

PRO-003

Sustainable Procurement Policy

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Introduction

Our Sustainability strategy sets out our approach operating in a responsible and sustainable way, generating environmental, social and economic value for our stakeholders.

In support of this, Unite Students requires its supply chain to mirror this ethos – operating in a manner that reduces our impact to the environment and considers the ethical, economic and social impact of all goods, services and engagements provided. Unite Students actively manages the social and environmental impact of our supply chain and will act on all opportunities that exist to significantly reduce this impact.

1.1 Purpose

Unite Students take our Sustainability responsibilities seriously. One of the ways in which we strive to minimise the impact of our activities on the planet and communities in which we work is through delivering sustainable solutions in our supply chain - a continuous process achieved by working collaboratively and innovatively with our Suppliers in the products and services we procure.

This policy sets out the minimum requirements expected not only of Unite Students, but also of the companies with which we work. Furthermore, it provides the framework for our Supplier Code which sets out the specific ethical practices that we expect of our Suppliers regarding its colleagues, governance and supply chain – in fact, not only of our Suppliers, but also of our Suppliers' Suppliers, and so on.

Specifically, this policy:

- a) Provides the sustainable basis upon which the procurement function shall source products and/or services.
- b) Ensures all colleagues involved in the purchasing of goods and services do so in a sustainable manner; and
- c) Provides clarity for our supply chain on the sustainable basis on which they are expected to supply their goods and services to Unite Students.

1.2 Scope

This policy extends to all involved in the procurement, purchasing or supply of goods and services, including our procurement team, our Directors and Senior Management Team, our colleagues, and our Suppliers.

1.3 Responsibilities

The Procurement function is responsible for defining the Sustainable Procurement Policy and respective strategies upon which the supply chain should be sourced and managed - always and closely in conjunction with the wider Unite Students business and the Sustainability team.

All members of the Procurement function are responsible for adhering to the Policy, communicating, vetting, and upholding its principles during supplier selection and management, reporting, and taking action where non-compliance is identified.

All Suppliers, including potential Suppliers, are expected to ensure that they understand and abide by the content of this Policy before, during and after doing business with Unite Students.

All Unite Students workers are responsible for adherence to the Policy.

Heads of Department and / or Functional Directors are responsible for ensuring there is clear and consistent messaging about and adherence to our Sustainable Procurement Policy when purchasing any form of supply. They are accountable for reporting and taking action where non-compliance is identified.

1.4 Definitions

Anti-corruption: Designed to prevent dishonest or fraudulent conduct, within a political context¹.

Carbon Footprint: a measure of the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organisation, or community ².

Carbon Footprint Equivalent (CO2e): a metric unit measure use to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential (GWP), by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide with the same global warming potential ³ CO2e/tonnes are the standard metric that Unite Student uses.

Circular Economy: an economic system based on using renewable resources, eliminating waste, and reusing and recycling material goods ¹³

¹ SOURCE Oxford Dictionary

² SOURCE: Oxford Dictionary

³ SOURCE: Eurostat Statistics Explained

DEIB: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Eco-Friendly or Environmentally Friendly: A product or service which is not environmentally harmful⁴, considered throughout the products life cycle and demonstrated through a robust LCA (defined below).

Ecological: In relation to or concerned with the relation of flora and fauna with one another and with their physical surroundings.

Embodied Carbon: All the carbon dioxide emitted in producing materials from the energy used to extract and transport raw materials as well as emissions from manufacturing processes⁵.

Environmental Product Declaration ⁶: A report which details what a product is made from and how this will impact the environment from cradle to grave; the outcome of a life cycle assessment (LCA) has been performed.

ESG: Environmental, Social and Governance ⁷.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions: Any gas that could absorb infrared radiation emitted from Earth's surface and reradiating it back to the Earth's surface ⁸. **Global Warming Potential (GWP):** a measure of how much energy the emission of 1 ton of a gas will absorb over a given period, relative to the emissions of 1 ton of carbon dioxide. It allows comparison of the global warming impacts of different gases.⁹

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA): A process for evaluating the effects that a product has on the environment over the entire period of its life thereby increasing resource-use efficiency and decreasing liabilities ¹⁰.

Supplier(s) / Supply Chain: All third-party companies that supply Unite Students with goods, materials, products and services, including contractors and sub-contractors.

⁴ SOURCE: Oxford Dictionary

⁵ SOURCE: UCLA

⁶ SOURCE: [ESG: The Report](#)

⁷ SOURCE: Cambridge Dictionary

⁸ SOURCE: www.britannica.com

⁹ SOURCE: EPA

¹⁰ SOURCE: European Environment Agency

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs¹¹.

1.5 References

The Sustainable Procurement Policy works in conjunction with or as additional parts to the following documents:

PRO-001 Procurement Policy

PRO-002 Supplier Code

PRP-05 Group Specification Policy

Sustainability Policy ENP-02

ENP-002 Unite Students Environmental Policy

Anyone can view these policies on the Unite Students intranet (employees) or for the publicly available, on our website:

<https://www.unitegroup.com/our-suppliers>

¹¹ SOURCE United Nations Brundtland Commission

¹³ SOURCE: Collins Dictionary

¹⁴ SOURCE: Collins Dictionary

Sustainable Procurement Policy

2.1. Intent

Our goal is to lead on sustainability and raise standards in the living sector. Our governance and processes ensure that working responsibly and sustainably isn't optional, that we always operate with integrity and transparency.

