



UK Universities Purchasing Consortia

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Statement on supporting the Higher Education procurement community

The Higher Education sector faces significant financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which may affect the ability of institutions to deliver excellence in teaching and research. Universities UK (UUK) recognises the challenges the sector faces, and has proposed a series of measures to ensure institutions are able to weather the financial challenges and play a central role in the recovery of the economy and communities following the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this approach, UUK appreciates it will be necessary to reduce costs, and identifies procurement as an area where savings can be achieved.

UKUPC (UK Universities Purchasing Consortia) is the evolved convergence of eight UK Consortia; APUC, HEPCW, LUPC, NEUPC, NWUPC, SUPC, TEC and TUCO who created a formal partnership to support collaborative procurement within Higher Education. We work together to maximise use of the sector's combined leverage, share knowledge / best practice and to support our wider procurement community.

The HE sector has a long history of collaborating on matters relating to the procurement of goods and services. With a mature contracting programme of over **130 framework agreements** available to members across all category areas (ICT, libraries, labs, STEMed, estates/facilities, catering, energy and professional services including legal and audit services etc), institutions are able to achieve significant savings across all areas of operation. The consortia have considerable support and buy-in from their members; expenditure through agreements for the academic year **2018-2019 was £1.9bn**, with cashable **savings in the region of £90m**; this is money the sector is able to use to support teaching and research within its institutions. Further information on expenditure and savings and the work undertaken by UKUPC can be found in the **UKUPC Impact Statement**.

UKUPC is able to provide increased value to the HE sector during this difficult time, there is scope for use / uptake of UKUPC collaborative agreements to expand and deliver further savings and efficiencies to institutions. With significant expertise in procurement, geared specifically to the HE sector, consortia work with members to develop these framework agreements to meet their needs and provide value for money through sustainable collaborative procurement. Active contract management ensures members continue to receive benefits through the lifetime of the agreements.

The role of UKUPC in supporting and enhancing expertise within the HE procurement community becomes crucial during a period of such financial challenge. As well as procurement support, UKUPC is able to provide additional value-added services through learning and development, key research and reports, and personalised procurement services to generate additional savings. Training and support for the sector's procurement community is central in protecting institutions through improving compliance and developing expert knowledge, and UKUPC's breadth of professional development programmes provide training across a number of skillsets. Additional services - such as system and data tools - will be key sources of information for corporate decision making and will support the sector in achieving greater value for money in these challenging financial times.

In this difficult time for the UK Higher Education sector, UKUPC will continue working with their members in the HE procurement community to support them with their current and future challenges.

Richard Murphy
Chair of UKUPC Board