

**SUPC**

Southern Universities  
Purchasing Consortium

# Delivering Value through Innovative Procurement

SUPC Impact Report 2018/19







We work for universities and are owned by universities. The HE sector is facing unprecedented challenges; funding reviews, Brexit, increased competition for students, regulatory changes and pension scheme changes are all contributing to a perfect storm for universities. Procurement teams are striving to deliver more with less. We understand universities and work with finance, procurement and other university staff to find the right procurement solutions to provide value for money for the institution, its students, and its wider community.

Our in-depth knowledge of universities, and specifically how to engage positively with academic areas, is our key strength. Our members know finance and procurement teams must work together with other university departments to deliver on university and departmental strategic goals and enhance the student experience and research delivery – we are our members’ preferred partner to make this happen.

We understand how to connect strategy to operations to deliver cash and time savings in a way that provides compliance and reassurance for your institution. Our knowledge of higher education and our wide reach through our sister business units - SUMS Consulting and

# The benefits of SUPC membership are far greater than the membership fees.

**HEAD OF PROCUREMENT  
SUPC MEMBER INSTITUTION**

the Procurement Shared Service - sets us apart from others.

We engage actively with organisations across the sector including other consortia and professional bodies. Our strategic partnership with the London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC) has allowed us to reduce duplication and create new opportunities for joint working across all category areas.

Our members are part of a unique community that represents over a quarter of university spend across the sector.

