



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

# Annual Procurement Report 2024—25



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# Executive Summary and Purpose



# Executive Summary and Purpose

**The University of Edinburgh's Procurement Department is pleased to present the Annual Procurement Report for the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025. This report underscores our commitment to supporting the University's academic mission, fostering excellence in research and teaching, whilst driving positive impact for our people and communities.**

Our Procurement Strategy 2030 has now been in place for over a year, setting out a clear vision for the next four years and reaffirming procurement's role as a strategic, value-driven partner aligned with the University's Strategy 2030.

This report serves as a key resource for evaluating our progress towards our strategic priorities. It highlights our achievements and demonstrates how procurement has enabled research and teaching, strengthened core operations, and delivered essential financial and operational efficiencies at a time when they are needed most. It also outlines our efforts to reduce environmental impact and maximise socio-economic benefit, areas where intelligent procurement can deliver both cost savings and meaningful long-term value.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to advancing the University's strategic, operational and commercial objectives, and to supporting its ambition to excel as a world-leading research-intensive institution. Since the launch of Procurement Strategy 2030, the financial challenges

that came to the forefront across the UK Higher Education sector at the start of the 2023/24 academic year (driven by declining real-terms funding, increasing operating costs, and growing pressures on student recruitment) have further underscored the critical importance of robust, strategic procurement. As universities face unprecedented scrutiny of their financial resilience, the effective management of non-pay expenditure has become a central mechanism for ensuring long-term sustainability. Therefore, our ability to act as a trusted, proactive and collaborative partner will be central to navigating the challenges ahead. We will continue to anticipate emerging needs, adapt to external pressures and align our activity with the University's evolving priorities.

Together, as a department, we remain focused on delivering outcomes that safeguard the University's financial sustainability and support its mission for excellence. Guided by our principles of integrity, stewardship and service focus, we will continue to uphold the highest standards of professional practice as a values-driven team in the years ahead.



## Vision

As a sector-leading procurement function, we enable the academic mission by delivering robust commercial and sustainable outcomes, while improving operational efficiency, allowing our staff and students to flourish and innovate.



## Purpose

We support the University in achieving its ambitions by delivering strategic sourcing solutions that foster excellence in research and education, with a focus on our people and our social and civic responsibility.

With oversight of approximately £375 million in annual non-pay expenditure, we work collaboratively with Colleges and Professional Services Groups to provide professional support, making optimal and ethically sound purchasing decisions while ensuring regulatory compliance.

Our focus is on maximising value for the University – delivering measurable financial and operational benefits aligned with our net zero and nature-positive commitments, as well as generating social and economic impact.

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 ('the Act') requires Scottish public sector contracting authorities with regulated procurement activity of £5 million or more per annum to have prepared a Procurement Strategy. Authorities, including Universities, are legally required to develop and to publish a Procurement Strategy are also required to publish an Annual Procurement Report, reflecting on the relevant reporting period against their Procurement Strategy.



# Enabling Research and Teaching, as well our Operations



# Enabling Research and Teaching, as well our Operations



Enabling **Research**  
and **Teaching**, as well  
as our **Operations**

By cultivating strategic supplier partnerships grounded in transparency, value and mutual trust, procurement enhances research outputs, accelerates innovation and contributes to world-class teaching initiatives.

Over the past year, we have collaborated closely with colleagues across the University to advance academic ambitions, enrich the student experience and strengthen the essential operations that enable both. This has included:

- Enhancing research competitiveness by securing compliant, value-driven contracts that meet funder expectations and strengthen our reputation for responsible stewardship.
- Strengthening resilience within key supply chains, ensuring continuity of essential goods and services that underpin daily University operations.
- Promoting sustainability and social value by embedding environmental and socio-economic considerations into procurement decisions, supporting the University's wider civic goals.
- Supporting capital and digital projects that enhance the learning, teaching and working environments for our staff and students.

To strengthen our contribution to the University's academic mission, Procurement has prioritised the development and maintenance of strategic relationships with staff, students and suppliers throughout this reporting period. By fostering regular dialogue and deepening our understanding of stakeholder priorities, we continue to identify opportunities where procurement expertise can enhance research capability, support teaching activity and address operational challenges.

## Advancing our strategic priorities



### Impact and value

Maximise opportunities for partnership and collaboration with our suppliers to advance research and innovation.

Procurement plays a vital role in achieving the University's strategic academic objectives by delivering innovative, value-driven and compliant sourcing solutions. As a trusted partner to funding bodies, we uphold the highest standards of governance, assurance and commercial rigour, ensuring that every procurement decision strengthens the University's reputation for integrity and responsible stewardship of public funds.

We support the University's commitment to excellence in research and teaching by providing solutions that not only shape and enable academic activity but also safeguard compliance and deliver strong commercial outcomes.

### Case Study: Maximising commercial value by consolidating laboratory equipment requirements

Through strong relationships with end-users, Procurement identified that three areas within the University were independently purchasing the three pieces of chromatography equipment from the same supplier.

Upon reviewing the requirements of these instruments and the need to purchase through the specific supplier it was determined that a combined strategic approach could be taken for these purchases. By consolidating the purchases, discounts were achieved to the value of £122k. This includes the trade in of two pieces of equipment and the purchase of a refurbished piece of equipment supporting Procurement's strategic theme of minimising the University's impact on the environment. This approach not only optimised commercial outcomes, but reduced admin and resource in completing these strategic purchases and created sustainable outcomes.

Over the past year, we have formalised the sharing of key procurement information—including P2P data, contract registers and project pipelines—to improve transparency, strengthen planning and support more informed decision-making across budget areas. In addition, we have delivered targeted engagement sessions with Colleges and Directorates to explore their emerging spend pressures and provide tailored advice on commodities and categories with potential to deliver efficiencies or generate savings. These efforts ensure our procurement activity remains closely aligned with the University's needs and contributes meaningfully to its academic and operational objectives.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- Over the reporting period, we have awarded 206 regulated contracts, collectively valued at £187M (excl VAT).
- These awards included GPA<sup>1</sup> and PRA<sup>2</sup> procurements, as well as call-off contracts from collaborative agreements exceeding £50,000. Procurement also supported 25 non-regulated procurement activities, including formal mini-competitions and quotations, collectively valued at £2.08M (excl VAT).
- Where deemed as the most advantageous route to market, we have partnered with consortia or other universities or consortia to access shared contracts, benefiting from quicker routes to market, economies

of scale and/or improved commercial terms. £125.3M or 33% of procurement-influenced expenditure has been routed through collaborative agreements.