This Policy provides those sustainable principles upon which Unite Students shall source its contractors, products and services and manage its supply chain – only working with companies that understand and share our commitment to our sustainability principles and equally reflecting these principles in their own supply chain.

The principles we seek and manage in our supply chain ensure we have positive impact on:

- People – sourcing ethically, safely and responsibly, and always being transparent.
- Environment - tackling climate change and reducing our environmental impacts.
- Communities - making a real contribution to the communities we operate in

As such the principles within this policy, shall always be considered in in our Procurement and supplier selection and management processes in delivering a Home for Success for our customers.

It is our intention that our Supply Chain shall:

- Comply with the most demanding requirements, whether they are relevant applicable local and national laws and regulations, or the principles set out in this Policy and our Supplier Code.
- Implement systems and controls to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations and the principles set out in this Policy and our Supplier Code, including policies, training, monitoring, and auditing mechanisms designed to provide ongoing improvement and assurance of its effectiveness.
- Mandate the principles set out in this Policy to their own suppliers and sub-contractors who may provide goods or services to Unite Students.
- Provide a process for workers to report, without fear of retaliation, activity inconsistent with the content of this Policy, with reference to ethical business conduct, and human and labour rights.
- Notify Unite Students of any alleged potential, suspected or actual breach of the law or this policy. This can be reported to the Unite Students Company Secretary, Procurement

Director or anonymously using our independent, confidential reporting service: 0800 069 8754 or www.unitestudents.ethicspoint.com.

2.2 Principles

Principle 1: People - our supply chain shall be ethical, safe, responsible, and transparent

We look to our Suppliers to: uphold our Supplier Code – the Supplier Code maps out the ethical, human rights, health & safety, and DEIB standards that we expect all our suppliers to follow in trading with, and that they can expect of working with, Unite Students. It exists to be clear that malpractice or unethical ways of working in our supply chain has no home at Unite Students.

Principle 2: Environment - we shall tackle climate change and reduce our environmental impacts

All Tier 1 and 2 Suppliers should have both a Sustainable Procurement policy along with a set of goals in relation to these. We will look for how our suppliers are able to demonstrate that they are changing their behaviours to achieve these goals and how they are able to assist Unite Students in achieving ours. Sustainability policies at a minimum should contain details on the company's commitments towards ethics, environment and sustainability alongside regulatory compliance measures, resource management, identification of risks, stakeholder communications and continuous improvement.

Specifically, we look for the following from our employees and supply chain in the purchase of any goods, materials or services.

Reduce Usage

Unite Students' employees will:

- (a) undertake due diligence to ensure the item(s) need to be purchased (i.e. there are no alternatives to purchasing new) and that they will be used. Careful consideration should be given to customised products that may not be returnable/refundable.
- (b) consider the whole life-cycle impact of an item/s before purchase, where reasonable opting to purchase eco-friendly alternatives.
- (c) show preference to goods and/or materials that are made from recycled products and have minimal packaging. Waste should be minimised through the purchase of products

and/or materials that are recyclable. With appropriate preference given to used or remanufactured goods but never at a compromise to safety, quality, or effectiveness.

- (d) purchase goods and products that comply with recognised environmental standards or British Standards for your sector.

Reduce Waste

We look to our suppliers to:

- (a) minimise or eliminate packaging where reasonable, and that packaging is reusable (by Unite Students or the supplier) or recyclable.
- (b) have a zero waste to landfill plan, including the increase of recycling and reuse of packaging and products.
- (c) adhere to the duty of care regulations for all waste produced as part of their operations and be able to provide Unite Students with disposal information where required.

Do all we can to achieve a Circular Economy:

We look to our suppliers to:

- (a) offer collection services for the purpose of reuse and recycling.
- (b) aim to offer the largest circular economy potential in their respective industry.
- (c) consider the durability and re-usability of products. Unite Students will take preference to products which will have value at end of life or could be manufactured into new products with minimal energy use.

Reduce Energy & Carbon:

We look to our suppliers to:

- (a) offer i) low carbon alternatives ii) can demonstrate they report and actively work to reduce their own carbon footprint.
- (b) provide documents relating to embodied carbon and the Greenhouse Gas Protocol for products and services in the form of a LCA or an Environmental Product Declaration. Suppliers should issue this to Unite when requested, in a timely manner. Unite Students may specify this is a requirement for certain activity or procurement transactions.