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## About SUPC



Full Members



Associate Members



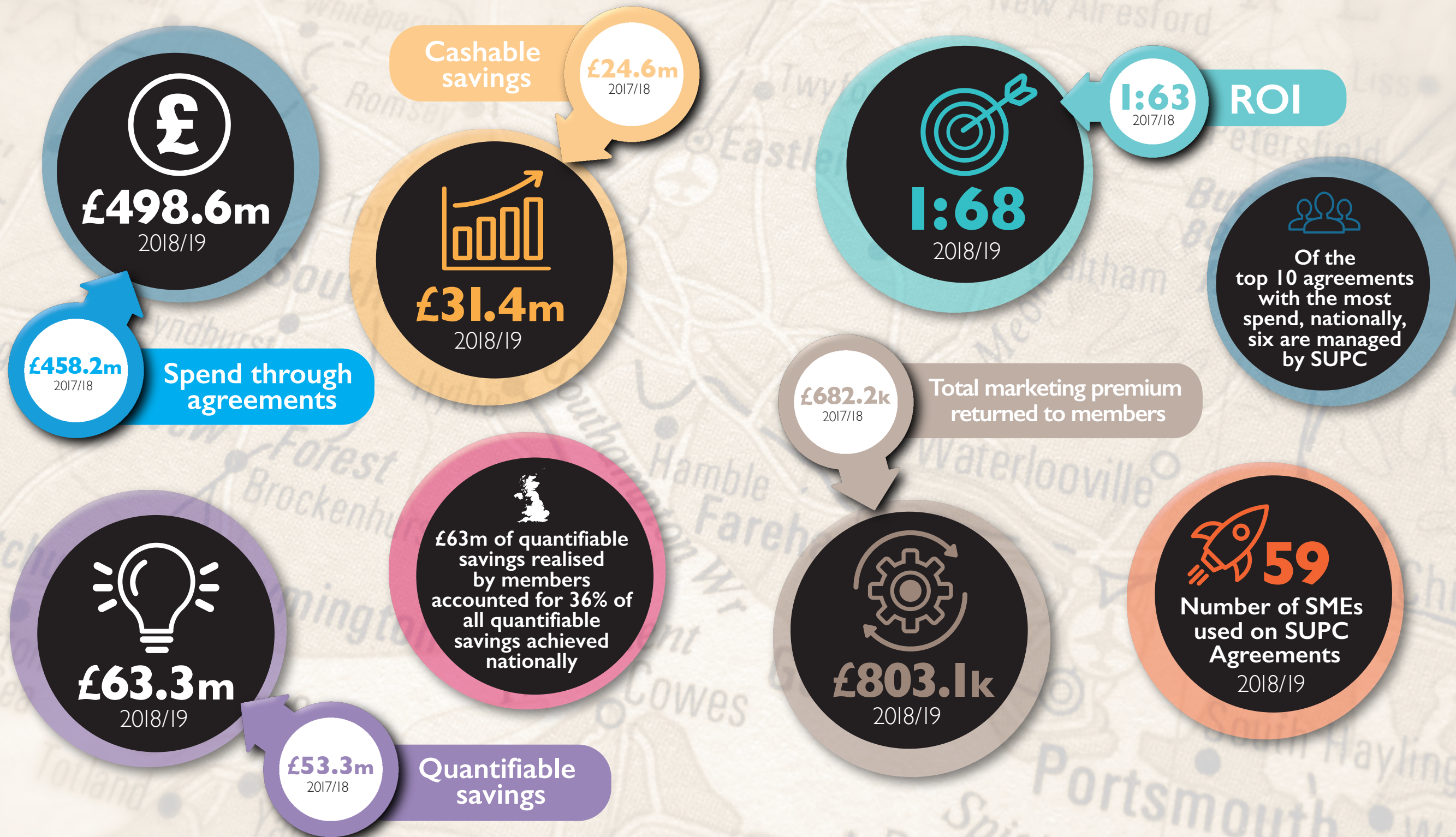
Affiliate Members

Academy of Contemporary Music	Buckinghamshire Education Skills & Training Partnership (BEST)	Dudley College of Technology	Harlow College	Northampton College	Suffolk New College
Activate Learning	Canterbury College	East Coast College	Hartpury College	Oaklands College	Sussex Downs
Amersham and Wycombe College	Central Sussex College	East Kent College	Havant & South Downs College	Peter Symonds College	Tresham Institute of F&HE
Aston University Engineering Academy	Chelmsford College	East Surrey College	Hertford Regional College	Peterborough Regional College	Truro College
Basingstoke College of Technology	Chichester College Group	Easton & Otley College	Highbury College	Plymouth College of Art & Design	Uxbridge College
Bedford College	City Academy Bristol	Epping Forest College	Leicester College	Portsmouth College	Waltham Forest College
Berkshire College of Agriculture	City College Norwich	Exeter College	London School of Theology	Seevic	Wednesfield High School
Birmingham City University	City College Plymouth	Farnborough College of Technology	Luton Sixth Form College	Solihull College	West Herts College
Academy Trust	City of Bath College	Gloucestershire College	Merchants Academy	Somerset College of Art & Technology	West Thames College
Birmingham Metropolitan College	City of Bristol College	Greater Brighton Metropolitan College	Mid Kent College	South Essex College	Wiltshire College
Bridgwater College	Cornwall College	Hadlow Group	Moorlands College	South Gloucestershire & Stroud College	Windsor Forest Colleges Group
Brockenhurst College		Halesowen College	Moulton College	Strode College	Worthing College
			New College Swindon	Strood Academy	Yeovil College

Our Members

\*As of 31/07/2019





## Our Impact

\*The increase in spend and savings figures is largely accounted for due to the inclusion of TUCO data in 2018/19.



We provide solutions to university procurement challenges. SUPC provides access to frameworks covering a wide range of products and services to help universities run effectively and deliver a strong student experience. Our unique membership model rewards universities who direct spend through our agreements by delivering time and money savings, as well as returned marketing premium every year.

**SUPC Members benefit from:**

- Access to over 130 collaborative frameworks to meet the spectrum of procurement needs
- Access to procurement advice and support from our team of specialists
- Access to our member base of universities, representing the breadth of UK mission groups, for networking and knowledge sharing
- Free member events including an annual conference, agreement launches, new member inductions and other events to learn about the latest insights from SUPC membership and beyond
- Commodity and category group meetings to discuss discipline-specific issues in a collaborative and supportive environment with like-minded colleagues
- Opportunities to shape new and re-tendered frameworks
- Quarterly spend reports to help you manage your framework usage
- An annual benefits statement to help you demonstrate value through your membership and deliver greater value for money based on your institution's spend profile
- Access to significantly discounted training courses and value-added services, such as procurement legal advice and market insight
- Discounted access to professional development support to help senior leaders operate at peak performance within new or evolving roles

- Knowledge exchange through a series of free publications including an e-Digest and case studies
- Access to our accumulated experience and knowledge of higher education institutions and developments over 50 years.

# Our internal Procurement Team view our SUPC contacts as highly supportive and responsive colleagues.

**HEAD OF PROCUREMENT,  
SUPC MEMBER INSTITUTION**



## Why Become a Member?





# Bernarde Hyde

## CEO

Bernarde has over 20 years' experience working in partnership with universities to help them make meaningful and impactful changes. Understanding the complexities and challenges of Higher Education is at the core of what Bernarde does – she thrives when identifying the areas where change will have the most impact. She specialises in business models and benefit realisation. Bernarde overlays expert consulting skills and commercial awareness gained from working in the retail sector with Debenhams plc and in manufacturing.



# Rob Johnson

## HEAD OF CATEGORY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

Rob is an experienced purchasing professional with over 30 years' insight gained in executive and consultancy roles throughout the manufacturing, service, finance and aviation arenas, and across the private, public, third and higher education sectors. Rob specialises in the development and deployment of procurement best practice, the creation of robust category strategies, the identification and delivery of cost reductions, and the creation of a value-adding procurement ethos.



# Gavin Phillips

## CATEGORY MANAGER (ACADEMIC SERVICES)

Before joining SUPC, Gavin spent over 20 years working in Higher Education and has in-depth knowledge of the library supply chain. Most recently, he was the Acquisitions Services Manager for Library Services at Imperial College London and was part of the Contract Management Group for the Books Framework Agreement. His skills include member engagement, supplier management and delivering operational excellence.



# Tammie Purdue

## CATEGORY MANAGER (ICT)

Tammie brings over 20 years' experience to her role at SUPC. Before joining us, Tammie spent 14 years in the NHS and brings with her specific experience in the ICT and Telecommunications areas. Her skills span operational procurement, supply chain management, e-procurement systems, strategic planning, regulated tendering, project management and contract planning and management.



# Jayne Thorn

## CATEGORY MANAGER (CORPORATE SERVICES)

Jayne brings 15 years' procurement experience to SUPC from various industries including food, IT and pharmaceuticals. Jayne's skills cover category reviews, the tendering process, and stakeholder engagement and management. Jayne combines analytical thinking with a focus on departmental and organisational goals. She is skilled at delivering savings and adding value for members.



# Dani Sweeney

## CATEGORY MANAGER (STEMed)

Dani brings over 20 years' procurement experience to her role at SUPC and manages the Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine (STEMed) Category. Before joining the team, Dani spent over 12 years in both the rail and water industries and has significant experience of procurement regulations. Dani brings expertise in contract planning and management, supplier and stakeholder engagement, and e-procurement systems to her role.



# Taron Smith

## ASSISTANT CATEGORY MANAGER

Taron brings to his role experience in the learning and development sector as well as financial services, working principally with banks, insurance firms and mortgage companies in a procurement and supplier management capacity. Taron's skills include stakeholder engagement, supplier management and compliance. Taron is your first point of contact at SUPC for all enquiries related to the Estates Category.



