

ETHICAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

Whilst the University of Northampton (UON) expects its employees and staff to comply with this policy, it does not confer contractual rights or form part of any contract of employment and may be amended by the University or replaced at any time.

2 OWNERSHIP

This policy is managed by the Procurement Team and owned by the Directorate of Finance and Planning on behalf of UON. This policy will be reviewed by the Procurement Manager on a three-year basis.

3 ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This Ethical and Sustainable Procurement policy is a corporate policy and applies to all employees (and workers, as applicable) of UON including any wholly owned subsidiaries, unless an alternative policy exists, subject to any qualifying conditions.

4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 CIPS – "Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply", is a United Kingdom-based global professional body working for the purchasing and supply professions.
- 4.2 ETI Base Code - ETI Base Code is based on the internationally recognised standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN agency responsible for labour standards, which the UK has signed up to: these include working conditions are safe and hygienic, child labour is not used, living wages are paid, working hours are not excessive.
- 4.3 Ethical Procurement - Ethical Procurement can be defined as: "a procurement process that respects fundamental international standards against criminal conduct such as bribery, corruption, fraud and human rights abuse, and responds immediately to such matters where they are identified" and "result in progressive improvements to the lives of people who contribute to supply chains and are impacted by supply chain decisions." (Ethical and Sustainable Procurement, CIPS).

- 4.4 FSC - The Forest Stewardship Council is an international non-profit, multi-stakeholder organisation established in 1993 that promotes responsible management of the world's forests.
- 4.5 ILO - The International Labour Organization is a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice through setting international labour standards.
- 4.6 PEFC - The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification is an international, non-profit, non-governmental organization which promotes sustainable forest management through independent third-party certification.
- 4.7 Sustainable procurement - "Sustainable procurement considers the environmental, social and economic consequences of design, materials used, manufacturing methods, logistics and disposal." (Ethical and Sustainable Procurement, CIPS).
- 4.8 UN - The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization aiming to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

5 POLICY STATEMENT

- 5.1 UON recognises that there is a responsibility to ensure that products, goods, services and works that we procure are sourced ethically and sustainably and within our obligations to comply with UK legislation, we will endeavour to conduct our procurement processes in accordance with this policy.
- 5.2 UON will base this policy around the ETI Base Code. The ETI Base Code is based on the internationally recognised standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN agency responsible for labour standards, which the UK has signed up to: these include working conditions are safe and hygienic, child labour is not used, living wages are paid, working hours are not excessive.
- 5.3 UON is committed to procuring goods and services in a manner that promotes environmental sustainability, social responsibility and economic fairness.

In alignment to the commitments outlined in UON's Environmental Policy, we are dedicated to embedding sustainable procurement and ethical purchasing across all activities specifically, we will: -

- **Engage with supply chain partners** who uphold recognised national and international standards relating to environmental protection and human rights, including labour rights and anti-slavery legislation.
- **Assess goods and services** not only on cost and quality but also on their environmental, social, and whole-life impacts, including carbon footprint, resource use, and end-of-life disposal.
- **Promote responsible practices** within our supply chain by encouraging suppliers to actively consider and mitigate the social and environmental consequences of their operations.
- **Manage supplier relationships** in a way that supports the University's carbon reduction targets and broader sustainability objectives, including those set out in our Climate Strategy.

6 KEY PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 The purpose of this policy is to leverage the UON's purchasing power to deliver meaningful benefits for our students, staff, local community, and regional economy.
- 6.2 Procurement decisions will be based on an appropriate balance between economic, social and sustainable factors.
- 6.3 UON will seek to engage with local enterprises who actively support student and graduate employability, through internships, placements, and job opportunities. Preference may be given to organisations that demonstrate a commitment to developing local talent and contributing to the university's employability goals.
- 6.4 Within competitive processes and procedures suppliers and contractors are required to maintain the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in their business dealings and practices, adhering to the laws of the countries where they operate. UON must ensure that prospective suppliers are aligned to the University's ethical standards and corporate values.

- 6.5 Suppliers and contractors are required to inform UON, at any time during a competitive process or following the award of a contract, of any concerns they, or any member of their supply chain have in applying this policy and, to the extent that is appropriate and relevant, encourage suppliers and contractors to keep records to demonstrate that their actions (and those of their supply chain) are fair and above reproach. Suppliers and contractors may also be required to provide periodic reports or evidence demonstrating compliance with ethical and sustainable practices, particularly for high-value or high-risk contracts.
- 6.6 Provide appropriate support, guidance and training to UON staff engaged in procurement processes, and in particular tender evaluation, supplier relationship and contract management processes.
- 6.7 Communicate the Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Policy to UON staff and, where appropriate its suppliers and contractors, and make the policy available on the UON web site.
- 6.8 For contracts valued at over £5 million, UON will include at least three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. These KPIs will be used to monitor supplier performance, including delivery of ethical, social, and environmental commitments.

7 PROCEDURE

- 7.1 The Procurement Manager will have the right to exclude any supplier or contractor deemed ineligible to tender for or be awarded a contract when any of the conditions set out in the Procurement Act 2023 prevail.

In deciding whether to exclude a supplier or contractor, the Procurement Manager will consider the seriousness of the misconduct, whether it was related to the subject matter of the contract, when it was committed and the action taken or being taken to prevent its recurrence, but this discretion will not apply to convictions for offences where there is a mandatory requirement on public sector contracting authorities to exclude candidates in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023.

- 7.2 The Procurement Manager at their discretion will select and audit suppliers to ensure compliance. Audits may include requests for documentation or third-party certifications that demonstrate adherence to ethical, environmental, and social standards.

- 7.3 In the event of a breach, the Procurement Manager will undertake a thorough investigation, assess the findings, and report accordingly. Where necessary, and if required improvements are not achieved or are deemed unfeasible, the Procurement Manager may exercise discretion to initiate and manage the termination of the supplier relationship.

8 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 8.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the UON's Strategic Plan and its underlying principals, Financial Regulations, Procurement Strategy, Modern Slavery Policy & Procedure and other related policies and procedures.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASESMENT

- 9.1 There is no adverse equality impact within this policy. Please see the Equality Impact Assessment.

10 VERSION CONTROL

Version Control	Author	Date	Approval Record
V1/2	S Booker	March 2022	Approved
V3	D Bokeh	May 2025	Draft – New Policy
V4	J Baines	September 2025	Approved

Record of Amendments

Date	Version Number	Details of Change
March 2022	2	Rewritten into policy template with the addition of point 4.3.

May 2025	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reference to 2015 act changed to PA23. - New clause 6,4 to address underrepresented suppliers - New clause 6.9 to address KPI requirements under PA23 for over £5m contracts - More details added into some clauses
September 2025	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Movement of Definitions to section 4 - Re-wording of Clause 5.3 - Extension of clause 6.3 to include a principle that supports engagement with suppliers who support employment opportunities to students and graduates. - Re wording of clause 6.4 and 7.3