatest challenges through our distinctive education, innovative research, and the value we place on excellence, inclusivity and partnership.
- 1.2. The University's [vision](#) is that by 2030, we will be firmly established among the world's top 50 great research-intensive universities, and the top 10 in the UK.
- 1.3. The three pillars of the University's vision are:
 - World-leading **research** and innovation with local, national and global impact
 - An inspiring **education** and transformative student experience
 - The transformative power of the global **civic** university
- 1.4. The Procurement Team contributes to the University's vision and strategy by ensuring that goods, services and works are identified and purchased in a way that supports the delivery of outstanding research, innovative education, a rewarding student experience and makes a significant contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Bristol and the South West.



2. Purpose

- 2.1. This plan, and its objectives, provides the roadmap to improve procurement processes, deliver efficiencies and support the University in delivering its overarching Vision and Strategy to 2030. It embeds our strategic priorities into our procurement processes and ensures how what we spend has the desired purpose, meeting our requirements and demonstrating a positive impact for the University and society.
- 2.2. The University is operating in a turbulent marketplace with ongoing financial, geopolitical, social, legal and environmental challenges as well as increasing demands for transparency and assurance of providing best value for our funders and students.
- 2.3. This plan has been developed to help us respond effectively and pro-actively to the challenges we face as an organisation and consider them as opportunities, helping us to drive progress, value for money and deliver excellence.

3. National Context

3.1. Financial challenges

The UK higher education sector is facing a challenging financial environment, with research projects generally not recovering their full costs, a declining unit of resource for home undergraduates, and a consequentially increasing reliance on international students for taught courses, and on other sources of income.

This is at a time when the expectations of regulators, students, students' families and other stakeholders are increasing, leading to increasing expectations for the quality of the physical environment, the boundaryless technology experienced on and off our campuses, and for the educational experience.

This makes the financial and non-financial benefits associated with good procurement practice ever more critical.

3.2. New Regulations

The procurement profession is facing the most challenging regulatory environment ever, with the UK's departure from the European Union leading in the short-term to dramatic changes in supply chain behaviour and in the longer term to the implementation of a new set of procurement regulations in 2024.

The University is currently a public Contracting Authority under the terms of the current Regulations, but this position is likely to change depending on the proportion of public and private funds received by the University.

The new regulations offer an increase in commercial flexibilities at the cost of increased requirements for transparency and disclosure. If the University remains a Contracting Authority, Procurement Team will need to implement these regulations safely, requiring detailed training for commercial professionals, and summary training for budget holders and decision-makers, while ensuring that the opportunities for innovation are maximized. If the University leaves the public procurement regulations,

the requirements for value for money, commercial innovation and legal security will remain.

4. University Context

4.1. *One of the world's best research-intensive universities*

The University is one of the world's best research-intensive universities, and aspires to be one of the very best – within the global top 50 of similar institutions.

This means ensuring that University research programmes have access to the right type of scientific equipment, at a price they can afford, and on a similar basis to peer institutions.

4.2. *Education and student experience*

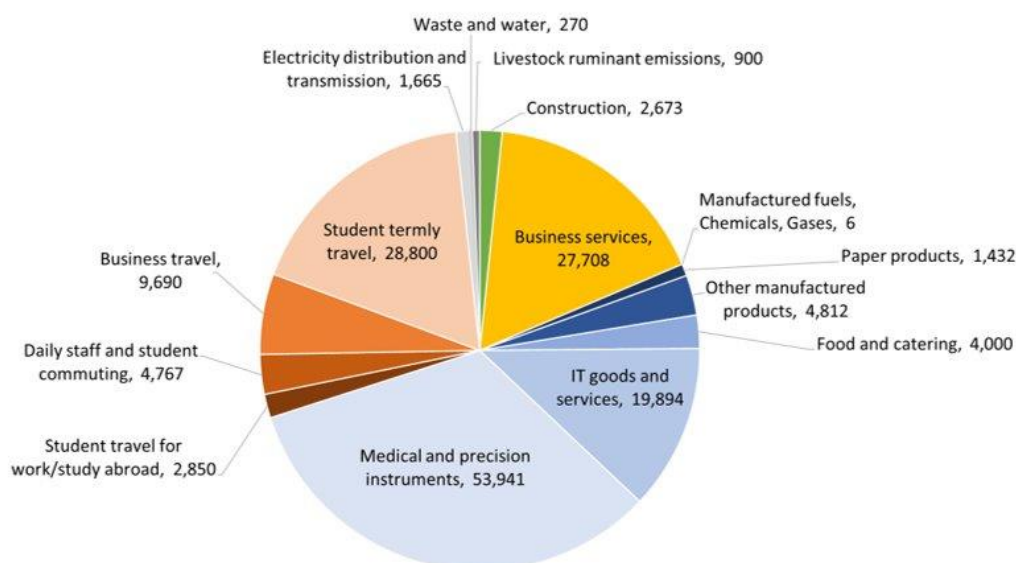
Students are entitled to a world class learning and student experience, meaning that educational systems and student support services must be effective and available. This requires considerable investment in University customer and record management systems, digital infrastructure and in an appropriate physical environment.

