



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

Who We Worked With

University of Portsmouth, a TEF Gold-rated university supporting an undergraduate student population of over 25,000, and ranked among the top 30 institutions in the UK in the National Student Survey 2020.

The Situation

The procurement team at Portsmouth already managed a high volume of work to support their institution's activities. The addition of a global pandemic and the need to prepare for Brexit increased their workload still further.

What Happened

During the year, Claire Crothers, Procurement Manager, and her team made use of the full range of SUPC membership benefits, including:

- Access to timely, accurate and trustworthy information on the complex issues caused by Covid-19 and Brexit, such as Procurement Policy Note interpretation, supply chain issues and compliant routes to market
- Accessible, relevant webinars and conferences – in-person and online
- Learning from peers and expert speakers to improve their own activities
- An increase in return on investment (ROI) from 1:72 in 2018/19 to 1:88 in 2019/20, despite the challenges of Covid-19.
- An expected return of over £19,000 in supplier marketing premiums for the 2019/20 year, more than covering the cost of SUPC members.



- Opportunities to get involved in activities, such as the IT software licence retendering group and participation in the post-Brexit Public Contracts Regulations reform consultation.

Outside of membership, Portsmouth undertook a Procurement Maturity Assessment (PMA+) in 2019. The PMA+ looked at the performance of the procurement team in the broader context of the institution's strategy and performance and provided a road map for making improvements. Through the process, they were able to identify areas to improve the procurement operations and strategy to deliver long-term benefits and having a third-party report with recommendations gave additional weight to influencing senior decision-makers and then delivering change.

The Difference it Made

The team has been able to make optimum use of their time by taking the input from SUPC and applying it to their institution's context. This has allowed them to increase their ROI through SUPC membership over previous years. They have been able to have better quality conversations with colleagues and to proactively influence senior level decision-making.

Hearing from peers at other universities has helped the team to identify successful ways forward for Portsmouth. Contributing to the collective voice of HE sector procurement has been beneficial to themselves and others.

There has been a direct impact on opportunities to increase understanding of procurement internally. This has come from providing strategic overviews at senior levels and from involving subject-expert colleagues, such as the IT team, in tendering groups. SUPC has worked with the procurement team to clearly demonstrate the efficiency and value that the University gets from its non-pay spend – a strategic imperative during these challenging times for the sector.

Being able to position themselves as a more proactive, strategic function has raised the profile of procurement at the University. This has in turn enabled more effective spend and ROI.

Case Study

‘Thanks to the leg-work carried out by SUPC, I have been able to pull out the information I need to provide timely input to the senior team at Portsmouth. This has really helped to proactively influence decision-making and raise procurement’s profile at the top table. Our PMA+ was also critical in developing the procurement team’s capability and impact. I am relatively new to the HE sector and have found SUPC colleagues to be welcoming and their support invaluable.’

*CLAIRE CROTHERS, PROCUREMENT MANAGER,
UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH*

Information and Support for Proactive Decision-Making in Difficult Times

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