



Procurement Policy

Version 1

This policy applies to all NCLT institutions.



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1.0 Definition

Procurement is defined as 'the whole process of acquisition of goods, works and services and assets spanning the whole life cycle from the identification of the business needs through to the end of the useful life of an asset, contract or of the need for an activity'. It is more than simply 'purchasing' and it covers provision from internal and external providers.

2.0 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the New Collaborative Learning Trust (NCLT) to employ a tactical approach to procurement practices whilst maintaining the excellent delivery of services. It is our policy to adopt innovative, commercially focused practices in the management of our spend and to do so in an effective, efficient, ethical and sustainable way that delivers local economic, environmental and social benefits.

'Value for Money' (VFM) is a term used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefits from the goods and services it acquires and provides, within the resources available to it.

It is the policy of the NCLT to treat all suppliers fairly and equally in any competitive process. New Collaborative Learning Trust (NCLT) believes in the principles of FREDIE, standing for Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement. NCLT is committed to providing an inclusive environment free from any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. NCLT strives to implement and deliver equality in all areas. Our fundamental belief in ensuring that all members of the NCLT community feel valued underpins everything that we do, both as an education provider and as an employer. The Trust will make every effort to ensure that anyone who comes into contact with the organisation is treated with courtesy, dignity and respect.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all purchases of NCLT and those associated with purchasing on behalf of NCLT. This policy encompasses all non-pay expenditure, to support the objectives of NCLT.

4.0 Aims & Principles

The purpose of this policy is to make clear the Trust's principles of procurement to assist colleagues in carrying out procurement activity on behalf of the Trust and has been developed to support the Trust's commercial objectives, and to align suppliers with the Trust's longer-term operational and financial planning.

The policy is a proactive approach based upon sustaining long-term relationships with key stakeholders and suppliers.

It should be read in conjunction with NCLT Financial Regulations, which detail the overriding principles and procedures which must be followed in order to ensure good financial control throughout the Trust.

This document reflects and supports the Trust's aims by working with staff and suppliers to optimise Value for Money in the procurement of goods, services and works (see NCLT Value for Money policy). It aims to balance efficiency against risk factors in achieving Value for Money, whilst promoting sustainable procurement.

The aim of the policy is to implement a sourcing approach across all categories of expenditure to deliver compliant and effective procurement as well as delivering value for money and identifying opportunities for added value to prospective and current students.

NCLT supports collaborative procurement at sector and national level where this provides demonstrable benefit to the Trust. To that end, NCLT is a user of CPC (Crescent Purchasing Consortium), and YPO (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation) when appropriate.

Early involvement in planning and decision making is necessary to influence business plans and define any procurement process. It is also important for procurement activity to manage any current expenditure or short-term goals in line with the organisations Financial Regulations.

NCLT recognises that the delivery of education at its sites may have adverse impacts on the environment and it is essential that these are minimised and maintained as such through continuous monitoring. It is acknowledged that the right procurement choices can reduce harmful environmental impacts.

5.0 Responsibilities

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is the Senior Manager with overall responsibility for implementation of this policy.

The Finance Director holds responsibility to ensure the policy is implemented correctly across the Trust.

The Finance Department is responsible for the acquisition of goods, services and works through a compliant process in order to obtain best value, by evidencing value for money to meet the needs of NCLT in terms of cost.

All NCLT staff with authority to order goods and services are responsible for implementing and aligning all expenditure to this policy.

6.0 Implementation

All procurement within NCLT shall be carried out in accordance with legal requirements, Financial Regulations and the Procurement principles. Where the value of the procurement is in excess of £50,000 per setting (excluding VAT), the process should be initiated by the Finance department. To clarify, no tender exercises should be undertaken by any part of the Trust in isolation.

Goods, services and works should be acquired by effective competition, including adequate and appropriate publication of the contract opportunity, unless there are convincing and justifiable reasons to the contrary. Competition promotes efficiency and effectiveness in expenditure. Awarding contracts on the basis of value for money following competition contributes to the competitiveness of suppliers. It is essential that a clear description of needs is approved before the procurement process is commenced in order to allow the writing and scoring of tenders received.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Finance to ensure that these requirements are complied with. Requests for departure from this Policy require the prior approval of the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

The confidentiality of information received in the course of duty must be respected and should never be used for personal gain.

