PROCUREMENT POLICY

POL-NWH-13

Lead Officer (Post):	Head of Finance
Responsible Office/ Department:	Finance
Responsible Committee:	Finance and General Purposes
Review Officer (Post):	VP Resources and Engagement
Date policy approved:	19.06.25
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	New
Date policy due for review:	19.06.28
UHI Single Policy / UHI NWH Policy:	UHI NWH Policy
Public face / College internal facing only	Public facing
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	Pending
Has a Data Privacy Impact Assessment been completed:	Yes, by DPO

Policy Summary

Overview	Why is the policy required?
Purpose	What will the policy achieve?
Scope	Who does the policy apply to?
Consultation	Who has been consulted on the policy, and who will be notified?
Implementation and Monitoring	Who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy, and what resources/ costs will be incurred?
Risk Implications	What are the risk implications of this policy?
Link with Strategy	How is this policy linked to the University or College strategy?
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment:
	Privacy Impact Assessment:

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 The College was established in 1993 and incorporated under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 on 1 April 1993. It is a registered charity (Scottish Charity Number SC021215)

1.2 On 1 August 2023, the College merged with Lews Castle College (trading as UHI Outer Hebrides) and UHI West Highland College. UHI North Highland College subsequently formally changed its name to 'The Board of Management of UHI North, West and Hebrides' [NWH].

1.3 NWH is a regional college of scale across the north-west Highlands and Outer Hebrides, with 9,000 students and 600 staff. It has 19 learning centre locations and provides sustainable tertiary education, skills training, research, and innovation for the communities of Lochaber, Lochalsh, Sutherland, Caithness, Wester Ross, Easter Ross, Skye, the Inner Hebrides, and the Outer Hebrides.

1.4 NWH is one of 11 academic partners that collectively form the University of the Highlands and Islands. The partnership is a diverse and flexible partnership serving our communities and connected to their needs.

2. College Vision

2.1 The college vision is to be an anchor institution for the region, a connected, flexible, and sustainable learning organisation, opening doors to a world of opportunities.

2.2 Our values are:

- Trust: We take pride in what we do. We are highly trusted by our students, staff, and partners. We are recognised for our leadership and dedication to deliver more for all whom we serve.
- Integrity: We take responsibility for all that we do, assuring transparency and accountability. We ensure people are at the heart of everything we do and that our organisation operates in collaboration and openness, with an ethos of dignity and respect for everyone.
- Excellence: We are ambitious for our learners, our staff, our college, and our communities. We drive innovation, aim to be sector leaders, and benchmark our performance on national and international standards

2.3 Our strategic objectives are:

- To become a financially sustainable, joined up organisation
- To grow curriculum, particularly in key areas that link with our research and commercial opportunities (blue and green economies/Gaelic language)

- To grow research and knowledge exchange through connecting our current specialisms and developing them potential
- To have cohesive and responsive business development teams who can respond effectively and purposefully to opportunities of scale
- To enhance the student experience through connecting our sites, resources, communities, and multi-location programmes
- To have resilient team structures and depth of resource to address changing priorities, opportunities, and economic difficulties.

3.   Strategic and Operational Context

3.1   The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 states that where a contracting authority has annual non pay spend expenditure equal to or greater than £5m, it should prepare a Procurement Strategy setting out how it intends to conduct regulated procurements. The college's recurrent non-pay expenditure is in the region of £4.5m per annum. Although the college have expenditure below £5m, the college shall publish a Procurement Strategy and Annual Report in line with best practice.

3.2   This Strategy sets out the strategic approach to operational procurement within a challenging economic, legislative, and regulatory environment. The Strategy is used in conjunction with the UHI NWH Strategic Statement 2023 and the UHI Strategic Plan 2030.

3.3   The Action Plan (Appendix I) element of the Procurement Strategy translates the strategic objectives and desired outcomes into the detailed actions and processes required to maintain a cost-effective (and legally compliant) procurement operation.

3.4   The college procures a vast range of products and services and does so in line with the Scottish Government Procurement Journey and the college's internal governance procedures.

3.5   The college is a member of Advanced Procurement Universities and Colleges (APUC), the Centre of Expertise for procurement for the higher and further education sector in Scotland. APUC is the key link between the HE/FE sector and Scottish Government in taking forward the Public Procurement in Scotland Programme. As part of the UHI Procurement Shared Service agreement, APUC provide the college with a dedicated Procurement Manager to assist with procurement related activities. Through membership of APUC, and as a Public Sector body, the college has access to National and Sectoral Framework Agreements tendered by APUC and other public sector organisations.

3.6   The college's procurement activities are assessed as part of an Internal Audit Programme and additionally the Operational Procurement Review (OPR).

4.   Strategic Procurement Objectives

4.1   The following key strategic procurement objectives have been identified:

4.1.1   To work with and educate internal and external stakeholders to deliver value for money, innovative, and sustainable products and services to meet the needs of the college.