The period 2024-2030 will see the exploitation of recently established student facilities, such as the New Dental School and the Retort Shed, and the construction of new spaces, notably the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus and a significant increase in teaching facilities at Langford.

4.3. *Civic*

The University makes a significant contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Bristol and the South West region. This means ensuring that a rising proportion of external purchasing is spent via organisations based in the surrounding region, that employment and learning opportunities are maximising, and environmental impact is reduced. The University is a Living Wage employer, and requires a similar commitment from our suppliers.

The University is working towards Carbon Net Zero and possesses an increasing depth of data on the environmental footprint of goods and services purchases by the organisation (known as 'Scope 3' emissions). The below diagram shows where most the University's emissions come from:



The University is also committed to ethical sourcing, which means managing our supply in a way that eradicates modern slavery and forced labour. The University is a member of schemes such as [TISCreport](#) and [Electronics Watch](#) that facilitate an ethical and just transition.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Procurement Team is part of the University of Bristol's Finance Services division. It is responsible for achieving best financial and non-financial value from University purchasing requirements, including approving the route to market of individual purchases over £25k. In 2021/22, the Procurement Team successfully influenced £144m of spend out of the £183m that the University spent on in-scope third party goods, services and works. This is largest part of the University's non-staffing budget.
- 5.2. The Procurement Team also provides advice and guidance to purchasing processes and decisions made by subsidiaries of the University, including Langford Veterinary Services and the National Composites Centre.

6. Strategic Positioning

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong University strategic commitment to Social Value, responsible sourcing and sustainability, linked to the University's ambitions as a global civic institution. 2. Top-quartile national performance in financial savings (6%) and SME spend (37%) 3. Sharing of market intelligence and good practice among HE purchasing consortia 4. Skilled and knowledgeable procurement professionals, with effective use of Apprenticeship Levy to grow our own talent 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remit of the Procurement function limits area of influences for <£25k spend meaning opportunities for savings and efficiencies may not be fully realised. 2. Purchase to Pay, Electronic procurement system does not fully meet Procurement Team needs for spend analysis, requiring a separate line-item analysis tool. 3. Use of Product Code data is limited

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Effective Procurement Procedures 6. Living Wage Foundation accreditation 7. Effective use of Collaboration agreements 8. Procurement practice has become more centralised and more consistent since 2018 9. Analysis of spend data improved since 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Availability of sufficient Procurement resources to deliver the objectives.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Procurement Act 2023 offers new opportunities for commercial innovation and flexibility. 2. Commodity Strategies to realise opportunities for increase savings and efficiencies. 3. The University's review of Contract Management offers an opportunity to standardise systems and processes, and to improve commercial leadership of high-value/ high-risk contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Procurement Act 2023 requires an increase in disclosure and publication of burdensome Notices. 2. Universities outside the scope of the Procurement Act (who receive more than 50% of their income from private sources) may have more commercial flexibility than UoB. 3. Geopolitical uncertainty, environmental change and trade administration create supply challenges and price pressures. 4. Labour market shortages inhibit the recruitment of professionally qualified and experienced Procurement Managers