- Approximately 68% of the university's non-pay expenditure, totaling £375M, was influenced by the Procurement Department through use of approved suppliers or sourcing support, a decrease of 6% from last reporting period.

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Develop comprehensive 3-5 year category/commodity strategies that outlines detailed plans on sourcing activity, net-zero ambition and social impact deliverables.
- Continue to encourage the adoption and use of 'non-standard' procurement procedures including dialogue and negotiation.
- Launch structured stakeholder engagement sessions and workshops covering several campuses and budget groups. Intention of the sessions is to provide detailed information on effective procurement.
- Conduct supplier/market engagement days focused on sustainability, local and SME suppliers.
- Review Contracting and Tender Templates to ensure the most up-to-date approach is adopted.

A comprehensive list of all regulated procurements awarded during this reporting period is available [here](#), as required under Section 18(2) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. All procurement activities have been conducted in accordance with the University's Procurement Strategy, aligned with Section 17 and Section 18(2) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

The University of Edinburgh actively promotes competition and encourages supplier participation in its procurement processes to achieve better value for money. One key approach to achieving this is by providing advance notice of tendering opportunities anticipated over the next two financial years.

Future regulated procurement needs have been identified through:

- Current contracts recorded in our contract register that will expire and need to be extended or re-let; and
- New requirements identified via future work plans provided by Colleges and Professional Services Groups, along with anticipated plans for programmes and special projects.

A non-exhaustive list of all anticipated regulated procurements is available [here](#), in accordance with Section 18(2)(f) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Agreement on Government Procurement (WTO) threshold applies - Goods and services of £177,897; Works of £4,733,252 (excl VAT).

<sup>2</sup> Procurement Reform Act threshold applies - Goods and services of £50,000; Works of £2,000,000 (excl VAT)



## Savings, efficiencies and cost effectiveness

Maximise commercial opportunities to drive financial savings and operational efficiencies through effective collaboration and implementation.

Within Procurement, we are committed to maximising commercial opportunities that deliver financial savings, operational efficiencies and strategic value - an area of growing importance given that our 'other operating expenditure remains' among the highest in the sector. Through effective collaboration and innovative sourcing approaches, we work proactively to balance cost, quality and sustainability, ensuring procurement activities meet immediate operational requirements while supporting the University's long-term strategic ambitions. Our approach also places strong emphasis on collaborative contracting and strategic aggregation, enabling us to leverage the University's collective purchasing power to secure best-value outcomes across all areas of spend.

By aligning procurement into specific categories, it allows us to conduct in-depth market analysis and optimise decisions that benefit the entire institution. To enhance commercial awareness and decision-making, we have continued to prioritise skilled recruitment and focus on continuous professional development, strengthening our expertise in category management to improve financial outcomes for the University.

During this reporting period, our efforts have included:

- Strengthening scrutiny at the contracting strategy stage by engaging key stakeholders early and undertaking detailed supply market analysis to identify the most effective procurement routes and secure best-value outcomes.

- Ensuring all purchases are aligned to the most appropriate frameworks, agreements and approved suppliers, enabling the University to consistently achieve competitive pricing and favourable commercial terms.
- Using enhanced functionality within the University's finance system to conduct granular, line-by-line spend analysis, generating deeper insights into spending patterns and supporting more robust, data-driven decision-making.

Through this, we have focused on identifying opportunities for efficiency, allowing us to:

- Eliminate duplication by identifying and addressing areas where contracts or processes overlap.
- Determine opportunities for aggregating requirements to achieve economies of scale.
- Consolidate supply chains to drive P2P effectiveness.
- Monitor compliance with procurement regulations, ensuring that all processes meet legal and institutional standards.

By combining strategic sourcing, advanced analytics and a commitment to delivering value, we are establishing ourselves as a true enabler of financial and operational efficiency, supporting the university's more effective use of resources and the ability to reinvest savings into research, teaching and student initiatives, supporting a more sustainable and financially resilient institution.

In November 2023, the UK Universities Purchasing Consortia (UKUPC) released updated Procurement benefits reporting guidance to be actioned from the start of the 2024/25 Financial Year. This suggested some updates to the methodology of recording savings and we took the opportunity to fine-tune further. Non-Cash benefits (benefits that have no monetary value easily associated to the procurement) may still be

### Case Study: Commercial maximisation from Media Buying contract

The media solutions required by the University reflect the scale and diversity of the institution and include a mixture of planned annual and ad hoc or reactive activity.

In April 2024 following a regulated tender process, University of Edinburgh awarded a 3-year pricing agreement for Media Buying Services.

With a forecast spend of £8.5M over the contract term, we leveraged that spend to appoint a media buying services partner to negotiate on our behalf across a range of media agencies and organisations to deliver services such as increase brand awareness, promote events and services, attraction of prospective students and their supporters.

In year one the total delivered savings for the academic financial year of August 2024 – July 2025 was **£250,030** against the discounted rate card, negotiated by the supplier across a range media agencies and organisations. This ensured a strong commercial outcome securing more value while continuing to meet our campaign targets.



captured and recorded locally but won't be reported in the annual procurement report. In addition, we made the decision to stop recording discounts that were offered without any negotiation i.e., only savings/benefits secured through procurement involvement and not merely 'discount from list price'. Thus, comparisons with previous years figures are no longer like for like. We will continue to fine-tune our benefit/saving methodology to ensure figures truly reflect the value our service brings to the University.

#### **Key achievements for 2024/25:**

- We have delivered £8.3M cash saving derived from regulated and non-regulated procurement activities. In addition, we delivered £11M in cash savings through the use of collaborative agreements. Total cash savings delivered equates to £19.3M.
- We continue to benchmark regularly to ensure that our staff are sourcing the right products from the right suppliers, or challenging the need to buy, focusing on commodities such as: laboratory and veterinary consumables, electrical and plumbing consumables, IT peripherals, licenses, courier services and building supplies.

- We have focused on P2P efficiencies for several commodities and associated suppliers, including Couriers, Taxis, Travel, Medical/Lab Gases and Car Hire. Resulting in smoother ordering and payment mechanisms.

#### **Planned Activities for 2025/26:**

- Leverage commodity knowledge to deepen supplier understanding with the aim of securing competitive pricing, optimising both cost and operational efficiency for identified commodities.
- Continue to conduct expenditure analysis to identify consolidation opportunities across departments.
- Implement communication and change management approach to raise awareness and understanding of our supply arrangements, including best value products and services.
- Continue to improve procedures and system guidance to enhance operational efficiency through simplified, more effective processes.
- Map full procurement/P2P process and provide supporting guidance/training information at each stage.

#### **Case Study: Laser System collaboration with University College London (UCL)**

The University was able to gain further discounts through a combined effort between the UoE and University College London (UCL) UK Dementia Research Institute (DRI) Centres. This was facilitated by a commitment for both parties to each purchase a Laser System through Coherent and a Two Photon Microscope through Bruker creating a combined discount for the University of Edinburgh of £92k. This approach highlighted how working with external stakeholders can also achieve greater savings to support the higher education sector's goal to further research, in this instance towards healthy brain ageing for all.



## Contract performance

Procurement has continued to strengthen our practices across the life time of the contract in our contract and supplier management processes.

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The established Contract and Supplier Management team work to ensure cost maximisation, maintain supplier and stakeholder relationships and proactively act to reduce risk to existing and upcoming contracts. The team are focused on delivering greater value for the University's contracts, in particular suppliers' commitment and fulfilment of community benefits.

At time of publication, the University has over 550 contracts that derive from a regulated procurement activity. Due to the volume, the Contract and Supplier Management team 'tier' contracts/suppliers according to their value, complexity and risk and focus their attention on Tier 1 and Tier 2 contracts/suppliers.

The contract management team play an essential role in the University's procurement activities by:

- Monitoring and reviewing risk at the outset and throughout the performance of a contract, ensuring the appropriate approach to management and contingency is in place where necessary.
- Monitoring supply chain to affirm alignment with the University's values and approach to ethical sourcing.
- Identify opportunities to streamline processes and make efficiencies in the internal procurement operations and data collection.
- Conduct regular formal meetings with suppliers to review performance, identify areas for improvement, and plan future initiatives that drive savings, efficiencies and added value.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- Offered troubleshooting advice on several contracts that have resulted in a cost or risk avoidance.
- Using data from our finance system and procurement dashboards, we have identified spend that has gone off contract and have been able to re-direct orders accordingly.
- The sale of used laboratory equipment contributing to income generation and reuse of equipment, minimising waste and promoting circular economy behaviours in the University.
- Following up with suppliers for reports and evidence of completion of the delivery of community benefits committed in contracts.
- Highlighting and reacting to a significant change in a contracted supplier's financial position by raising awareness and contributing toward a contingency plan, working closely with stakeholders to ensure the impact of the risk is minimal.
- We have continued to focus on improving the performance and oversight of a number of critical contracts, such as the travel management contract.

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Redevelop the supply chain risk database/ register using digital tools for efficient use and information sharing.
- Continue to develop and refine methodology to track and validate contract management savings.
- Review of current contracts to assess where further cost savings can be achieved (e.g. renewals, extension points).
- Review methodology for recording and tracking contract deliverables (e.g. community benefits).
- Develop robust Contract Handover packages that can be shared with stakeholders and Contract & Supplier Management staff.

### Case Study: Commercial maximisation by Contract and Supplier Management

The University procured a cryogen-free dilution refrigerator with an integrated magnetic field to support rapid sample and set-up changes for the Schools of Physics and Astronomy. The supplier was appointed to supply, install, and provide technical services for the equipment.

When the final project elements were being completed, the University and the supplier engaged in discussions to ensure the concluding payment accurately reflected the overall delivery and performance of the system. The Contract and Supplier Management (CSM) team facilitated these discussions, working collaboratively with the supplier to agree a fair and value-focused settlement.

Through effective negotiation and constructive engagement, CSM secured a revised final payment of £42,618.75, achieving a saving of £24,456.25 (36%). The payment was completed in March 2025.

This outcome delivered strong value for the University while supporting a positive and ongoing working relationship with the supplier.

# Minimising our Impact on the Environment





# Minimising our Impact on the Environment



## Advancing our strategic priorities



### Supplier emissions

Embed sector-leading sustainable procurement practices with our suppliers, evidencing year-on-year reduction in supply chain emissions to support achieving a 1.5 degree pathway

Currently, over 50% of the University's annual greenhouse gas emissions stem from supply chains, highlighting the essential role procurement must play in reducing our environmental footprint. By actively engaging with suppliers to encourage sustainable practices and solutions, we continue to drive meaningful progress to reduce this impact.

To support these efforts, we remain committed to embedding environmental sustainability at every stage of the procurement activity. From initial planning and strategy development to contract management activity, efforts have focused on ensuring procurement activities align with the University's environmental ambitions.

Contracting strategies for regulated procurements align to the University's Climate Strategy, explicitly addressing carbon emission targets and exploring alternative purchasing models in collaboration with stakeholders. To support this, we have introduced a responsible procurement toolkit, complete with templates and guidance, to assess and embed sustainability impact into tenders where relevant.

We also have an increased emphasis on suppliers demonstrating strong environmental practices in tender submissions, as well as developing specifications and evaluation criteria designed to minimise environmental impact while fostering partnerships with like-minded suppliers. Examples include requesting carbon emissions data or evidence of actions to reduce a supplier's environmental impacts in tender responses, with these being established as key performance indicators (KPIs) or deliverables for relevant contracts.

Over the past year, we expanded our focus on sustainability, carbon management and ethical procurement practices through an improved professional development schedule, providing dedicated Carbon Literacy sessions

for staff across the Procurement service. In addition, the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) have arranged dedicated sessions for teams across the University on the wider Responsible Procurement topic, in order to support wider behaviour change, including inductions for all new Strategic Procurement staff.

Our collaboration with SRS, as well as with the wider sector, continues to strengthen. Together, we advance sector-leading best practices and collaborate with staff, students and suppliers to collectively contribute to a responsible and resilient future. This includes:

- Input into the updated APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities & Colleges) supplier assurance questionnaire, due for release in 2025/26.
- Input into the updated Responsible Procurement Mapping Tool, developed in conjunction with UKUPC.
- Development of the Edinburgh Pathway, a collaborative approach to a sustainable supply chain which is being launched at the University later in 2025, before being rolled out to the wider sector in 2026.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- 55 procurement staff participated in Carbon Literacy training course.
- New UKUPC Responsible Procurement Mapping Tool used to guide procurement strategies.
- Supported development of updated supplier assurance questionnaire with APUC - Section 1 Questionnaire, with agreement to use this as supplier assurance tool for all new contracts going forward.
- Agreement for common approach to supply chain ask within University (Edinburgh Pathway), and engagement of this pathway to key stakeholders internally to be formally launched in Nov 2025.
- Publication of Responsible Procurement section on Procurement Hub which includes guidance, case studies and links to sector tools.

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Launch of [Edinburgh Pathway](#).
- Establish working groups to explore further adoption of the Edinburgh Pathway across the wider Further & Higher Education (HFE).
- Host UK wide Responsible Procurement Group Seminar, focused on increasing collaborative approach across Further & Higher Education sector.
- Roll out of APUC - Section 1 Questionnaire, to new contracts as well as high-impact existing contracts.
- Run dedicated Responsible Procurement sessions for University Schools or Departments.
- Increase Responsible Procurement themed resources available through our Procurement Hub.
- Arrange dedicated Biodiversity Literacy training course for Procurement staff.



## Circular economy

Integrate circular economy principles with our colleagues, communities, and suppliers to enable a more sustainable production and consumption approach.

The University of Edinburgh recognises that a shift toward a circular economy is crucial for achieving a sustainable future. This approach focuses on minimising waste, extending the lifecycle of materials, and reducing reliance on finite resources. It aligns with the University's Strategy 2030 and broader environmental objectives, aiming to reduce environmental impact while driving innovation and efficiency.

To embed circular economy principles across all procurement activities, every contracting strategy requires an assessment of options to explore potential circular solutions. By incorporating these considerations into our templates and guidance, we ensure that circular economy priorities are consistently communicated and applied throughout the procurement lifecycle.

Collaboration plays a vital role in advancing circular economy practices. We ensure our SRS (Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability) colleagues are engaged early in high-risk or high-impact tenders to assess and promote circular solutions where appropriate, and link in subject matter experts from across the University to inform and guide our decisions where appropriate. Additionally, our involvement in the development of sector or national collaborative agreements ensures consortia frameworks are aligned with best and innovative circular economy practices as well.

Supporting our buying community to make more informed decisions is essential in enabling circular

options. We are improving engagement with the wider University Buying Community through:

- Offering dedicated sessions for University Departments or Schools;
- Releasing succinct case studies on recent projects;
- Offering an online short course titled "Embedding the Circular Economy into University Purchasing".

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- "Circular Economy for University Procurers" short course released. 61 participants completed the course in 2024/25.
- Hosted User Intelligence workshops in collaboration with SRS and APUC looking at opportunities to promote circular options in laboratory consumables.
- Co-Chaired Responsible Procurement Group Circular Economy & Waste Subgroup, with sessions focused on:
  - Improving call-off from of relevant framework agreements (i.e. those with circular economy options).
  - Refurbished IT equipment to be sold to staff / students.
  - APUC lab consumables framework.
- Ensured an SRS presence at "Meet the supplier" days at our BioQuarter and Central Campus

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Increase uptake of Circular Economy course to 200 staff.
- Host "meet the supplier" day for Suppliers on APUC Sustainable Furniture Framework (LOT 3: Circular Economy Solutions) (October 2025).

### Case Study: Circular Economy approach to School Outreach from University Life Science Consumables supplier

Fisher Scientific UK donated £20,000 worth of 'dead' stock to support local secondary school science departments within Edinburgh under the Life Science Research Consumables Dynamic Purchasing System contract. Dead stock is used to describe items which are not in a sellable condition owing to damaged packaging and includes consumables which have passed their manufacturer's recommended expiry date but remain safe to use. This stock would otherwise become obsolete or be disposed, but instead has been repurposed in schools providing children an insight to science laboratory equipment and consumables.

*"Fisher Scientific are grateful to be a part of the community benefits delivered in partnership with the University of Edinburgh. We have also focused hugely on providing STEM opportunities to those who are currently underserved by donating critical equipment to schools, enabling children to learn to love science! We have provided beakers, and hotplates, things which many scientists take for granted as these enable so many exciting projects to be undertaken. Plastic wear and PPE that can be used in biology, chemistry and physics allowing children to get a real feel for what lab work looks like. We see the value in this fully, and facilitating many others to continue to serve the community by doing so!"*

– Ellie Fraser, Academic & Industry Account Manager, Fisher Scientific UK



## Wider environmental impact

Improve our understanding of the impact of our supply chain on biodiversity, water scarcity, and chemical pollution, bringing ambitions in line with our approach to climate change.

A key priority will be developing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of our supply chain on these broader focus points. While this work has yet to begin, it is a critical aspect we are committed to exploring and addressing in the coming years.

Looking ahead, we will broaden our focus on environmental impact to include biodiversity and nature, chemical pollution and water scarcity. This widening will align our ambitions with the University's refreshed climate strategy, ensuring our supply chain practices are impactful and positioned to address these emerging critical global challenges.

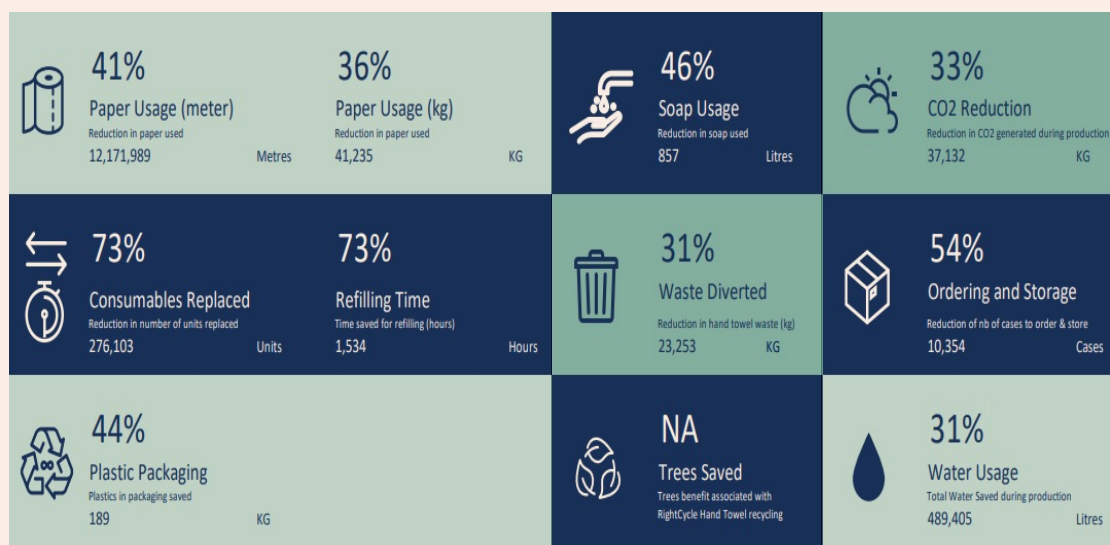
### Case Study: Sustainability initiative for janitorial and cleaning supplies

Bunzl Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies provide janitorial and cleaning suppliers for the University. This contract replaced hand towel, toilet tissue and soap dispensers with more efficient models in order to achieve a range of cost and sustainability benefits.

The savings of this contract will be accrued over time as they are a result of reduced usage (rather than a lower unit price or smaller pack size).

The estimated savings and sustainability benefits are as follows:

- Estimated saving of ca £192k per calendar year when all areas are set up
- Fewer sheets used, less waste, fewer deliveries
- Labour savings on fewer changes of rolls, fewer orders placed and invoices processed.
- Other figures detailed below



In previous years, all the old dispensers were sent to landfill by the end users. Kimberly Clark reviewed this process and aimed to improve the process for both the customer and the environment. Units are now taken away, broken down into pellets, and sent to a plastics company. The material is then reused in kids' toys, plant pots, and running tracks.



### **Case Study: Charitable Donations from Tree Planting as part of the University's Forest and Peatland partnership programme**

As an essential piece of the University's Forest and Peatland partnership programme, the SME CK Forestry were awarded a contract to plant and maintain a significant number of samplings in the Pentlands and Bridge of Allan.

The Forest and Pentland partnership programme is part of the University's mission to make the world a better place and be carbon net zero by 2040. The programme involves carbon sequestration (as opposed to third party carbon offsetting) to compensate for unavoidable carbon emissions (e.g. business travel). The project aims to also improve the biodiversity and local community, whilst providing opportunities for research, teaching and learning.

As part of the contract to plant samplings and maintain the sites, CK Forestry have offered the following community benefits:

- Provided Bigger United football team under 12s with football kit.
- Donation to Help for Heroes of £0.01 for every two trees planted; The donation from Rullion Green with 36,460 trees planted, and Drumbrae West with 224,755 trees planted.
- Additional donation to Help for Heroes with 179,731 additional trees planted
- At third site with 533,702 trees being planted, the supplier has agreed to donate £0.01 for every 1st tree planted to Help for Heroes and £0.01 for every 2nd tree planted to local charity Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust.
- Employment of previously unemployed local from Drumbrae area to work directly on this contract. Following completion of the project work at Drumbrae, the individual was offered a full-time contract and they were enrolled in H&W training, through which he has obtained his NPTC certifications for the safe use of Brush Cutter, Strimmer, Clearing-Saw and PA1//PA6 (Spraying Ticket)

### **Case Study: Sale of old University equipment in line with Circular Economy Principles**

The University's goal to reach Net Zero by 2040 is being supported through the Edinburgh Pathway, which puts a strong focus on making the best commercial use of resources and following circular economy principles. By offering resale support to end users across the University, strategic procurement is been able to generate income and enable the reuse of valuable lab equipment, minimising landfill waste and prolonging the serviceable life of instruments. Between February and June 2025, four major sales took bringing in a total of £86,620. These sales show how the University can recover value from existing assets while supporting its sustainability goals.

# Delivering Positive Impact for our Communities



# Delivering Positive Impact for our Communities



## Advancing our strategic priorities



### Social impact

Capitalise on opportunities to deliver social impact through our contracts to drive socioeconomic benefits for our communities.

Aligned with the University's Community Plan, we leverage procurement as a powerful tool to drive positive economic and social change. Each procurement decision is a chance to generate meaningful benefits for our communities. We are committed to prioritising social impact by embedding practices that promote community and economic development, support fair working conditions, and create opportunities for small and local businesses. These efforts help foster a supply chain that champions quality jobs, skills development, and community wellbeing.

Through every procurement, we have continued to carefully consider how each contract can contribute to the

University's broader social impact goals. By incorporating community benefit clauses, we aim to enhance contract sustainability through targeted recruitment and training, supporting small business and social enterprise growth, and actively engaging with local communities.

In line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, we applied specific criteria to contracts valued at £4 million and above, ensuring major procurements include measures to drive community benefits (unless deemed not relevant). Additionally, where feasible and proportional, we apply these clauses to procurements below this threshold, provided they do not compromise value for money.

To support us with these efforts, a community benefit menu was developed and piloted on a select number of procurements in 2024/25. The community benefit menu was developed through consultation with external stakeholders including suppliers and community groups. The menu provides a framework for suppliers to choose relevant community benefits that they can commit to delivering, in the knowledge that they know local communities will benefit from. The community benefit menu also supports our approach to embedding clear Key Performance Indicators within our contractual agreements.

Several of our suppliers are not based locally and therefore we recognise the need for flexibility for the delivery of community benefits. Throughout 2024/25 we have encouraged our suppliers to consider the use of the ESES Communities community benefit portal as part of their community benefit delivery where relevant. The portal matches requests made by local communities with suppliers' keen to deliver community benefits in their field. This has resulted in several achievements as detailed in our ESES Case Study.

### ESES Community Benefits portal

To encourage the delivery of meaningful local community benefits through our procurement activities we have worked closely with our partners ESES Communities. ESES Communities, funded through the Edinburgh & South East Scotland (ESES) City Region Deal, manage and deliver a community benefits portal matching communities and good causes with suppliers across the Edinburgh City Region.

Throughout 24/25 we have made a concerted effort to encourage our suppliers to engage with the portal and support requests made by local communities that relate to their field and values as an organisation. To date this has resulted in over 20 requests being fulfilled to the value of over £7,500 by University of Edinburgh suppliers. This support has directly impact over 3000 individuals across the local area.

*"It has been fantastic to be able to connect so many University of Edinburgh suppliers with local organisations and support the fulfilment of meaningful community benefits. These benefits make a huge difference and we witness the impact these have on communities across the ESES city region. We look forward to strengthening this partnership over 25/26."*

- Claire Darlow, Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal, Community Impact Manager

Case studies of community benefits delivered through ESES Communities can be found here:

<https://www.esescommunities.org/recent-case-studies/the-university-of-edinburgh-case-studies.html>



Together, with our suppliers and partners, our procurement activities have continued to strengthen and positively transform the communities we serve over this reporting period.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- Our procurement activities have delivered significant community benefits, including commitments in the following areas:
  - Labour, employment and skills development, including apprenticeships, employment support, work experience placements, and skills workshops.
  - Provision of equipment and resources, including the provision of lab consumables to local schools.
  - Charitable contributions, including support for the University of Edinburgh grant scheme and donations to local charities.

- Community engagement, including initiatives such as school outreach programmes and volunteering activities.
- University student engagement activities including career talks and workshops, site visits, careers fairs, and mentoring opportunities.

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Begin to implement the use of our community benefit menu more broadly within our procurements where appropriate.
- Further encourage our suppliers to engage with ESES Communities for the delivery of relevant and impactful community benefits.
- Further expand the use of contract management activities with improved management information to ensure commitments have been delivered.

### Case Study: Community Contributions for Darwin Tower demolition

The University's strategic plan to build a new 'zero carbon ready' Biological Sciences hub to deliver research, teaching and innovation required demolition of the existing Darwin Tower on campus. To make space for this new energy efficient build, Rhodar Industrial Services were appointed to demolish the existing Darwin Tower and as part of the contract delivered substantial community benefits:

- Creation of jobs: 2 full time positions and 1 part time position were provided to local residents, including one cleaning role and two demolition operative roles. In addition, 3 full time local agency staff were employed for the duration of the contract
- 1 apprentice was employed in plant operation and demolition safety, however did not complete the programme and subsequently withdrew
- Provided 80 hours of accredited plant, lifting and health & safety training
- Donated £2,500 to Inch Park Community Sports Club to sponsor new sensory room, set to launch in late Summer 2025. The room will provide a safe space for children and adults where a resident counsellor will offer counselling services.
- In July 2025, 6 rolls of Monarflex sheeting, valued at £1,314 were donated to Civil Service Strollers Football Club located on Marine Drive, Edinburgh
- Hosted a site tour for university students, providing insight into the project and its demolition processes
- 2 steel beams from the Darwin Tower were donated to the University's School of Engineering for grading and testing. Steel was also reused as street furniture in the new public realm areas for the new construction
- Donated £1,500 school uniform packs for young people through the School Bank West Lothian's 'Winter Warmer Campaign', supporting children aged 4-17 with full uniform packs valued at £150
- Volunteering with 2 food charities (Soul Foods, Empty Kitchens Full Hearts). The volunteers from Rhodar's team assisted with meal preparation, cooking, packaging of food packs and delivery across the city for those in need.
- Distributed 200 wellbeing packs; 100 to each Soul Foods and Empty Kitchens Full Hearts. The wellbeing packs included a variety of essentials (e.g. toothbrush, toothpaste, lip balm, soap, hats, fairy liquid and washing detergent) geared towards supporting people living in temporary accommodation and the homeless.
- Engaged with the School of Engineering at the University to support students, offering a site visit to assist with their waste and sustainability project. Further site visits are planned as part of their community benefits contribution

Rhodar Industrial Services contributed time, people and money towards key initiatives within Edinburgh which enhanced the value of the contract to the wider community.

A full summary of all community benefits committed to in this reporting period can be found [here](#), as required under Section 18(2) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

**Case Study: School Outreach by Microscope supplier**

As part of the contract to supply and deliver a Multiphoton- confocal super-resolution hybrid microscope for the Zebrafish Imaging Facility, Nikon UK Ltd committed to and took part in a careers fair event at Inveralmond Community High School in West Lothian.

In doing so, Nikon provided young people in the community insight into the company's operations, its role within the sector and its diverse career opportunities and future pathways in science, technology, engineering and manufacturing (STEM).

Further information on the event can be found: [ICHS Careers Fair 2024 - Inveralmond Community High School](#)

**Case Study: Re-use of existing equipment instead of buying new for Langhill Farm**

Langhill Farm (dairy) part of the University estate required a feeding machine. Initially, the plan had been to replace the existing feeder with a new like-for-like machine, but following further research with procurement, the team at Langhill farm opted for a forklift and tractor for greater operational flexibility and long- term value. The Forklift was an ex-demonstration model, which enabled existing equipment to have a prolonged life instead of manufacturing new, avoiding consumption of additional raw materials, components and a reduction of energy emissions for production. This also saved £40,815 against the allocated budget.

**Case Study: Charitable Donation from Office Stationery Supplier**

Banner are the University's contracted provider of office supplies. In the recent establishment of the contract with the University, Banner committed to deliver at least £2,000 worth of assistance to local community projects annually, including helping those affected by homelessness.

In an effort to improve welfare and dignity for those affected by homelessness, 200 silicone menstrual cups and essential hygiene supplies (disinfectant wipes, antibacterial sprays/ surface cleaner, protective gloves) were donated to Rowan Alba, an Edinburgh based charity providing long term supported accommodation and community outreach to those affected by homelessness, addiction and isolation.

Additionally, Banner donated £2,800 worth of seasonal sleeping bags to help reduce exposure risk for rough sleepers during winter to Social Bite, an Edinburgh established charity and social business providing homes, jobs, food and support to empower people to transform their own lives.



## Economic growth

Shape our contracts to support sustainable and inclusive growth, leading to improved participation of small and local businesses.

In Procurement, we remain committed to shaping contracts that drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Our efforts align with the University's broader objectives of delivering tangible benefits to the local and national economy. By actively fostering relationships with small and local suppliers, we support the growth of these businesses, stimulate innovation and promote sustainability across our supply chain.

During this reporting period, we continued to conduct 'lotting' assessments in contracting strategies. This approach determines whether contracts can be structured to better support SMEs or supported businesses in successfully bidding for goods and services, thus fostering participation in our procurement processes.

We also recognise the vital role of social enterprises and supported businesses. We have continued to engage with suppliers that provide meaningful employment opportunities for disabled or disadvantaged individuals. This approach ensures these businesses can serve as a critical stepping stone into mainstream employment, reinforcing our commitment to social responsibility.

We also remain aware of the critical importance of prompt supplier payments, particularly for SMEs, third sector organisations and supported businesses, where late payments can have significant negative impacts. Collaborating closely

with our Finance colleagues, we have continued to improve processes for invoice flow, receipting and matching. These enhancements have resulted in a 3% increase of supplier invoices being paid within agreed terms, reinforcing our commitment to responsible financial practices.

By embedding these commitments in our procurement activities, we continue to advance sustainable impactful economic outcomes.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- From our total non-pay expenditure, 16% was with local suppliers. This equates to £59.5M spread across 1,475 suppliers. 21% of suppliers utilised in FY24/25 were local suppliers.
- We had a total University expenditure of £149M or 40% with SMEs in 2024/25.
- Our total spend was £239K with 5 supported businesses in 2024/25.
- We hosted further supplier engagement events at our BioQuarter campus in March '25 and George Square campus in June '25, linking staff with our suppliers to discuss future opportunities at the University.
- We attended a Supplier Development Programme 'Meet the Buyer' event at Murrayfield in June '25.

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Host a Meet the Buyer/Supplier event for local businesses.
- Develop guidance/information prompting stakeholders to consider local suppliers when undertaking market research.

Under Section 18(2)(e) of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, the University is required to 'outline the steps taken to involve supported businesses in regulated procurement.'

While no contracts were directly awarded to supported businesses during the reporting period, the University proactively engaged with the sector, achieving a total spend of £239,000 across five supported businesses in 2023-24.

Looking ahead, the University's aim is to ensure that we work with suppliers to facilitate opportunities for supported businesses and third sector organisations where possible.





## Responsible supply chains

Ensure we have a sustained focus on the wellbeing of those that work in our supply chains.

This year, we have maintained our focus on social responsibility in procurement, building on our strong commitment to ethical practices that promote fair working conditions and the wellbeing of workers across our supply chains. By leveraging our influence, we have continued to uphold the highest standards of labour ethics, ensuring that our procurement decisions reflect integrity and contribute to positive social impact.

Given the University's global reach, we have continued to drive positive change through our supply chains. By requiring all suppliers registered on our finance system to confirm their compliance with our Supply Chain Code of Conduct, we have reinforced the importance of social, ethical, economic and environmental responsibility, ensuring our procurement practices foster sustainable and equitable outcomes. We are strengthening our supplier assurance/due diligence for our highest-impact suppliers, using the Ecovadis platform for suppliers considered highest risk in their direct operations and supply chains.

We have maintained our focus on promoting Fair Work Practices as a key priority. In regulated procurements, we have embedded Fair Work Practices in our tender documentation where appropriate, aligning our approach with statutory guidance to promote high quality and fair work, as well as workforce diversity.

Aligned with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, we have maintained our zero-tolerance policy toward slavery and human trafficking, as articulated in our Modern Slavery Statement. We have continued to uphold robust policies and systems designed to prevent human rights violations within our operations and supply chains, focusing on monitoring and improving conditions with key suppliers and their partners. We offer an online training course aimed at informing our staff on the topic of Modern Slavery.

As an affiliate of Electronics Watch, we remain actively involved in improving global labour standards. Through this

partnership, we have continued to support the work toward better working conditions within our ICT supply chains, using worker-driven monitoring to create meaningful change.

We have also remained committed to responsible contracting, ensuring rigorous compliance with all other relevant legislation. Each contract has undergone detailed evaluations to verify that bidders meet critical requirements, including Health and Safety standards, GDPR compliance, and adherence to late payment policies, tailored to the specific needs of each procurement.

By embedding these ethical practices into our procurement processes, we have continued to set a high standard for responsible and socially impactful procurement, reinforcing our commitment to ethical practices and improving the wellbeing within our supply chains.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- All new suppliers required to sign [SUSTAIN Supply Chain Code of Conduct](#) before being registered on our Finance system for payment.
- An additional 7 suppliers have been evaluated through our specialist assessment tool for contracted suppliers (Ecovadis).
- Active membership in key collaborative groups, including the Higher Education Procurement Authority (HEPA) Responsible Procurement Group (RPG) as well as the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC).

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Enhance our practices and reporting of Fair Work at tendering stage through to contract management.
- Continued implementation the Supplier Code of Conduct with enhanced promotion among suppliers.
- Improve uptake of contract management database for standard assessment.
- Enhance awareness of ethical issues by improving the awareness of online training and information, integrating it with broader procurement awareness initiatives.

# Driving Progress Across Our Enablers



# Driving Progress Across Our Enablers

**Encompasses the critical factors, resources, capabilities and processes that support the delivery of our objectives. Continuous improvement to these areas is vital as they provide the foundation for our service quality and effectiveness. By continuously improving and developing these five pillars, we enhance our ability to achieve our strategic objectives.**

## Engagement and collaboration

Strong relationships with staff, students, suppliers and key external partners are essential to aligning our procurement activities with the ambitions of our Colleges and Professional Services Groups. Over the past year, we have continued to focus on improving mutual understanding and collaboration, enhancing our support to our customers and delivering ongoing improvement to improve our services and increase our value to all the business areas we support.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- We have a programme of proactive engagement with Colleges and Professional Services Groups, fostering and improving open, two-way communication by actively connecting and engaging directly with our stakeholders.
- We lead weekly hybrid support sessions and host regular in-person face to face forums at key campus locations. Some of the team co-locate with their key stakeholders as part of weekly hybrid working arrangements. All of these forums and user sessions provide the opportunity for tailored assistance, improving user confidence and system adoption as well as our understanding of operations in the business areas which in turn inform our ongoing continuous improvement.
- We have developed and launched two eLearning modules which are available for all staff and students:
  - 1) Procurement Fundamentals provides an overview of public sector procurement and the framework the University uses to conduct its procurement activities,
  - 2) Requestor training provides a practical and detailed overview of how to procure goods and services including a details system functional overview of the University purchase-to-pay Oracle Fusion system.
- We embedded the new University change management framework to ensure that we engaged and consulted with staff to ensure process developments were supported and successfully adopted by staff.

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- Working collaboratively with the University Tax team we will be supporting specific focus on improving requestor understanding of VAT on the purchase of goods and services.
- We will be focusing on providing targeted support for users and suppliers who are not following the correct process and best practice in their requisitioning activities. As a result, we expect to reduce the level of invoice queries.