# Chris O'Hagan

## DATA ANALYST

Chris has eight years' experience working as an analyst in procurement, and brings a diverse set of skills to his role including, change management, data/financial reporting, insight analysis and project management. He is also responsible for developing SUPC's reporting approach to ensure the organisation presents insightful information to members, suppliers and other stakeholders in the most effective way.

Full list of all SUPC staff is available on our website [www.supc.ac.uk](http://www.supc.ac.uk).

# Your Delivery Team



Responsible procurement is important to our members, to their students, to their staff and to us. We want to look after our communities, our fellow global citizens and our environment. By working with us, members access agreements tendered with responsible procurement in mind. Members can be responsible procurement champions by getting involved in our working groups. Procurement and sustainability leads can access online tools to manage activity in supply chains – looking at modern slavery, support for local SMEs and protection of our environment. We help members deliver responsible solutions to procurement challenges.

In 2018/19, we made sure all of our tenders included questions on responsible procurement. Where it was appropriate, we increased the importance of responsible procurement criteria. Most recently, we made the submission of Modern Slavery Statements mandatory for all suppliers awarded on our Temporary and Permanent Recruitment Services Agreement, regardless of their annual turnover. We made sure we helped any SMEs where they did not have skills or experience in this area to develop a meaningful statement and approach. SUPC also has its own Modern Slavery Statement, which explains explicitly our commitment to protecting the welfare of individuals in our supply chains.

We provide our members with annual Scope 3 Emission Reports to help them assess the environmental impact of various supply chains. This year we are working with our consortia colleagues

across the UK to improve this report so that it provides more accurate and insightful information.

Our members tell us that they want us to help them learn more about responsible procurement and to provide a forum to share best practice. To do this, we include responsible procurement programming in our events and meetings whenever possible. We are relaunching our Responsible Procurement Special Interest Group and are formally aligning our activity with the national Higher Education Procurement Association's (HEPA's) four sub-groups: Social Value, Human Rights, Climate Change Impact Reduction, and Sustainable Packaging and Deliveries.

We are making it easier for members to prioritise responsible procurement by producing questions sets for tenders and call-offs that institutions can use for their own mini-competitions. This will ultimately support changing university strategies, which are putting more emphasis on environmental and social sustainability.

As a member of the sector, we want to examine our own activities to ensure we are as environmentally responsible as possible. We are reviewing and refreshing our own procurement and contract management procedures to make sure we embed responsible procurement in all elements of the procurement cycle. This year's joint conference is eliminating all non-essential printed and single-use material as part of our exhibition. Finally, we are investigating compliance to either level five of the Flexible Framework and ISO20400 certification.

## Our Commitment to Responsible Procurement





**S**UPC members spent over £171 million on ICT products and services through agreements in 2018/19. They made the most of this spend by working with SUPC to achieve time and money savings, while ensuring they are ready for rapid changes in technology.

### Access to relevant, compliant and money-saving solutions

To maximise return on their often limited time and resources, our members have continued to use the three national ICT frameworks led by SUPC to connect with suppliers they know will provide the compliant, high quality goods and services they need. Spend through these agreements has increased over the past three years. We have seen an increase of more than 24% through the Software Licence Resellers Agreement in the last year alone.

This means our members have:

- Easy access to relevant, high quality suppliers who understand the sector
- A greater portion of the marketing premium is returned to them thanks to higher spend through a single agreement (based on their institution's spend data)
- Increased return on investment for procurement through the use of robust, compliant arrangements.



In addition to frameworks led by SUPC, our members have access to suppliers and solutions through ICT frameworks which are managed by other procurement consortia in the sector. This opens up a wider range of options to solve the variety of ICT-related challenges faced by institutions today.

Members have accessed SUPC's expertise and have looked to us as a hub of information on the best sector procurement options. Members have used our advice to implement collaborative solutions instead of running their own costly procurement exercises. We helped universities use agreements in ways that meet the unique requirements of their institutions to deliver time and money savings.

### Making things easier

This year we have worked with our members to develop new terms and conditions for use with ICT suppliers. These template terms and conditions mean that members can engage with suppliers more quickly and without having to start from scratch each time. They can focus on the specific requirements of their institution and their current project, rather than on the general points of connecting with ICT providers.

By engaging with members regularly, we have ensured that our ICT frameworks accurately reflect latest requirements in the sector.

### Building connections, influence and expertise

We represented our members' needs at the national level, ensuring their voices are heard in cross-sector discussions. Through attendance at the National ICT Strategy Group alongside other sector consortia, we contribute to identifying common requirements and increasing influence markets and suppliers.

Members themselves have connected with peers and built their expertise by attending our computing group and other ICT events. These events address current ICT hot topics that may affect an institution or the sector as a whole.

Events also provide opportunities to hear from framework suppliers. By getting to know them

## What we do

- Develop or provide access to framework agreements across the following commodities:
  - Audio Visual
  - Computing
  - Software
  - Telecommunications
- Provide advice and support to institutions buying in these areas
- Keep up-to-date with market developments and share that knowledge with members
- Provide opportunities for members buying ICT goods and services to network and learn from each other.

and their offer better, procurement teams can make more informed decisions when appointing.

### What's next?

Students, staff and other HE stakeholders are becoming increasingly reliant on cloud storage in everyday life and therefore expect access to it from their university as well. Given the multitude of cloud storage providers in the market, we have identified this as an area where we can assist our members to find quality, compliant suppliers.

We are working with public cloud providers to look at a national strategy for cloud procurement for the sector. We hope to be able to launch a new framework for our members that will allow them to quickly and compliantly access the best suppliers in the market.