7. Objectives

7.1. Our strategic priorities are:

1. Delivery of major projects	Objective 1: Support the delivery of major University projects, by ensuring that procurement processes are effective, timely and result in robust commercial arrangements.
2. Value for money	Objective 2: to achieve a year-on-year increase in cashable and non-cashable savings. The University's proportion of savings will remain in top quartile for the HE Sector.
3. Commodity management	Objective 3: Develop commodity strategies for high risk, high spend and critical supplies or services which will be agreed by senior finance management and stakeholders
4. Contract and supplier management	Objective 4: Co-design procedures and guidelines for contract and supplier management with the Commercial Contracts Director, considering at the outset of the procurement what this will look like for each specific procurement and the benefits it aims to achieve.
5. Procurement systems and processes	<p>Objective 5.1: Use technology to achieve value for money, from purchase-to-pay, to spend analysis and robotic process automation.</p> <p>Objective 5.2: Implement the Procurement Act 2023 effectively and proportionately, ensuring that the University's requirements for resilient processes, scientific innovation and commercial entrepreneurship are maintained.</p>
6. Customer service excellence	Objective 6: Model the the University's professional behaviours model, upholding the Finance Services Charter.

7. People development	Objective 7: Access University and Apprenticeship Levy resources to develop professional skills.
8. Risk management	Objective 8: Actively manage risks (mitigating them where possible) to legally and contractually protect the University.
9. Social Value, sustainability and ethical sourcing	<p>Objective 9.1: Maintain Living Wage Foundation accreditation as part of the University's commitment as a global civic institution, and to ensure that suppliers continue to maintain this standard.</p> <p>Objective 9.2: Facilitate the University's strategy to become carbon neutral by 2030.</p> <p>Objective 9.3: Increase the University's spend with local suppliers from £28m in 2021/22 to at least £40m by 2029/30.</p>
10. Collaborative procurement	Objective 10: Deliver efficiencies through collaboration, by promoting consolidation among University departments, with peer institutions in the region and via Higher Education purchasing consortia.

Further details on these strategic priorities is given below

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR PROCUREMENT

8. Delivery of Major Projects

- 8.1. During 2023-2030, the University will complete a number of major projects, including the replacement or renewal of a number of key systems and processes (including the main software systems for financial processes and student records), and large-scale capital projects (including the launch of the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus and the world-leading Isambard AI supercomputing facility).
- 8.2. The Procurement Team has a key role in the delivery of major projects, and will ensuring that commercial planning is effectively integrated in institution-wide programme management, technology selection and capital project delivery.

Objective 1: Support the delivery of major University projects, by ensuring that procurement processes are effective, timely and result in robust commercial arrangements.

9. Value for money

- 9.1. In the 2021/22 academic year the University of Bristol Procurement Team were responsible for over £144m influenceable spend and achieved £11m in annual savings (a saving level of 6%).
- 9.2. The Procurement Team seek to obtain value for money throughout the procurement lifecycle. In order to understand the opportunities available at the outset of a procurement activity it works with relevant stakeholders to determine the route to market and how to evaluate tenders to achieve value for money over the life of the Contract.

9.3. The University uses a savings methodology set out by the Higher Education Procurement Authority (HEPA), to measure the process efficiencies and financial savings related to procurement activity.

- These are reported in an annual survey to HEPA (on behalf of the Office for Students) that enables the University to monitor its performance internally and externally within the higher education sector.
- The national average for procurement cashable and non-cashable savings is 4.9%, indicating that the University’s position (6.05%) remains in the top quartile for the performance.

Objective 2: to achieve a year-on-year increase in cashable and non-cashable savings. The University’s proportion of savings will remain in top quartile for the HE Sector.

10. Commodity management

10.1. Commodity management has been identified by the University as a mechanism to more effectively manage its procurement activity, giving greater understanding of when and how to tender or to identify alternative options to achieve benefits to the University. It will help to identify areas where the Procurement Team can add value, determining best methods of procuring the goods or services, identify savings, efficiencies and opportunities in key areas whilst also enabling effective risk management and greater stakeholder involvement. Taking a holistic commodity management approach will better support the delivery of value for money and demonstrate our commitment to ‘responsible procurement’ as well as being an enabling mechanism to deliver the objectives outlined in this plan.

10.2. Commodity management should include contract and supplier management – the structure, coordination, planning and management of communication with suppliers throughout the life of a contract (not just during a tender process and contractual negotiations) to maximise the value of supplier relationships. The procurement team will analyse spend by commodity to determine priority areas.