- (c) be ready to share further data with Unite Students where a full LCA is not available, to allow a carbon footprint calculation. This may include locations of resource, production sites, manufacturing practice and transport.
- (d) be willing to collaborate with Unite Students on reduction measures when asked, including responding to questionnaires, provision of data and the creation of action plans. Unite Students actively reviews the highest impacting supply areas in terms of carbon footprint within our supply chain.
- (e) ensure energy efficiency measures can be adhered to by Unite Students (where products supplied require energy in their usage) i.e. through providing clear instructions for efficient use and maintenance. Where a claim on efficiency or savings from a product is made, Unite Students may require additional details on performance from the supplier post installation/purchase.

Maximise Air Quality:

We look to our suppliers to:

- (a) be aware of, and adhere to, all relevant clean air legislation.
- (b) have active measures to reduce or prevent emissions to air within the manufacture/sourcing of their products or services. When requested, Suppliers should be able to provide policies or information surrounding methods/plans to reduce or prevent emissions.
- (c) work towards transforming fleets (including logistics provided by third parties) to electric vehicles or have considered diesel alternatives such as hybrids or biobased fuels.
- (d) use products which do not contain harmful chemicals, in particular showing preference to products with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and low or no formaldehyde in materials such as furniture and paint.
- (e) make Unite Students aware of any products supplied or services offered which contain or make use of chemicals which are harmful to human health and the environment through chemical safety data sheets.

Conserve Water and maximise water quality:

We look to our suppliers to:

- (a) supply products that minimise water use wherever possible, and conserve water compared to their alternatives. This is considered throughout the production, manufacturing, and use of the product, where applicable.
- (b) active measures to reduce or prevent pollutants entering watercourses as a result of the manufacture/sourcing of their products or services. When requested, Suppliers should be able to provide policies or information surrounding methods/plans to reduce or prevent pollution incidents.

Minimise Ecological Risks:

We look to our suppliers to:

- (a) minimise or avoid the supply of products created through unsustainable practice or extensive use of fossil fuels.
- (b) seek to phase out the use of unsustainable practices or fossil fuels for alternative measures.
- (c) be aware of their ecological risks and opportunities and be in active measures to minimising these risks with clear demonstration of how this is being achieved.
- (d) protect and where possible enhance habitats and wildlife on or around Unite Students grounds. Where this is not possible on Unite Students properties, other means of improvement should be sought.

Principle 3: Communities – we shall make a real contribution to the communities we operate in

We believe in supporting the communities where we operate, and we look to our Supply Chain for similar values and principles:

- We ask our suppliers to minimise their impact on the local community through compliance with regulations as a minimum.
- We ask our Suppliers to engage positively with the local community and consider providing time off for volunteering and financial assistance to the causes that they are supporting wherever possible.

- We ask our Suppliers to work to avoid disruption to local people; and
- We aim to develop our Supply Chain Diversity further in support of our communities.
- We offer small and medium enterprises (SME's), social enterprises, and local businesses the opportunity to participate in our supply chain by inviting organisations of any size or type to take part in tenders we launch.

3.0 Key Outcomes

By upholding its Sustainability Strategy within the procurement of goods and services throughout our supply chain, we can achieve our goals.

Adherence to this policy, both internally and by our Suppliers, will ensure Unite Students' activities and those of our supply chain have the least possible environmental and social enabling our commitment of being a responsible business.

Progress will be measured annually by the Procurement function with specific and relevant Sustainable Procurement objectives set and agreed with the wider business. Specific improvement plans may be agreed with respective Suppliers based upon their impact upon our Sustainable Procurement principles, with plans and measures being agreed as part of as part of ongoing review and performance meetings.

4.0 Non-Compliance

Unite Students reserves the right to assess and monitor suppliers' compliance with this Policy, whether or not audit rights are contained within relevant supply chain contracts.

Non-compliance with the intent and any conditions set out within this policy will be subject to enquiry.

5.0 Sanctions

Following enquiry, any supplier found to have breached this policy may have their services with us cancelled with immediate effect and be removed from our purchasing systems.

Any worker who breaches this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

3.0 Appendix A – Document Control Information

Document Management			
Document Ref / Title		Sustainable Procurement Policy	
Version #	V2.0	Status	Live
Classification		Public (everyone has access)	
Reason for development		Ensuring a sustainable supply chain is in place	
Summary of changes		Annual review –incorporates more precise use of language, clarity on supplier role, movement of ethical sourcing/human rights/H&S into Supplier Code to avoid duplication/enhance simplicity.	
Applicable parties		All workers, Suppliers, and sub-Suppliers (Unites supply chain)	
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Owner (name / title)		Procurement Director	
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Consultation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Data Protection	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> NCC / ECC	<input type="checkbox"/> City Teams
<input type="checkbox"/> Sales	<input type="checkbox"/> IT Service Desk	<input type="checkbox"/> IT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance - AR	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance - Treasury	<input type="checkbox"/> InfoSec	<input type="checkbox"/> HR
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance - AP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> H&S	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Intelligence
<input type="checkbox"/> Estates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> Asset Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Support	<input type="checkbox"/> PMO	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition / Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Version History (copy and paste from top section to here as a record)			
Version	Date approved	Author	Summary of changes

V1.0		Francesca Garnham, Chloe Lloyd, Eleanor Biddiscombe	New Policy
V2.0		Eleanor Biddiscombe	Annual Review