# Category Focus: ICT



## The challenge

The University's existing high throughput computing services had been in place for 10 years and it was time for a refresh. The research computing team was keen to consider future expansion requirements, as well as current needs. They wanted a way for the University and individual researchers to quickly buy extra data storage when they need it, without this taking valuable time away from their research. This could also support their funding applications by providing known costs at the start.

## What happened?

The team carried out a mini-competition under SUPC's Servers, Storage and Solutions National Agreement. Discussions with suppliers before and during the process helped them to understand the University's specific requirements. This included the need to expand storage in the future. Using the framework meant that all suppliers, including the incumbent, were treated fairly and equally.

Appropriate terms and conditions have already been negotiated by SUPC with framework suppliers. UCL could therefore appoint a supplier without time-consuming and costly legal negotiations. The faster timescale for selection also worked well with the one-year funding model at UCL.

## The outcome

Using the framework to appoint a supplier delivered increased storage, better performance and a quick turnaround:

### Storage:

- Significantly increased storage capacity from 384 terabytes (TB) under the old system, to 1 petabyte (PB) as part of the initial installation, up to a whopping 3PB as part of the December 2019 upgrade.

### Performance:

- Provided a 100-fold increase in performance from 1Gbit to 100Gbit input/output.

### Time/money saved:

- Saved time using pre-agreed contract terms
- Conducted a 3-6 month mini-competition
- Achieved a 1-month turn-around for researcher kit.

- A massive expansion of data storage and a significant improvement in performance speed. This means academics and research students can carry out their work in a shorter time.
- A quicker and easier process for buying extra capacity from the contracted supplier if research requires it in the future. This improves the experience for researchers and encourages consistency across the University.
- Access to ongoing system administration and stability (provided by central IT) which researchers would not get when buying their own systems. This saves time and money for



## ICT Case Study

Meeting researchers' needs for high throughput computing: saving time and increasing capacity



- UCL research staff when problems do occur.
- Better value for money across the whole life cost of the service.

The research computing team is now using the framework to re-tender for a high performance computer and associated provider; they are repeating the process because they know it works.

**We're really happy with what the framework allows us to do and that is why it is our default option for supplier selection and appointment.**

OWAIN KENWAY,  
UCL, HEAD OF RESEARCH COMPUTING





In 2018/19 SUPC members spent nearly £143 million through corporate services agreements to ensure their universities operated effectively and efficiently. From travel services, to recruitment, to a wide range of consulting services, SUPC is working to ensure members' needs are covered.

### Delivering sector-specific benefits

This year we have updated three of our frameworks: National Education Recruitment Advertising and Resourcing Services (NERARS), Temporary and Permanent Recruitment, and Travel Management Services. These have delivered a wide range of benefits to our members, including:

- Sector-specific suppliers who are able to provide a tailored service
- End-to-end services and one-stop-shop arrangements, where all related activity can be carried out, tracked and evaluated through a single contract
- Transparent pricing arrangements and a clearer picture of spend

Technology developments within the travel industry

give institutions greater visibility of where their employees are in the world when travelling. This has created advantages related to duty of care.

### Frameworks designed with you in mind

Operating within the HE environment means that our members face challenges specific to their sector. We tailor our frameworks to meet those needs as closely as possible.

For example, we drew up the Temporary and Permanent Recruitment framework to cover job titles across a broad, sector-specific spectrum. This included those which are relevant in the higher education world, such as librarians and invigilators, as well as more general ones, including events roles and retail staff. This has enabled members to use specialist recruitment agencies and agreements that reflect their world and their needs. This framework included permanent recruitment in addition to temporary recruitment – the first time SUPC has tackled this spend area. This gives members a compliant route to market for permanent staff.



The Travel Management Services framework also offers a large number of sector specific benefits, such as academic fares and student group trips. These are not available outside the sector. Our members know that support through this framework is tailored to their circumstances. It remains one of the most used frameworks in the sector, with spend averaging £150m per year. We expect over £750m to run through the framework over the life of the contract.

### Responding to members' feedback

Input from our members helps to shape the work that we do and the framework agreements we negotiate for them.

Recruitment is a big spend area for institutions. They asked us for a framework to cover both temporary and permanent recruitment, bringing both aspects together and providing an easy way to transfer employees from temp to perm. We included this broader remit when we updated the Temporary and Permanent Recruitment framework.

We have eight SMEs on the framework, as a result of hearing how institutions wanted the opportunity to work with smaller suppliers. We also appointed location-specific agencies with the knowledge and expertise for more challenging labour markets, such as London and Oxford. The selection of suppliers was designed to meet the needs of university recruitment teams with people strategies to deliver for their institutions.

We recognise that university procurement teams have many demands on their time.

### What we do

- Develop and provide access to framework agreements across the following commodities:
  - Travel management services
  - Recruitment and recruitment advertising
  - Resourcing services
  - Consulting services
- Provide expert advice and support in these areas
- Maintain and develop understanding of the supplier market for academic institutions' requirements
- Provide opportunities for members to come together, learn from each other and meet suppliers.

Keeping up-to-date with the latest available frameworks can be time-consuming. We held a launch event for two of our updated frameworks, which brought over 150 people together to learn more about the frameworks and how it can help them. The opportunity to meet the suppliers and understand their offer was well-received.

### What's next?

Over the next year, we will explore university media and marketing spend within our membership and the wider sector. Our aim is to assess what kind of collaborative procurement solutions will provide the best value for universities within this significant spend area.

