

Sustainable Procurement

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HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
POLICY TITLE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Universities have material direct and indirect social, environmental and economic impacts through the research we do, through the experience and education we provide future leaders and through the way in which we engage with communities, government, business and our broader society. The Joint Future Thinking Taskforce on Universities recognised in their “New Horizons” document, the vital contribution HEIs have to play in delivering the Scottish Government's sustainable economy growth objectives.

Procurement is a key means of delivering these policy objectives, and underpins the achievement of the social, economic and environmental benefits that sustainable economic growth demands. The forthcoming Sustainable Procurement Bill will address sustainability in its widest sense, encompassing social, environmental and economic benefits, and further contextual relevance is given by the requirement for Scottish HEIs to produce economic impact and outcome reports, in support of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

This Sustainable Procurement Policy supports Heriot-Watt University's (HWU's) publically declared intention¹ to address the challenges of climate change and reduce carbon footprints. It also identifies ways in which procurement can deliver on the wider policy objectives of innovation and growth; promotion of jobs and training opportunities; and making it easier for SMEs to access and compete effectively for public-sector business.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sustainable Procurement Policy is to ensure that all staff involved in the procurement of works, goods and services manage that procurement activity in a way that:

- maximises the environmental and social benefits of public investment;
- minimises any adverse environmental impacts from the procurement of works, goods and services;
- allows the University to make a material contribution to the achievement of the Government's National Performance Framework outcomes;
- achieves these goals whilst delivering best value and compliance with Scottish and EU Procurement Law.

3. OBJECTIVES

Adherence to this policy will allow the University to meet the requirements of The Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement Action Plan (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/sspap>), to promote improvements in sustainability performance in the public sector.

It will improve the University's performance in the annual Procurement Capability Assessments conducted by the sector Centre of Procurement Expertise (APUC Ltd.)

It will improve the University's performance in the Sustainable Procurement Task Force's Flexible Framework, a widely used self-assessment mechanism which allows organisations to measure and monitor their progress on sustainable procurement over time.

http://www.actionsustainability.com/evaluation/flexible_framework/.

Implementation of this policy will help to improve the University's performance in The Green League Table of UK universities created by People and Planet, a student network campaigning to end world poverty, defend human rights and protect the environment (<http://peopleandplanet.org/greenleague>). The University, as at June 2012 sits at 110th out of 153 HEIs based on its environmental management and performance and, like other HEIs is now receiving an increased number of FOI questions relating to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).

This policy will also help improve the University's performance in the Universities that Count (UTC) corporate responsibility benchmarking exercises.
<http://www.eauc.org.uk/utc>

4. SCOPE

The policy requires all staff with procurement responsibility, whether at an operational or strategic level, to:

- ensure sustainability and corporate social responsibility considerations are embedded within the procurement process;
- ensure all staff with procurement responsibility are trained in this area;
- ensure the procurement of goods, services and works is absolutely necessary and consider options to reduce, reuse and/or recycle;
- ensure economic, social and environmental impacts are all taken into consideration when making procurement decisions;
- acquisitions are made on a 'whole life cost basis';
- maximise the recycled and recyclable materials content of procurements;
- minimise the use of packaging materials;
- source energy-efficient products;
- support the use of the Government Buying Standards relating to sustainable procurement in product/service specification and tender design;
- consider commodities that are Fair Trade accredited;
- assist Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and local suppliers to understand the procurement processes in order that they can compete effectively.
- ensure compliance with all relevant procurement and environmental legislation;
- analyse the University's non-pay spend to identify areas where adverse environmental impacts can be mitigated;
- review carbon emissions associated with the procurement of goods, services and works.
- measure the impact of sustainable procurement and report to stakeholders.

This Policy applies across all campuses.

5. LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY

The principle areas of procurement comprise: Estates (capital works contracts, minor works, buildings and grounds maintenance, utilities); ICT; Hospitality Services; Schools and sections direct and indirect materials. Procurement Services, through their implementation of the Flexible Framework, will embed sustainability within each Procurement Commodity Strategy, engaging with the respective heads of each of the above principle areas, to embed sustainable procurement across the University. There is a natural linkage also to the Energy & Environment Officer.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Annual PCA audit of Flexible Framework implementation.
- Performance in relevant league tables.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

- Flexible Framework implementation progression to Levels 3, 4 and 5.
- Embody sustainable procurement within each major commodity strategy.
- Training in sustainability for key employees.

8. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FURTHER REFERENCE

Policies

HWU's Environmental Policy Statement:

<http://www.hw.ac.uk/estate/documents/environmental-policy-statement.pdf>

HWU's Fair-trade Catering Policy

<http://www.hw.ac.uk/policy/facilities/fair-trade-catering-policy.pdf>

Further reference

HWU's Procurement Strategy: WIP

HWU's Carbon Management Plan:

<http://www.hw.ac.uk/estate/documents/carbon-management-plan.pdf>

Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement Action Plan:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Procurement/policy/corporate-responsibility/sspapoct09>

Scottish Government's Community Benefits in Public Procurement:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/212427/0056513.pdf>

Buying Social – A Guide to Taking Account of Social Considerations in Public Procurement (European Commission):

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6457&langId=en>

Transition Heriot-Watt (THW) www.transitionheriot-watt.org.uk

The THW Steering Group aims to reduce the carbon footprint associated with the Edinburgh campus, and also to provide social and economic benefits for its community. THW work with departments such as Procurement, Estates, Hospitality and the University's Student Association on projects covering energy conservation, greener travel, more recycling, the re-use of students' unwanted items, promoting better diets and lowering the amount of food waste.

9. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

Contact Procurement Services at: procurement@hw.ac.uk

ⁱ The University has signed the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCS), and in doing so, has committed to producing and publishing a 5-year Climate Change Action Plan which includes measurable targets and timescales to achieve a significant reduction in emissions from all business operations and activities including:

- Energy consumption and source
- Waste reduction, recycling and responsible disposal
- Sustainable estates development
- Sustainable travel planning
- Responsible procurement of goods and services.

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