4.1.2   To comply with relevant Scottish and UK legislation and embed sound, ethical, social, and environmental policies in alignment with the Sustainable Procurement Duty and the global climate emergency targets.

4.1.3 To analyse the college's non-pay expenditure and apply appropriate procurement strategies to deliver value for money and reduce commercial risk.

4.1.4 To develop appropriate management information through optimal use of procurement systems in order to measure procurement and supplier performance including value for money and value-added services achieved by the college.

5. Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

5.1 The College is committed to delivering its procurement activities in compliance with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

5.1.1 The College will produce a Procurement Strategy and Annual Report.

5.1.2 The College will conduct all regulated procurements in compliance with the Regulations demonstrating equal treatment, non-discrimination, transparency, proportionality, and mutual recognition. The College will use portals including PCS and PCS-T to publish its procurement opportunities and shall strive to ensure appropriate use of lotting, output-based specifications, and clear evaluation criteria to ensure the procurement is accessible to as many bidders as possible. The College will be open in its communications with its supply chin and provide relevant feedback where appropriate.

5.1.3 For every relevant procurement over £4m, the College will consider community benefits in all of its tenders on a proportionate basis. This will include, whenever feasible, where the value is below £4m.

5.1.4 For each relevant procurement, the College will consider the community affected by the resultant contract and ensure any affected organisations/persons are consulted e.g. impact on service for students, staff, or wider community. Consultation will always be on a scale and approach relevant to the procurement exercise.

5.1.5 In compliance with the Act the College will consider, before undertaking a procurement, whether it is relevant and proportionate to make the Real Living Wage a condition of contract, whilst ensuring the appropriate balance between quality and cost of the contract, paying regard to the statutory guidance on Fair Work First.

5.1.6 The College is committed to contracting only with suppliers that comply with all appropriate and relevant legislation, including the Health and Safety legislation. Where appropriate, and on a contract-by-contract basis, the college will assess the legislation applicable to the procurement and take steps to ensure bidders comply with such legislation. Where appropriate, the College will also seek to assess the compliance of subcontractors.

5.1.7 The College supports the sourcing of goods that are fairly and ethically traded. Where relevant and possible, it shall make use of appropriate standards and labels to take account of fair and ethical trading considerations. The College will continue to work with APUC and Electronics Watch to monitor our supply chain with regard to matters relating to modern slavery.

5.1.8 The College aims to facilitate the supply of healthy, fresh, seasonal, and sustainably grown produce which represents value for money. The College will work with its supply chain to ensure products meet the nutritional requirements for food for all users of our catering

services and will use best practice guidance such as "Catering for Change – Buying food sustainably in the public sector."

5.1.9 The College recognises the importance of paying suppliers promptly once a service has been performed or goods delivered and that late payment is particularly detrimental to SMEs, third sector bodies and supported businesses. The college commits to as far as is reasonably practicable, payments are made no later than 30 days after the invoice.

5.1.10 To comply with the Sustainable Procurement Duty, the College will consider the environmental, social, and economic issues relating to all regulated procurements and how benefits can be accrued, on a contract-by-contract basis by taking proportionate actions.

5.1.11 The College will seek to take account of climate impacts and the circular economy in its procurement activity contributing to the college's pledge to join the United Nations' climate change campaign in the Race to Net Zero, the Scottish Colleges Statement of Commitment on the Climate Emergency and the college's Net Zero Plan. The College will create and monitor a Scope 3 Emissions Report.

5.1.12 Where relevant, the college will seek to involve SMEs, third sector bodies and supported businesses in our procurement activities.

5.1.13 The College will endeavour to make use of available tools and systems such as the Scottish Public Procurement Prioritisation Tool, the Sustainability Test, Life Cycle Impact Mapping, the Scottish Flexible Framework, the Sustain Supply Chain Code of Conduct, Supply Chain Management (SCM) Tool, Eco Vadis and Electronics Watch, where these are relevant and proportionate to the scope of the procurement.

6.   Annual Reporting

6.1   The College will produce an Annual Report detailing progress against its procurement objectives. The Annual Report will be published this on the college's website. This report, produced as soon as feasible after the end of each academic year, will describe how the college has discharged its obligations under the Act and how it has exercised discretion and judgement as permitted by the public procurement rules to secure strategic objectives in compliance with the Act.