## Category Focus: Corporate Services



### The challenge

The city of Oxford presents a challenging recruitment environment. Oxford Brookes University competes for staff with four large hospitals and a new city centre shopping mall, as well as the University of Oxford. The area also suffers from transport issues which add to the challenge of finding people to work in the city.

Managers who needed to recruit staff at Oxford Brookes found that agencies without an understanding of the specific challenges in the local labour market struggled to find candidates for them. As a result, there was not a standardised approach or consistent supplier choice across the University. Roles remained vacant or were filled with candidates who were not the best fit.

### What happened?

Impressed by the strong supplier selection on the SUPC Temporary and Permanent Recruitment Agreement, the procurement department ran a mini-competition covering lots one, two, five and six (admin, ancillary, corporate services and IT). They took the opportunity to get to know the suppliers and talk to them about the market. This helped enormously in making the best choices for the University.

The procurement department worked hard



to engage the HR department and heads of recruiting departments, asking them to input to supplier questions and rating. Not only did they feel involved, their understanding of what to look for when filling a vacancy increased.

### The outcome

The University has seen a number of benefits from using the SUPC framework to appoint suppliers:

- Quality of candidates has improved.
- More staff are using contracted suppliers because they recognise the quality of the

agencies on the framework. This means more university spend is going through a compliant route to market.

- A clearer pricing structure.
- Opportunities to move staff from temporary to permanent employment, both for new appointments and for people who have been with the University longer-term.

An additional benefit is the agencies' contribution to student employability through attendance at job fairs; agencies provide opportunities for a wider range of relevant experience.

**Finding suppliers who had a local presence and understanding was important to us. Using the right agencies for us enables us to appoint the right candidates at the right price in a challenging market.**

**IAIN MCWILLIAMS,**  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT,  
OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

## Corporate Services Case Study

Selecting recruitment agencies that provide the right candidates at the right price



**W**ith a spend of over £63 million through STEMed Category agreements in 2018/19, SUPC members are looking for reliable solutions that consider the growing need to be sustainable. SUPC has looked at ways to minimise environmental impact and increase social value by using SMEs.

### Choice and confidence in suppliers

During the year, we re-tendered and extended a number of frameworks and agreements. This included the Laboratories Consumables and Chemicals Agreement and the Antibodies and Sera Agreement.

Our members have been able to:

- Choose between several lots covering specific items and a one-stop-shop covering all labs requirements in one place
- Access new suppliers, such as CamLab and Greyhound Chromatography, as well as longer-established suppliers such as VWR, SLS and Fisher Scientific
- Feel confident that suppliers have been vetted and reviewed for the sector. This allows them to focus on their own particular requirements



- Use marketplace solutions to order and pay for goods and services with minimal fuss.

For many of our members, STEMed is an area of significant spend and one which is helping to grow student numbers. Updated and extended agreements have helped to reassure members about security of supply, where these disciplines form a core part of their income generation and their offer to students.

### Understanding our members' priorities

We know that value for money and compliance are equally important to our members. We continue to support them in accessing both. For example, this year we worked with members to develop new terms and conditions to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and serve their priorities. Having pre-agreed Ts and Cs means universities spend less time on this element and more time on procuring the right goods and services for their needs. Procurement budgets still need to work as hard as possible – to this end, we included a marketing premium rebate of 0.5% on the Laboratories Consumables and Chemicals agreement.

SUPC is focused on continuous improvement of agreements throughout the agreement life – we don't simply let and forget. By keeping up-to-date with market developments throughout the life of the contract, we ensure our agreements can respond to changing requirements.

We remained a hub of information and advice for members through events, meetings and one-to-one support. We held two SUPC Lab Group Meetings to help members share challenges, discover solutions and connect with colleagues. Our meetings and events address hot topics such as recycling and plastic use within the STEMed Category. We coordinated our activities with larger sector events so that members could meet with the greatest number of colleagues and suppliers possible when out of the office or lab – we want our members to feel they achieve value and use their time as efficiently as possible when attending our events.

### Working together with other consortia

We recognise that collaboration increases the benefits we can bring to our members. Our members can use frameworks offered by any of the higher education consortia across the UK. We have continued to keep members informed about all consortia agreements. This supports them to select the best option for their institution's strategic goals, wherever that option comes from.

By working alongside the other consortia, we have maintained an up-to-date understanding of the marketplace nationally, not just regionally. This gives our members avenues beyond local suppliers. Together we have formed a national strategy group looking at how to develop the STEMed offer and incorporate the new technologies and methodologies required by institutions.

Through forums to share best practice across consortia and individual institutions, we have been able to communicate consistently to suppliers in the market about buyers' needs.

### What's next?

This coming year, we will re-tender the agreement for laboratory and gases and related equipment, and host a launch event for our Lab Consumables and Chemicals Agreement. One of our core activities will be to look at the national STEMed strategy for the next five years to ensure our activities will meet members' research and teaching requirements while responding to sustainability needs and new ways of working. Finally, we will explore requirements for agreements within the area of engineering across our membership and the wider sector.

## Category Focus: Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine (STEMed)



### The challenge

The STEMed category is fast-moving, with technical advances and developing priorities influencing the market. The rise in importance of ethical considerations and sustainability issues, for example, means that frameworks need to develop to reflect what the HE sector needs now, and in the future. Our members' strategic plans in this area cover researchers, teaching staff and students, so procurement activity must support a broad remit.



### What happened?

The STEMed National Procurement Group has continued to bring together both procurement specialists and technical experts to develop solutions that meet members' STEMed procurement needs from regions such as SUPC, LUPC, APUC, HEPCW, NEUPC and NWUPC. Technicians, Researchers and academic colleagues have provided the ground knowledge of requirements and user feedback. Looking at angles such as spend data, market forces and the use of SMEs, the group has taken a strategic view of the market and the likely future needs of members when planning frameworks.

