

Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium

Engagement Strategy – January 2016

Context

In 2015, SUPC developed a new strategic plan that will guide its activities from now until 2018. Within this strategy, SUPC outlined three key objectives:

- Provide high quality collaborative agreements that deliver excellent value
- Provide professional procurement support, advice and guidance for its members
- Take a significant role in driving the national higher education procurement agenda

Effective member engagement is essential to meet these objectives. SUPC has a legacy of regular member consultation and engagement through regular newsletters, emails, enhanced website, social media, meetings, surveys and member visits but it was felt that this needed to be expanded into a comprehensive member engagement strategy. This member engagement strategy has been developed in consultation with members, and is based on feedback from members through standardised surveys, formal workshops and written feedback on previous drafts.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this member engagement strategy is to formalise and increase the effectiveness of SUPC's engagement with their members; this in turn will support SUPC's business objectives. SUPC will develop a detailed engagement action plan to support this strategy separately.

The objectives of SUPC member engagement, in order of priority are:

SUPC Member Engagement Objective	SUPC Key Objective	Measure of success
Understand why some members do not use SUPC contracts	Provide high quality collaborative agreements that deliver excellent value	Increase in number of agreements used by SUPC members – see KPI*
Better understand the practical challenges faced by members	All	Year on year increase in member perception of SUPC acting as a member focused organisation Year on year increase in the number of procurement consultancy interventions – See KPI*
Raise awareness of the scope and benefits of current and future agreements	Provide high quality collaborative agreements that deliver excellent value	Increased expenditure through current agreements – see KPI*
Better understand members' current and	Provide high quality collaborative agreements	Increase expenditure through new and current

future contracting requirements	that deliver excellent value	agreements – see KPI*
Regularly inform SUPC member Heads of Procurement of their institution procurement activity through SUPC		Year on year increase in SUPC Heads of Procurement perception that they are informed of their institution procurement activity through SUPC
Increase the number and quality of member interactions so that members feel that SUPC is member focussed	All	Year on year increase in member perception of SUPC acting as a member focused organisation
Members keen to engage with SUPC	All	Increase in response rates to SUPC engagement initiatives
Fully participate in the development of national HE procurement strategy and operations . Seek members' views on such developments, represent these views and keep members fully informed on national developments	Take a significant role in driving the national higher education procurement agenda	Year on year increase in heads of procurements perception that SUPC is delivering this objective

*A list of SUPC's KPI's is shown in Appendix 1.

We will on ratification of this strategy establish baselines, through member surveys and analysis of previous activities, for the objectives that are not currently measured by a KPI. Improvement targets for each of these areas will then be agreed.

Member Groups Identified

SUPC, in consultation with members, has identified several key member audiences that would benefit from a defined engagement approach. These audiences are:

- Vice-Chancellors
- Chief Operating Officers
- Functional Directors such as Finance, HR, ICT, Library and Estates
- Heads of Procurement
- Category Managers (both within and outside central procurement teams)
- Lead Buyers (both within and outside central procurement teams)
- Customers and end users

SUPC will segment these audiences by their interest in SUPC activities and their ability to impact SUPC activities; for example we will segment member institutions by attributes such as level of procurement maturity, spend levels, research profile, international focus, and key specialisms as well as contract call-off and usage strategies to ensure we are providing the appropriate level of

engagement. We understand that a one-size-fits-all approach will not support successful engagement with members or other enabling bodies.

SUPC will use the Heads of Procurement as a source of advice and information to ensure that a consistent message that supports institutions' procurement objectives is provided to all key institutional audiences.

There are also a number of enabler bodies, which while they are not SUPC members, will support us in achieving our member engagement objectives. These enabler bodies include professional membership bodies such as BUFDG, HEPA, AHUA, AUA, UCISA, SCOUNL, AUDE, CIPS¹ and other professional bodies etc.

Core Values

SUPC will adopt the following core values, which will underpin all engagement activities.

<p><u>Responsive and Reciprocal</u></p> <p>Engagement is a two-way process and we appreciate the benefits of mutual learning between members and SUPC. We value members' contributions to improving outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Inclusive</u></p> <p>We commit to seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially interested or affected by SUPC work.</p>	<p><u>Understanding</u></p> <p>We will seek to understand the practical challenges within our member institutions/organisations. We will spend time with our members to ensure we understand their requirements, resources and challenges.</p>
<p><u>Objective and Advisory</u></p> <p>We will ensure information is accessible and objective and facilitate engagement with all members. We will provide advice that is focused on the best interests of members</p>	<p><u>Open, Transparent and Trusting</u></p> <p>We will provide information so members can participate in a meaningful way and will foster a culture of sharing ideas.</p>	<p><u>Respectful</u></p> <p>We will value members and use their input to improve policy and outcomes. We will actively listen to members and respond in appropriate and respectful ways.</p>

Methods

SUPC will undertake continual engagement with all members and this will be supplemented with targeted methods depending on the particular objective. SUPC will engage with members in the most appropriate way to achieve maximum impact; this means that we may engage with different identified groups and individuals in different ways depending on the requirements of a particular project.