- We are leading the introduction of a major systems upgrade to our purchase-to-pay system.
- Ongoing awareness of procurement policies and processes through targeted briefings to strengthen alignment on shared priorities.

## Communication

As detailed in our Procurement Strategy, clear and effective communication is integral to achieving our objectives. It fosters trust, collaboration and alignment across the University, laying the groundwork for the overall success of our procurement activities.

### Key achievements for 2024/25:

- We have continued to develop and enhance our Procurement SharePoint Hub to serve as the primary resource for procurement and purchase-to-pay information for the whole University, improving accessibility and awareness of procedural and policy guidance.
- We launched a regular dedicated newsletter to communicate key messages and updates to our requestor community which reaches c 8,500 users.

### Planned Activities for 2025/26:

- The successful roll-out of a new, comprehensive purchase-to-pay suite of reporting aimed at supporting school and department leaders in managing their P2P activity. Review and update all communication channels to improve accuracy, clarity, and accessibility.
- Upskilling our Finance Helpdesk colleagues to ensure they are trained, equipped and supported to they can confidently assist and resolve more first-line user queries. This will improve the user experience and reduce the number of issue escalations which need to be resolved by Procurement staff.

## Capability

Continuous improvement in our team's capabilities has remained a key focus throughout this reporting period. By investing in training, skills development and career growth opportunities, we strengthen our ability to deliver high-quality procurement services.



**Key achievements for 2024/25:**

- We have continued to place significant emphasis on market intelligence and insights to ensure optimal sourcing routes are chosen.
- Our agile operating model and flexible resource allocation has ensured continuity in procurement and stores operations, even during peak demands or staff transitions.

**Planned Activities for 2025/26:**

- Continue to strengthen team capabilities and leadership through professional development and targeted training.
- Undertake a review of our induction and onboarding process and information to ensure new starts feel as comfortable and as upskilled as quickly as possible.
- Equip non-Procurement staff with tools, guidance and support to enhance their non-regulated sourcing activities.

## Systems and processes

Streamlining workflows and enhancing user experiences remain at the heart of our priorities. Our efforts this year reflect our commitment to continuous improvement of our purchase-to-pay process and our service delivery.

**Key achievements for 2024/25:**

- Enhancements in invoice flow, including receipting and matching processes, have driven improvements in purchase-to-pay performance and supplier satisfaction.
- We have continued to optimise research stores, including system updates and refined processes that have improved notable and sustained recorded performance in stock accuracy, availability, compliance and audit assessments and user satisfaction scores.
- We have improved our supplier registration process via the system functionality in our supplier portal module. This has made the process easier for suppliers and more efficient as an end-to-end process.
- We have successfully rolled out the new Supplier Qualifications Module to selected Estates and Facilities suppliers as a mechanism to capture, review, store and report on supplier certifications. This represents a significant improvement on manual systems the University has previously had in place.

**Planned Activities for 2025/26:**

- Improving the underlying process which supports the selected use of procurement cards, in particular the back-end process of bank reconciliation. This will be done in collaboration with our Finance Operations colleagues.

- We will be undertaking a review as part of a wider University Change Programme to take a holistic review of all payment channels including purchase orders, corporate cards and other forms of staff and student payment options. The review will provide clear guidance on future payment channels for each form of business requirement which will optimise the experience for end users and simplify the current payment landscape.
- We will be undertaking a review of system functionality for invoices. This will include invoice scanning and entry to our P2P system and encompass invoice hold types and review practical levels of invoice tolerances to ensure the University adopts the correct balance of efficiency, controls and risk management.
- Continued improvement of procure-to-pay processes through targeted improvement initiatives, including VAT process enhancements, improved invoice flow, appropriate payment routes and research collaborator payments.
- Develop and implement updated standard operating procedures to improve user experience and process efficiency.
- Continue to review and evolve operational performance indicators to measure and enhance effectiveness.

## Data

Data is fundamental to enable us to improve performance, identify cost saving opportunities and strengthen decision-making.

**Planned Activities for 2025/26 :**

- We have made improvements to our detailed spend data and reporting tools to support strategic sourcing initiatives and supply improvement efforts.
- We have made significant improvements and simplification in our supplier catalogue content which has resulted in over 3.4 million items being removed. This has simplified the choice for users whilst making the data support activity better and more reliable.
- Our continued efforts to refine supplier records, pricing data, and stock information have resulted in better service delivery and improved purchase-to-pay performance.

**Planned Activities for 2025/26:**

- Improve user engagement and understanding to help users maximise their benefit from the existing data and reporting solutions which we have developed and launched.
- Continue to develop our data and reporting solutions to benefit our staff and students, our procurement and stores team and our suppliers.

# Annex



# Annex

## Enabling Research and Teaching, as well our Operations

### Number of regulated procurements completed

Number of procurements	Aug 24-Jul 25	Aug 23-Jul 24
Gpa regulated procurements	45	32
Pra regulated procurements	72	54
Further competitions and direct awards from collaborative agreements (>£50k)	89	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>174</b>

### Value of regulated procurements completed

Value of procurements	Aug 24-Jul 25	Aug 23-Jul 24
Gpa regulated procurements	95.2M	36.6M
Pra regulated procurements	8.98M	6.4M
Further competitions and direct awards from collaborative agreements (>£50k)	82.7M	152.95M
<b>Total</b>	<b>187M</b>	<b>195.9M</b>

### Summary of negotiated procedures without prior publication

Number of procurements	Aug 24-Jul 25	Aug 23-Jul 24
Negotiated procedures without prior publication	87	64
Competition is absent for technical reasons	82	60
Incompatibility or disproportionate technical difficulties in operation and maintenance	3	4
Extreme urgency	0	0
Creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or artistic performance	0	0
Protection of exclusive rights	0	0
Manufactured for research	2	0

### Summary of non-regulated procurements completed (<£50K)

Number of procurements	Aug 24-Jul 25	Aug 23-Jul 24
Number of non-regulated procurement projects	25	14
Value of non-regulated procurement projects	£2.08M	£901K

### Summary of regulated and non-regulated procurement savings

Procurement saving type	Category A/B (Collaborative)	Category C (University)
Cash savings	£11M	£8.3M
Non-cash savings	0	0

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