6.2   The Annual Report will include:

6.2.1   A summary of the regulated procurements that have been completed during the year covered by the report;

6.2.2   A review of whether those procurements complied with the college's Operational Procurement strategy;

6.2.3   To the extent that any regulated procurements did not comply, a statement of how the College intends to ensure that future regulated procurements do comply;

6.2.4   A summary of any community benefit requirements imposed as part of a regulated procurement that were fulfilled during the year covered by the report;

6.2.5   A summary of any steps taken to facilitate the involvement of supported businesses in regulated procurements during the year covered by the report;

6.2.6   A summary of the regulated procurements the college expects to commence in the next two financial years;

6.2.7 A summary of the work the college is doing on addressing climate change impacts in our supply chain;

6.2.8 Such other information as the Scottish Ministers may by order specify.

8. Links to related documents/websites

8.1 [Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA)](#)
8.2 [APUC Ltd](#)
8.3 [Catering for Change – Buying Food sustainably in the factor](#)
8.4 [Community Benefits](#)
8.5 [Eco Vadis](#)
8.6 [Electronics Watch](#)
8.7 [Equality Act 2010](#)
8.8 [Fair Work First](#)
8.9 [Health & Safety at Work Act 1974](#)
8.10 [Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014](#)
8.11 [Real Living Wage](#)
8.12 [Scottish Colleges Statement of Commitment on the Climate Emergency](#)
8.13 [Sustainable Procurement tools](#)
8.14 [Scottish Government Procurement Journey](#)
8.15 [Sustainable Procurement Duty](#)
8.16 [Public Contracts Scotland (PCS)](#)
8.17 [Public Contracts Scotland-Tender (PCS-T)](#)
8.18 [UHI Strategic Plan 2030](#)

9. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author

Appendix I – Action Plan

January 2025- Dec 2027

Procurement Strategic Objective	Outcomes	Main Actions
To work with and educate internal and external stakeholders to deliver value for money, innovative, and sustainable products and services to meet the needs of the college.	Robust procurement policies and procedures in place to assist with the procurement of all goods, services and works.	- Review current processes to ensure robust internal control process for procurement processes and systems. - Procurement policy, procedures, tender template and terms and conditions in place reflecting current legislation and best practice including Fair Work First, community benefits, late payment, health and safety, fair and ethical trading, Sustainable Procurement Duty, promotion of equality and fairness, circular economy, and consideration of whole life costing. - Develop and maintain procurement section of SharePoint to host policies, procedures, and guidance documents.
	All staff with purchasing responsibilities have access to appropriate procurement training.	- Procurement staff to attend annual CPD Training as required to ensure all skills remain relevant and up-to date. - Procurement training roadshows to be delivered at campus locations. - Optimise use of SharePoint for procurement awareness training/initiatives. - Include procurement training at point of college induction. - Develop and maintain a training register.
	Key procurement information readily available relevant stakeholders	- Co-ordinate procurement initiatives and disseminate procurement information from external sources e.g. such as APUC Category Bulletins. - Optimise use of all relevant communication channels. - Advise stakeholders of relevant UIG opportunities.
To comply with relevant Scottish and UK legislation and embed sound, ethical, social, and environmental policies in alignment with the Sustainable Procurement Duty and the global climate emergency targets.	Achieve social, economic, and environmental benefits through procurement.	- Embed social and environmental criteria in mini competitions and local contracts. Use tools available to identify relevant criteria. - Supply Chain Code of Conduct included and signed by appointed Contractor(s). - Investigate use of local suppliers, SMEs, supported businesses and social enterprises for relevant contracts. - Consider tendering approaches, such as Lotting, to maximise accessibility to SMEs
	Contribute to the Climate Emergency agenda. Take account of climate and circular economy in procurement activity where appropriate.	

	Achieve improved working conditions for our Scottish communities through fair work practices within our supply chain.	• Provide guidance via the internet on how to do business with the college. • Consider innovation in each local tender considering new approaches where appropriate. • Consider community benefits where relevant. • Produce an annual Scope 3 Emissions Report • Work with APUC and college stakeholders to develop a category plan to reduce climate impact through the supply chain in line with From Now To 2030 (FNT2030). • Include Fair Work Practices criteria in our tender opportunities (where relevant).
To analyse the college's non-pay expenditure and apply appropriate procurement strategies to deliver value for money and reduce commercial risk.	Optimise expenditure through compliant procurement routes. Increase use of collaborative framework agreements.	• Complete an annual spend analysis. • Identify appropriate routes to market and develop a 2 year forward contracting plan. • Identify collaborative spend opportunities and, where appropriate, move spend to framework agreements. • Optimise collaborative opportunities with regional partners • Increase contracted spend and minimise maverick spend. • Maintain a Contracts Register. • Develop and maintain a Procurement Risk Register.
To develop appropriate management information through optimal use of procurement systems in order to measure procurement and supplier performance including value for money and value-added services achieved by the college.	Robust expenditure data, efficiency measurement model demonstrating value for money and procurement systems in place.	• Use PCS/PCS-T and PCS Quick Quote system to advertise opportunities appropriate to value. • Use Contract Uptake system for expenditure analysis, benefits statement and contracts planning. • Use Hunter to record contracts and savings. Identify high value / high risk expenditure and develop appropriate contract management procedure via SCM system. • Use Pecos as the purchase order system for the College. • Conduct procurement and supplier surveys to measure procurement and supplier performance. • Produce an Annual Procurement Report.