

# University of Exeter Procurement Strategy 2025 -2030

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**ACCESSIBLE**

**RESPONSIVE**

**INNOVATIVE**



## 1. Introduction

The University of Exeter is committed to excellence in procurement, ensuring that our processes align with both institutional goals and national directives. In light of the Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) 2025, we have updated our procurement strategy to reflect these priorities and to continue delivering value through responsible and sustainable procurement practices.

Our procurement approach is designed to ensure compliance with new transparency, competition, and value-for-money requirements introduced by the Procurement Act 2023.

The University of Exeter (UoE) is deeply committed to assuming a leadership role in sustainability and climate change, both locally and internationally. Our dedication extends beyond running operations efficiently; we're actively seeking collaborations across educational, research and operational platforms to drive transformative action. Our goal is to be recognised for our innovative approaches, influential presence, and meaningful contributions.

At the heart of this commitment lie responsible procurement practices. UoE acknowledges its role as a significant consumer and recognises the potential impact of its procurement activities on the environment, economy, and society. Therefore, we are dedicated to procuring goods, services, and works in a manner that not only meets legal requirements and operational needs but also contributes positively to environmental conservation, economic prosperity, and societal well-being.

## 2. Alignment with National Procurement Policy Statement 2025

The NPPS 2025 outlines key priorities that public authorities (inc HEI) should focus on within their procurement activities. Our strategy aligns with these priorities as follows:

- **Social Value:** We will integrate social value considerations into our procurement decisions, ensuring that our activities contribute positively to society. This includes promoting fair working conditions, supporting local communities, and ensuring diverse and inclusive supply chains, as emphasized in the Procurement Act 2023.
- **Supporting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs):** Recognising the vital role SMEs play in innovation and economic growth, we will simplify our procurement processes to increase SME participation, reducing administrative burdens and providing clear guidance to potential suppliers.
- **Innovation:** We are committed to fostering innovation by leveraging procurement procedures that encourage supplier-led solutions, ensuring the University remains at the forefront of advancements in education and research.
- **Sustainability:** Environmental sustainability is a core consideration in our procurement activities. We will prioritise suppliers who demonstrate a commitment to net-zero objectives and circular economy principles, in line with the UK government's sustainability commitments.

## 3. Strategic Objectives

To implement this strategy, we have established the following objectives:



- **Value for Money:** Ensure that all procurement activities achieve the best possible value, balancing cost with quality, social value, and sustainability considerations, as per the Procurement Act 2023.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Maintain open and transparent procurement processes, ensuring all stakeholders have access to procurement decisions, contract award justifications, and supply chain performance.
- **Capacity Building:** Invest in training and resources to enhance the procurement capabilities of our staff, ensuring they are equipped to implement regulatory and policy changes effectively along with improving commercial accumen.
- **Risk Management:** Identify and manage risks associated with procurement activities, including supply chain disruptions, regulatory compliance, and fraud prevention, ensuring operational resilience.

#### 4. Ethical Procurement

We recognise that our procurement decisions have socio-economic and environmental implications.

The University is committed to:

- **Adhering to international standards** on ethical sourcing, including fair labour practices and responsible supply chain management.
- **Complying with the Procurement Act 2023**, ensuring procurement mitigates risks associated with modern slavery, corruption, and human rights.
- **Encouraging suppliers to align** with our ethical procurement principles, ensuring long-term sustainability and responsible business conduct.

#### 5. Climate and Ecological Impact

We require climate and ecological considerations to be at the heart of procurement decisions by:

- Factoring in the carbon footprint of service delivery, goods manufacturing, and provision of works.
- Aligning with government policies on environmentally responsible procurement, including low-carbon and sustainable product sourcing.
- Prioritising suppliers who commit to reducing environmental impact and achieving net-zero emissions.

#### 6. Standards of Conduct

All procurement activities must adhere to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality. Procurement must be conducted fairly, transparently, and in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023. We will regularly monitor and audit procurement activities to ensure continuous alignment with legal and ethical standards.

#### 7. Social Value and Community Impact

The University is committed to incorporating the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 into procurement decisions by:



- Supporting local businesses and community groups, strengthening the regional economy.
- Enhancing environmental sustainability through responsible sourcing and supply chain management.
- Improving student, staff, and community well-being by fostering social and economic opportunities.

## 8. Governance and Compliance

The University's procurement function operates under a robust governance structure, ensuring compliance with:

- The Procurement Act 2023 and its associated regulations
- National Procurement Policy Statement 2025 principles
- Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Responsible Procurement Policy and Social Value Policy
- University of Exeter Financial Regulations
- University of Exeter Modern Slavery Statement
- 3rd Party Grant Funding Guidance
- Procurement Operation Procedures (under review)

Regular audits will ensure compliance with procurement best practices, and procurement policies will be reviewed periodically to maintain alignment with evolving institutional, regulatory, and legal requirements.