Objective 3: Develop commodity strategies for high risk, high spend and critical supplies or services which will be agreed by senior finance management and stakeholders

11. Contract and supplier management

11.1. The University has suppliers covering a broad range of commodity areas.

11.2. Many of these suppliers are in long-term relationships with the University. Procurement will continue to:

- Tender requirements and contract with suppliers as necessary to test that we are receiving the best Value for Money, for legislative compliance, internal regulations and as good procurement practice
- Assess and develop suppliers to ensure that risks are managed
- Exploit opportunities and develop efficiencies with suppliers
- Encourage and support suppliers to share our values, especially where serving students or staff directly
- Manage the supply base to ensure the University's research, education and the student experience has the right provisions in place at the right time

Objective 4: Co-design procedures and guidelines for contract and supplier management with the Commercial Contracts Director, considering at the outset of the procurement what this will look like for each specific procurement and the benefits it aims to achieve.

12. Procurement systems and processes

12.1. The value of effective systems and appropriate use of technology is significant. The University has implemented an integrated Finance and HR system (MyERP) which provides an overall structure for purchasing, reporting and payments, among many other functions. The functionalities of this system will continue to be developed and exploited throughout the life of this plan.

12.2. The Procurement Team uses an electronic tendering portal which enables an efficient, auditable, transparent and consistent approach to all Procurement activity. An e-marketplace which allows efficiencies to be driven from low-value, high-volume purchasing, notably of common goods and pieces of equipment, is integrated within MyERP.

12.3. A spend analysis tool (Coupa AIC Spend360) has been deployed, which helps to interrogate detail from expenditure to better inform decisions and category management.

12.4. These, together with well managed filing and information management processes, ensures all documentation is fully auditable to meet legal compliance and risk management obligations.

12.5. The Procurement Act 2023 is the biggest change in procurement processes in a generation, with a greater scope for entrepreneurial innovation coupled with higher obligations for publishing and accountability. The University is likely to review whether

the rising proportion of private sector income could lead to the institution leaving the public contract regulations as early as 2024/25.

Objective 5.1: Use technology to achieve value for money, from purchase-to-pay, to spend analysis and robotic process automation.

Objective 5.2: Implement the Procurement Act 2023 effectively and proportionately, ensuring that the University's requirements for resilient processes, scientific innovation and commercial entrepreneurship are maintained.

13. Customer service excellence

- 13.1. The Procurement Team provides services to internal colleagues, current or potential suppliers and other key stakeholders. It employs qualified procurement professionals who share the goal of the *Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply* (CIPS) to “*promote and develop high standards of professional skill, ability and integrity among all those engaged in procurement.*” The procurement professionals commit to follow the [CIPS Code of Conduct](#), the [CIPS Code of Ethics](#) and also follow the University of Bristol [Code of Conduct for Professional Behaviours](#).
- 13.2. The Procurement Team will monitor its collective performance against industry standards in addition to University commitments such as the Finance Services Charter.
- 13.3. The Procurement Team will lead fraud prevention policy and practice, and will monitor compliance with the University's refreshed Fraud Awareness and Modern Slavery training courses.

Objective 6: Model the the University's professional behaviours model, upholding the Finance Services Charter.

14. People development

- 14.1. The Procurement Team is structured to align with commodity areas with a Senior Procurement Manager responsible for procurement of each major element. This structure allows the Procurement Team to offer an efficient service to customers, effective management of risk and use of specialist knowledge to deliver value for money and fit-for-purpose contracts.
- 14.2. The Procurement Team has effectively accessed Apprenticeship Levy (AL) funding to support CIPS Level 4 training, and intends to access AL funding for Level 5-6 training once this becomes available.
- 14.3. To be effective Procurement must continue to invest in the skills and competencies of not only the Procurement Team but also internal stakeholders.

Objective 7: Access University and Apprenticeship Levy resources to develop professional skills.