Where possible, within procurement activities, it is NCLT's aim to forge links with the local community to encourage positive participation and address barriers to entry to encourage local, regional, SME and ethnic minority suppliers to bid for NCLT contracts.

Within any procurement activity, consideration should be made as to how the student experience can be enhanced. This could take the form of a commitment to student intern positions, an enhanced student offer etc. This added value should be considered as part of the tender evaluation process.

7.0 Sustainability & Ethical Procurement

Sustainable development is about meeting society's needs today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs – often referred to as good corporate citizenship or corporate social responsibility. With the climate emergency clearly the most serious global environmental threat, sustainability and carbon reduction are becoming key corporate responsibilities for all organisations. The key areas for action are:

- Energy and Carbon Management (Utilities)
- IT Infrastructure and Resources
- Travel and Transport
- Water Reduction
- Waste Management (Reduction in Landfill)
- Building Design and Functionality (Rationalisation)

Organisation and Workforce Development (Education)
Governance and Finance

NCLT recognises the risks associated with ethical procurement and fraud and is committed to reducing this to a minimum.

NCLT will work with suppliers to identify and minimise ethical issues in supply chains, including but not limited to:

Modern slavery
Corruption
Bribery
Human trafficking

NCLT's Finance Department will strive to:

Seek, where appropriate, suppliers who understand the key sustainability issues so that they can tailor their products accordingly;

Ensure sustainability questions are asked for any tender process as a matter of routine;

Support suppliers who have a culture of sustainability where it is shown to deliver value for money or delivers environmental/socio economic benefits, or preferably both of these;

Monitor and review the response to sustainable questions within tender documents and seek to use the more appropriate ones within future tendering documents;

Look to minimise the use of energy in all processes and evaluate whole life cost thus reducing emissions and water waste.

Purchase products with recognised labelling schemes such as FSC, MSC or EU Eco label, where appropriate;

Promote the use of fairly traded products where appropriate;

Ensure goods are disposed of in an environmentally responsible way;

Minimise waste where possible by implementing process efficiencies and utilising recycling opportunities;

8.0 Compliance

All tendering activity should involve the Central Services Finance team to ensure compliance with NCLT Financial Regulations and the UK Government Public Contract Regulations 2015.

As part of the standard tendering procedures suppliers are required to submit a signed certification of non-collusion and non-canvassing and a declaration of interest.

Breaches of the Financial Regulations with regard to procurement are to be challenged by the Finance Director and reported to the Trust Executive Team.

Procurement Procedures are detailed in the Financial Regulations Section 22.

9.0 Policy Monitoring & Review

This Policy will be monitored on an annual basis.

Procurement will carry out checks on a regular basis of who NCLT is paying to ensure that Value for Money is achieved, existing contracts are utilised and legal obligations are met.

As an organisation in receipt of public funds NCLT is subject to scrutiny by the ESFA, regular reviews by our internal auditors and external auditors. These bodies require the Procurement Principles to be carried out effectively.

It is the responsibility of the Central Services Finance Department to show that adequate policies, procedures and checks are in place to enable this and to demonstrate its effectiveness.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) gives public access rights to certain information which would previously have been deemed confidential. External requests for information relating to NCLT's purchasing activities, including information about NCLT's suppliers, must be referred to the Finance Director in the first instance. If they are formal requests under the Freedom of Information they should be directed to the Data Privacy Manager immediately.

Policy Status

Policy Lead (Title)	Director of Finance	Review Period	Annually
Reviewed By	Trust Executive Team/ Audit Committee	Equality Impact Assessment Completed (Y/N)	N

POLICY AMENDMENTS

Version	Approval Date	Page No./Paragraph No.	Amendment	Audience	How Communicated
Version 1 Updated by Dave Hunt and Jo Vickers	Audit 29/11/2022		New Policy	NCLT Staff	Uploaded on to SharePoint