## 9. Compliance with Procurement Act 2023: Transparency and Publication of Notices

The University is committed to full compliance with the transparency requirements set out in the Procurement Act 2023. This includes:

- **Publication of Notices:** Ensuring procurement opportunities, contract awards, and key procurement decisions are publicly available, in line with legal requirements.
- **Market Engagement:** Conducting pre-procurement engagement to enhance competition and improve procurement outcomes.
- **Contract Management Transparency:** Regularly reviewing contract performance and making relevant data publicly accessible where appropriate.
- **Supply Chain Visibility:** Enhancing supply chain transparency to mitigate risks and ensure compliance with responsible procurement standards.

## 9. Implementation and Monitoring

We will implement this strategy through a series of targeted actions, including:

- Developing guidelines and toolkits to assist staff in incorporating social value, transparency, and sustainability into procurement decisions.



- Enhancing our key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress towards strategic objectives and compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 over and above our HEPA requirements.
- Engaging with suppliers to communicate our expectations and collaborate on achieving shared goals in ethical and sustainable procurement.
- Regularly reviewing and updating procurement policies to reflect best practices, legal requirements, and sector advancements.

## 10. Conclusion

By aligning our procurement strategy with the National Procurement Policy Statement 2025 and the Procurement Act 2023, the University of Exeter reaffirms its commitment to responsible, transparent, and sustainable procurement. Through these efforts, we aim to support our institutional mission, contribute positively to society, and drive sustainable development.

For more detailed information on our procurement policies and procedures, please refer to:

- University's Financial Regulations,
- Procurement Operating Procedures,
- Responsible Procurement Strategy and Policy,
- Social Value Policy.



## Appendix 1 – Delivery Plan

### 1. Enhance Strategic Alignment and Operating Model Coherence

- Integrated Procurement Framework: Ensure the new operating model introduced in September 2024 delivers a more cohesive framework that ties procurement activities directly to the University's broader operational and strategic goals. Ensure procurement priorities are embedded into the University's overall financial and operational planning strategies.
- Monitor the benefits of the hybrid procurement model: centralising strategic and operational procurement functions while allowing flexibility at the local level for operational decisions.
- Within the boundaries of the Procurement Act 2023 procure using a flexible, agile approach to maximise benefits to the University.
- Collaborate on Procurement activity with regional and sector organisations where they support the University's strategies and Exeter civic agreement and make economic sense.
- Become a key part of University strategic projects with embedded, well defined and best in class procurement support.

### 2. Boost Efficiency Through Technology and Automation

- Digital Procurement Tools: Continue to enhance e-procurement platforms and AI-driven tools to streamline supplier selection, contract monitoring, and reporting.
- Performance Dashboards: Develop real-time dashboards to monitor team and supplier performance, contract compliance, and environmental/social impact.

### 3. Strengthen Supplier Engagement and Market Intelligence

- Strategic Supplier Partnerships: Establish long-term partnerships with key suppliers to drive mutual value, encourage innovation, and improve supply chain resilience.
- Market Engagement: utilise premarket engagement to better understand supplier capabilities, project risk and commercial hotspots to ensure better procurement outputs.
- Supplier Relationship Management (SRM): extract commercial, performance and compliance benefits from a tiered SRM approach.

### 4. Elevate Sustainability and Social Value

- Circular Economy Integration: Embed circular economy principles (reuse, recycling, repair) into procurement criteria.
- Local Supplier Incentives: Develop incentives for local suppliers to reduce carbon footprint and strengthen regional economic ties.

### 5. Capacity Building and Skills Enhancement

- Procurement Skills Development: Offer targeted training on sustainable procurement, ethical sourcing, and contract management.



- **Supplier Development Programmes:** Support smaller suppliers (especially SMEs) in meeting University procurement requirements through better engagement, training and simplified processes.

## **6. Governance and Risk Management**

- **Procedural Gateways:** Introduce a front-loaded approach to procurement activity that establishes key information at the outset of a process to reduce risk.
- **Enhanced Contract Monitoring:** Form stronger relationships with key stakeholders to review contract performance, supplier risk, and ethical compliance.

## **7. Improve Transparency and Stakeholder Engagement**

- **Stakeholder Consultation:** Establish regular consultation mechanisms with faculty's, students, and staff to ensure procurement decisions reflect the wider University community's needs.
- **Open Contracting Data:** Publish contract performance data and supplier impact reports to improve accountability and stakeholder trust where required.

These outcome and actions should ensure the successful delivery of the procurement strategy, increase operational efficiency, enhance supplier relationships, and position the University as leaders in sustainable and socially responsible procurement.