The sustainability of suppliers and their products has been a key consideration. It is an area that we know is important to our members and the activities of the group have reflected that.

### The outcome

Members have helped develop and then used frameworks to support their strategic plans, in a more effective way. Benefits have included:

- Following user feedback, we have added a non-branded 'teaching lot' and a 'research lot' with branded goods to the IRLA Chemicals and Consumables Framework. This distinction has



given members a choice of suppliers, goods and prices, which reflects their specific requirements.

- Universities such as Aston are exploring pipette and other plastic recycling and working with framework suppliers to understand what other recycling options are available.
- Members have used the high value lab equipment (HVLE) framework to purchase better quality machines, with better service agreements and warranties. This in turn enhances the student learning experience, since they get exposure to cutting-edge equipment which might otherwise not be possible. For example, undergraduate students at Aston University have been using a high value mass spectrometer for final year projects.

**SUPC helps us bring together the right stakeholders to develop support and solutions that deliver value for Aston, as well as the wider sector. We would not be able to do any of this without the involvement and commitment of the lab group members from across SUPC membership as well as support from colleagues in fellow consortia.**

*JITEEN AHMED, TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER, ASTON UNIVERSITY, CHAIR OF THE SUPC LAB GROUP AND CHAIR OF THE STEMED NATIONAL PROCUREMENT GROUP*

## STEMed Case Study

Future-proofing STEMed frameworks to support our members



**S** UPC members spent £17 million through Estates agreements in 2018/19. Our job is to make sure members know what options are available to support spend in this area.

### Key area of impact on students

Spending on construction, maintenance, cleaning and all the other commodities which make up the Estates category is key for higher education institutions. This has become ever more important as their students have demanded more from the physical environment. Our members are evolving the way their spaces can be used and need suppliers who can deliver as requirements change, such as architects who design safe and welcoming spaces to support student wellbeing.

This is also a complex area, with many suppliers, frameworks, contracts and consortia already involved. We have continued to support our members to navigate this complicated market and access the best solutions for them. We have done this through inviting providers of alternative solutions to member meetings including Pagabo, LHC, Crown Commercial, Southern Construction Framework and Consortium Procurement.



## Category Focus: Estates



### **Making connections on our members' behalf**

Where our fellow higher education procurement consortia already have estates-related frameworks in place, SUPC is no longer letting frameworks ourselves. We recognise that we can better serve our members' needs by assisting them to access the high quality existing agreements elsewhere. These will achieve the desired outcomes for their institutions, while ensuring we don't duplicate effort across the sector.

In addition, we have also built relationships with procurement consortia in the wider public and not-for-profit sectors who offer estates agreements. This includes public sector specialists, Pagabo and LHC. We believe that it is beneficial to our members to facilitate their access to frameworks and suppliers where these consortia already have expertise.

SUPC has been acting as a focal point so that our members do not need to spend time making these connections individually.

### **Sharing knowledge and best practice**

Our members continue to tell us that they often have a need for small, local suppliers in this category. This happens when, for example, they want to appoint a contractor for PAT testing or for cleaning halls of residence. Large frameworks are not suitable in these circumstances. We have continued to support our members to apply procurement principles themselves.

The SUPC category group has met four times this year as a way to share knowledge and learn from each other. We have also hosted a number of regional cluster meetings to bring together members with specific regional concerns and requirements. Meetings covered topics ranging from asset mapping and management to the benefits of national contracting regimes.

Finally, we are exploring retention and return of marketing premium from alternative framework providers. This year, SUPC negotiated a partial return of marketing premium generated through spend with Pagabo back to our members. Any members who use Pagabo this year, will receive their portion of the marketing premium back from Pagabo next year.

### **What's next?**

Next year, we will continue our work nationally as part of the Estates Joint Contracting Group to ensure national activity is structured for the benefit of members. We will also look at developing closer relationships with other framework providers that members use, particularly with Crown Commercial Services. We will get involved in tender working parties and other working groups whenever possible to ensure member needs are met. Finally, in response to member requests, we are looking at options for free training that members can access to help them meet their Estates procurement needs.





### The challenge

When it comes to finding an estates consultant or contractor, university procurement teams can choose from a vast array of frameworks. Some are sector-specific, but for more specialist requirements, one option may be to look more widely, such as at NHS frameworks or housing consortia. Keeping up-to-date with everything that is available can be incredibly time-consuming for procurement teams.

The increasing complexity of higher education projects can also mean that they need to find different approaches and new contractors that they are not familiar with.

### What happened?

The SUPC Estates Group, which is open to all members, met four times during the year. Attendees heard from a range of framework providers, including Pagabo, the Procurement consortium, LHC and suppliers who work in the estates marketplace. This gave members a chance to learn about relevant frameworks and developments in the market.

They also shared their own challenges and experiences with estates-related procurement activity. They learnt from each other and identified suitable options for their institution.

### The outcome

Members of the group benefitted in a number of



ways, including:

- More quickly and easily identified suitable framework options to solve their institution's requirements.
- Developed increased knowledge of suitable consultants and contractors, many of whom

can contribute to estates improvements that benefit students.

- Kept their own industry knowledge up-to-date, for example learning about changes to NEC. This has helped in conversations with internal estates colleagues.

**Sign-posting  
from SUPC is  
hugely beneficial  
because there  
are so many  
potential  
frameworks that  
I cannot hold  
information on  
all the options.**

*HELEN BAKER, PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR,  
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND  
CHAIR OF THE SUPC ESTATES GROUP*

## Estates Case Study

SUPC Estates Group acts as signpost  
and support in a busy market



# W

ith a spend of  
£53 million through  
Academic Services  
agreements in 2018/19,  
SUPC members looked

to SUPC for innovative solutions that meet  
students' needs.

## Supporting student learning opportunities

Our main focus for the year has been in the areas  
of books and journal subscriptions, in order to  
support our members' priorities for their students.

The purchase of books and journal subscriptions  
is central to ensuring that students receive  
the content they need for their studies. SUPC  
membership gives institutions access to compliant  
and competitive agreements with suppliers to meet  
those needs. Using our detailed market insight and  
in-depth procurement expertise we have again  
delivered results for our members.

We have continued to combine a commercial  
mind set with an understanding of the academic

environment. This is vital for a category where our  
members' drivers often include moving away from  
large-scale, multi-product suppliers for purchasing  
books. In addition, we know that students are  
increasingly demanding that their institutions make  
more ethical choices in all areas. This includes the  
suppliers they work with and our agreements  
reflect that.

As well as making agreements available, we have also  
given detailed advice and guidance to institutions  
when calling-off from these agreements. Members  
have continued to rely on our support to connect  
with the right suppliers in the right way to help them  
meet the particular study needs of their disciplines  
and their students.

## Market understanding to benefit all

We recognise that journal subscriptions are an  
area of strategic importance to universities. But we  
also know that the market is an unstable one. At  
SUPC we have been working with suppliers to drive  
continuous improvement, across the market as a  
whole and over the lifetime of each agreement.

Our members have benefitted from:

- Price stability and transparency
- Reductions in the risk and exposure caused by  
advance payments
- Improved service delivery and management

Books and subscriptions are commodities that  
increasingly rely on technology for ordering, e-books

# Category Focus: Academic Services







and distribution. We have successfully worked with suppliers to ensure they meet our members' minimum technical requirements.

### **Bringing the sector together**

We have continued to facilitate Library Groups meetings, both within our consortium and with our strategic partners at LUPC. This network brings together librarians to share best practice and learn from each other. Through discussion of the procurement-related topics that are important to them, the SUPC team has learnt more about their priorities. We then use that knowledge to get the best agreements for our members. For example, members told us that a significant amount of off-framework spend is by students on print books through global online marketplaces; we have worked with suppliers in a proactive way to develop services in this area. You can read more in our next case study.

SUPC has also acted as a focal point to bring together library groups more broadly across the UK. Representatives from across the sector build relationships and feed into the direction of national collaborative procurement activities. For example, SUPC fed into, and now uses in our agreements, the national standards and best practice guidelines developed by the National Acquisitions Group.

### **What's next?**

In 2020, we will re-tender our national books agreement, which will include e-books. This is a well-used agreement across the sector with roughly £56 M being spent through it in 2018/19 – this makes it the fifth most-used agreement, nationally. We will also look at spend in the broader Academic Services Category, particularly, in the important field of student wellbeing.



### The challenge

Most universities have software that tells students which books they need to buy for their courses. Having moved away from a physical bookstore, City had been directing students to a well-known global online marketplace. However, students disliked this approach and wanted an alternative, competitively priced option that felt more ethical and socially responsible.

### What happened?

City looked at the Joint Consortia Books framework agreement, led by SUPC, to see if they could find a new marketplace. The agreement covers the sale of books to staff and students. Lot seven offers new schemes for universities which allow staff and students to save money on their books, while also providing income for the university.

After exploring its options, City awarded Wordery to deliver a new solution. Wordery provided an online market place, similar to what was in place before, but with notable added benefits:

- Competitive discounts for staff and students on millions of titles
- Cashback to the university: 7% on all purchases or 9% credited for purchases made on titles from Dawson Books

- A university co-branded webpage so the portal felt like part of the university
- Co-branded marketing support, such as banners, posters and bookmarks to promote the scheme – all free of charge.

Wordery and City worked together to deliver the scheme and now have an ongoing partnership.



### The outcome

City was able to respond to student concerns, increase student satisfaction and find a solution that met everyone's needs. City's nearly 20,000 students can now purchase competitively priced books for their courses, while getting cashback and/or additional discounts. The university also wins by earning a commission on all sales.

**The agreement made it easy and cost-effective for us to deliver a solution our students needed. Wordery offers an impressive depth and breadth of academic titles at very appealing prices, along with exclusive discounts for our students and staff.**

CLAIRE PACKHAM, HEAD OF LIBRARY ACADEMIC SERVICES, CITY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## Academic Services Case Study

University delivers online books marketplace that saves students, staff and the university money





ur Procurement Shared Service provides objective advice and expertise to our clients. Our consultancy support and assessment services allow you to work with us on areas of specific focus, or to think about support for longer-term transformation programmes. Unlike most external consultancies, we recognise how important it is that you own your programme or project. Our clients come to us for objective insight to help improve their performance.

### Helping You with Procurement Consultancy Support

We provided support to a number of institutions during the year. For example, we worked with universities across the UK to provide contracts reviews, interim resource, scoping and procurement transformation support. We are experienced in HE sector procurement and able to work flexibly across a range of services. As HE experts, we supported all areas of procurement development and management to help universities deliver value.

Our clients ask for our support with:

- Strategic change and implementation

**Our team of experts are uniquely positioned to provide insight based on best practice across the sector. From large-scale procurement transformational projects, to discrete assessments, to interim resource and tender support – we’re here to partner you through your procurement challenges.**

**BERNARDE HYDE, CEO**  
SUMS GROUP (SUPC, PSS AND SUMS CONSULTING)

- Performance measuring and reporting
- Supplier strategy and performance management
- Short-term resource support
- Tender management
- Category management
- Spend Analysis
- Purchase-to-Pay implementation
- Personalised mentoring and professional development support
- Bespoke training packages.

### Improving Your Procurement Maturity

A Procurement Maturity Assessment (PMA+) is an independent, detailed assessment of the procurement function that helps you take a step back and get an objective view of your procurement capability and capacity. The PMA+ benchmarks your institution against best practice to help you improve.

### What we do

- Help institutions drive increased efficiency and effectiveness from their procurement activity
- Provide strategic expertise to support transformation programmes
- Deliver professional interim resource support
- Support teams and individuals with skills development and capacity-building
- Assess and benchmark functional and strategic activity to support improved performance.

This year, we launched the PMA+ On-Site and PMA+ Remote and worked with several universities across the UK.



## Expert Procurement Support



## Impact of our work

- Provides internal business case for investment in procurement
- Focuses functional activity to deliver improvements
- Raises the profile and reputation of procurement at your institution
- Improve skills and capacity to help individuals and teams improve performance.

This year, De Montfort University achieved a 25-percentage-point increase in maturity rating over successive assessments – the largest ever increase. They have used the assessment to raise the profile and reputation of procurement across the institution.

Our PMA+ will help you:

- Elevate the importance of procurement efficiency to your senior executive team
- Drive qualitative input from key senior stakeholders including Finance Directors and decision makers behind major purchases, such as Directors of Estates, ICT and Marketing (available as part of an on-site PMA+ only)
- Engage with key senior stakeholders through on-site interviews and presentations to support buy-in (available as part of an on-site PMA+ only)
- Provide your Audit Committee with assurance that your institution is meeting sector benchmarks and performing both effectively and efficiently
- Demonstrate to the Office for Students that procurement best practice is delivering value
- Save time with a streamlined question set and Office 365 evidence submission platform that improves process without compromising rigour

- Work with our team of professional procurement specialists who have a wealth of experience from both HE and the commercial sector.

### Value for Money (VfM) Procurement Assessments

Universities are facing big challenges: the implications of Brexit, increased competition for students, increased pension contributions and a new regulatory body, to name a few. However, this presents a time-sensitive opportunity for universities to identify and deliver saving in ways that provide value to students, staff and wider communities. A VfM Procurement Assessment is a sector-specific, holistic assessment of third-party spend across your institution. It will help you identify and prioritise opportunities to deliver greater value and savings from your procurement activities.

Universities undertake VfM Procurement Assessments to:

- Look at total cost optimisation and examine demand, supply and process improvement opportunities to identify immediate savings opportunities
- Gain insight through sector and institution-specific benchmarks and combine these with commercial best practice to target potential savings activities
- Gain financial insight necessary to demonstrate the value of procurement and make the case for investment to deliver greater savings
- Obtain robust metrics based on spend from sources such as HEIDI, Spend 360 and university financial statements, providing sector insights that go beyond those already available to your institution through other sources
- Work with our consultants who provide support and deliver a detailed on-site presentation to help you improve buy-in and ensure stakeholder understand report findings.





De Montfort University (DMU) had its first PMA in the spring of 2018, attaining a maturity score of 23%, and landing at the top end of the Developing quartile. After setting tough internal targets, DMU commissioned a follow-up Procurement Maturity Assessment (PMA+) in the summer of 2019 to measure improvements. By using the action plan from the 2018 assessment, DMU improved its scores in several areas and jumped in overall maturity by 25 percentage points. With a score at the top end of the Tactical quartile, DMU now sits above the sector average for maturity\*. This increase means the team has the right strategy, policies and procedures to deliver greater time and cash efficiency. Ultimately, this will deliver better value for money for the institution and its students.

#### The challenge:

DMU needed to benchmark its performance and progress after implementing an action plan from its last assessment in 2018. Martin Satchwell, Head of Procurement, had set targets within the first DMU Procurement Strategy to raise the function's maturity. His goals were to raise DMU's maturity to Tactical by autumn 2019, and Planned by spring of 2021.

#### The solution:

Martin decided to go for a PMA+ (remote) because it is the only assessment tailored to the HE sector. Progress through the PMA+ framework provided consistency, benchmarking and examples of best



provide guidance on how best to submit evidence, while providing the rigour expected of an objective third party.

#### The outcomes:

DMU made the largest single improvement within the sector. They jumped 25 % points landing them at the top end of the Tactical quartile. Their biggest improvements were in the areas of governance, resources and skills, and collaboration. Martin says, "The single most important action we took was to develop a strong procurement strategy that aligned with the university's business needs. This provided the road map to focus our activity and supported the case for additional resource within our team." The team is now more consistent in its practice. They have used the assessment to raise the profile and reputation of procurement across the institution. Within the team, Martin has linked PMA+ actions to individual work plans and appraisals. This will allow the team to embed activities that support good performance as part of their continuous professional development. They have also used their score to show that with greater investment in the team, they could improve further and have created a new Senior Category Officer role supporting their International Office operations.

\*The four ratings for procurement maturity from least to most mature are: developing, tactical, planned and superior.

**The PMA+ delivered a clear action plan for functional development. It meant we invested in the right activities to deliver the greatest impact for our team, the institution, and ultimately, our students.**

**MARTIN SATCHWELL,**  
HEAD OF PROCUREMENT,  
DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

## Case Study PMA

DMU jumps 25 percentage points in procurement maturity and uses progress to promote the function



## Financial Statements

Copies of Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium audited Directors' Report and Financial Statements are available from [supc@reading.ac.uk](mailto:supc@reading.ac.uk) or on our website at [www.supc.ac.uk](http://www.supc.ac.uk).

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