15. Risk management

- 15.1. Risk management is an essential activity. This is often recognised as conflicts of interest, confidentiality issues, procurement fraud and project delivery risks. The Procurement Team assesses and manages risk throughout the procurement lifecycle, recording risk and mitigation in a risk register and reporting this to the Director of Procurement.
- 15.2. The University must comply with legislation, such as the Procurement Bill 2023. The University must also be compliant with several regulatory and funding bodies including the Office for Students, UK Research & Innovation, and the Charities Commission. The University's own [Financial Regulations](#) apply to all financial business of the University irrespective of the source of funding and the Procurement Team maintains systems that allow the University to comply with these regulations.
- 15.3. A key aspect of every procurement process is to ensure that the appointed supplier is both capable and committed to meeting the University's requirements. It is important that the Procurement Team support stakeholders in identifying the requirements and setting the appropriate evaluation criteria for each competition

Objective 8: Actively manage risks (mitigating them where possible) to legally and contractually protect the University.

16. Social Value, sustainability and ethical sourcing

- 16.1. The University of Bristol is a global civic institution which uses its resources, influence and connections to contribute to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the communities in which we all work.
- 16.2. Procurement supports the goals of the University Strategy, notably Goal 3 (Sustainability and Climate Change) and Goal 8 (Contributing to Bristol's Economy, Services and Society).
- 16.3. The Procurement Team leads the University's approach to responsible procurement, comprising Social Value, sustainability and ethical sourcing.
 - i) Procurement will realise Social Value, ensuring that the purchasing contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Bristol, the West of England and the South West. This will include the promotion of socially responsible local supply including paying the real Living Wage.
 - ii) Procurement will consider the whole-life cost of ownership of goods, services and works, and supports the University's strategy to become net carbon neutral for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2030. Procurement will improve knowledge of Scope 3 emissions (from suppliers), and ensure that this reduces by 30% by 2030.
 - iii) Procurement will contribute to high environmental standards and working conditions, and will eliminate Modern Slavery from our supply chain. The share of the University's spend being spent within the surrounding region will increase.

- 16.4. Sustainability is not only about the reduction of our environmental impact but is also how we continue to demonstrate our positive social and civic contribution; this is also sometimes referred to as social value. Within procurement this means ensuring we include sustainability and social value considerations at every stage of the procurement process.
- 16.5. The Procurement Team will continually improve its understanding of sustainability and social value to ensure that it takes opportunities to reduce any of the negative impacts of its procurement activities and maximise the value it can bring to the environment and society. As part of the University's commitment to sustainability and social value the team is committed to support a number of [Green Pledges](#).
- 16.6. The University is accredited to the real Living Wage, requiring both a commitment to be made by the University regarding direct employees, and for the University to require a corresponding commitment from service providers.
- 16.7. The Procurement Team will work with the business community to develop and enhance relations and the procurement experience for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) as well as play our part in strengthening the local and regional economy. This includes targeted engagement with SMEs from a Black And Minority Ethnic background and those based in the South West of England.

Objective 9.1: Maintain Living Wage Foundation accreditation as part of the University's commitment as a global civic institution, and to ensure that suppliers continue to maintain this standard.

Objective 9.2: Facilitate the University's strategy to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Objective 9.3: Increase the University's spend with local suppliers from £28m in 2021/22 to £40m by 2029/30.

17. Collaborative procurement

- 17.1. The University already has considerable experience in collaboration, notably by aligning common purchases with other institutions in the sector and the surrounding area, and by maximising use of national and sector frameworks, both those promoted by Higher Education purchasing groups (such as the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium, of which the University is an active member), and those promoted by wider public sector purchasing bodies, such as Crown Commercial Services.
- 17.2. The University implements the findings of the [Diamond Report](#) into efficiency, effectiveness and value for money in British universities. In addition to seeking opportunities for collaboration with other institutions, this includes consolidating requirements between Schools and Divisions within the University. Procurement's role in facilitating this collaboration and sharing best practice also extends to supporting subsidiary companies, sharing best practice in procurement and ensuring they have access to agreements and contracts that are established.
- 17.3. The use of frameworks can drive efficiencies, as it eliminates process costs for all parties involved.

Objective 10: Deliver efficiencies through collaboration, by promoting consolidation among University departments, with peer institutions in the region and via Higher Education purchasing consortia.

18. Review and Reporting

- 18.1. This plan will be subject to an annual review and approval of changes by the Chief Financial Officer
- 18.2. The Procurement Team will report annual progress against the objectives to the Finance & Infrastructure Committee

References

UoB Financial Regulations

UoB Procurement Policy and Procedures

Procurement Act 2023