SUPC will facilitate opportunities to support institutions in achieving best value in their procurement activities; we will develop an engagement and communications plan to support our category management activities, procurement shared service and other activities and will seek opportunities to support our members through all of our activities. SUPC will use a variety of engagement tools that are most appropriate for the particular engagement. These will include the following:

- Personal face to face meetings – member visits, regional and SUPC wide meetings
- Webinars

¹ See Appendix 2 for glossary

- Telephone (including skype and conference calls)
- Attend sector events
- Events and workshops
- Website
- Emails
- Surveys
- Focus groups

As a first step we will undertake a member survey to establish a baseline for our objectives, review the terms of reference and effectiveness of our commodity groups, with our members explore the possibility of offering more regional events and establish and communicate a member support structure. We will buy a Client Relationship Management System and use it as a tool to monitor and manage our member engagement activities .It will be a repository of information that all members of the SUPC team can easily access and utilise.

Regular and appropriate consultation will continue to be a priority as part of our member engagement. We will undertake this in a variety of ways that will include web-based surveys, polling at meetings, telephone interviews and face-to-face meetings. We will commit to better understand our members’ requirements and challenges.

Risk Management

This table outlines the key risks inherent in our engagement strategy, and how SUPC can mitigate these risks.

Risk	Impact H/M/L	Likely H/M/L	Mitigating Action	Risk Category
Limited resources within member institutions and within SUPC	H	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUPC has recently expanded its team, which has provided us with greater resources to address member requirements. • New Client Relationship Management System will provide a central repository for member information that will be shared by all SUPC staff and will enable SUPC to more effectively and efficiently use its staff for member engagement. 	RED
Limited interest from members in engaging with SUPC	H	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By clearly demonstrating the benefits of engagement with SUPC, we will motivate members to prioritise engagement with SUPC. • We will find out why some SUPC members are not interested in engaging and develop an action plan accordingly whilst accepting that some members may not want to engage • We will use different consultative 	AMBER

			techniques including regular surveys and interview to gain a better understanding of members' requirements and adapt our engagement method accordingly.	
Differing expectations of engagement outcomes by members and SUPC	M	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will clearly communicate to members why we would like to engage with them and we will communicate the results of the engagement. We will be clear that SUPC cannot satisfy all its members' priorities. This strategy will show where we intend to improve engagement 	GREEN

SUPC has a full risk register and these risks are only for the implementation of our engagement strategy.

Implementation and Evaluation

Based on this strategy, SUPC will develop an implementation plan outlining specific engagement tactics and timelines. We will pilot new approaches and evaluate their success based on achieving the engagement objective. We will assess the success of this strategy as a whole against the engagement objectives outlined at the beginning of this document on an annual basis and report back to the SUPC Board and Council.

SUPC Key Performance Indicators

Objectives:	KPI	Target	
		Year 1	Years 2,3,4
Provide high quality collaborative agreements that deliver excellent value	Increase number of agreements with member spend above £5m per annum	2	2 per annum [total 8 over 4 years]
	Increase in savings delivered (based on 5% average savings)	£1m per annum	£1m per annum
Provide professional support, advice and guidance for our higher education members	Number of new assignments per annum	5	To be reviewed
	Saving delivered from assignments	£50k per annum	To be reviewed
	Number of institutions using shared procurement resource	0	Two in year two and thereafter review
	Number of times members supported with agreement call-off and commitment	3 Target saving of £100k per annum	To be reviewed
Ensure that national HE collaborative procurement is in line with SUPC member interests	Member feedback from annual survey	Feedback demonstrates improved satisfaction- Benchmark to be established	To be reviewed

Glossary of Terms

BUFDG	British Universities Finance Directors Group
HEPA	Higher Education Procurement Association
AHUA	Association of Heads of University Administration
AUA	Association of University Administrators
UCISA	Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association
SCONUL	The Society of College, National and University Libraries
AUDE	Association of Universities Directors of Estates
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply