



POLICY No 8	PROCUREMENT AND TENDERING
STATUS/DATE OF THIS VERSION	Reviewed by Finance & Audit Committee 2 nd October 2025
APPROVED BY	
RATIFIED BY	
REVIEW	September 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

UET wants to achieve the best value for money from all our purchases. This means getting goods and services in the correct quality, quantity and time, at the best price possible. A large proportion of purchases will be paid for with public funds and UET needs to maintain the integrity of these funds by following the general principles of:

- ***Probity***, it must be demonstrable that there is no corruption or private gain involved in the contractual relationships of the Academy/Trust.
- ***Accountability***, the Academy/Trust is publicly accountable for its expenditure and the conduct of its affairs.
- ***Fairness***, that all those dealt with by the Academy/Trust are dealt with on a fair and equitable basis.
- ***Value for Money***, the Academy/Trust shall aim for:
 - o Economy, minimizing the cost having regard to appropriate quality.
 - o Efficiency, an appropriate relationship between outputs and costs.
 - o Effectiveness, the achievement of the intended outputs.

2. ROUTINE PURCHASING, RECEIPT AND PAYMENT

Routine purchases can be requested and are authorised as per the financial authorisation levels detailed in UET's Finance Policy and Procedures. A quote or price must always be obtained before any order is placed. The Finance Office have a list of regularly used suppliers, however, if the purchaser

considers that better value for money can be obtained by ordering from a supplier not regularly used by the Academy/Trust then this must be discussed and agreed with the Finance Office.

All orders must be made, or exceptionally confirmed, in writing using an official order form, stocks of which are held in the Finance Office. Orders must bear the signature of the member of staff requesting the order and must be countersigned by the budget holder as required. The signature of the budget holder confirms that there is sufficient budgetary provision.

Official orders are required for all purchases except utilities, rent, rates, petty cash and any payments due under a loan/lease agreement. Urgent verbal orders must be confirmed by a written order.

Individuals must not use official orders to obtain goods for themselves.

Each order must be entered on the financial system as a commitment.

On receipt goods must be checked against the delivery note and the delivery note checked against the invoice. The invoice must also be checked against the order. Evidence of these checks and the initials of the person who carried them out must be added to the invoice. Wherever possible checks are not done by the person who signed the order.

Payment is made within agreed time limits after certification by an approved signatory.

Wherever possible an invoice is not authorised for payment by the person who signed the order nor by the person who checked the receipt of goods/services. Payment is only made against the supplier's VAT invoice and not on a Statement.

3. TENDERING

FORMS OF TENDERS

There are three forms of tender procedure: open, restricted and negotiated and the circumstances in which each procedure should be used are described below.

Open Tender:

This is where all potential suppliers are invited to tender. The school must discuss and agree how best to advertise for suppliers, e.g., general press, trade journals or to identify all potential suppliers and contact them directly if practical.

This is the preferred method of tendering, as it is most conducive to competition and the propriety of public funds.

Restricted Tender:

This is where suppliers are specifically invited to tender. Restricted tenders are appropriate where:

- there is a need to maintain a balance between the contract value and administrative costs,
- Many suppliers would come forward or because the nature of the goods are such that only specific suppliers can be expected to supply the school's requirements,
- The costs of publicity and advertising are likely to outweigh the potential benefits of open tendering.

Negotiated Tender:

The terms of the contract may be negotiated with one or more chosen suppliers. This is appropriate where:

- the above methods have resulted in either no or unacceptable tenders,
- only one or very few suppliers are available,
- extreme urgency exists,
- repeat services or additional deliveries by the existing supplier are justified.

4. QUOTATION AND TENDERING

Except in the case negotiated tenders, the minimum required numbers of tenders or quotations from appropriate contractors for a given estimated value of contract are:

- Above £2,000 and up to £5,000 two oral quotations; (The member of staff to whom the quotations are given should make a written note of the amounts of the quotes, the name of the person giving the quote and the date of the quote. The written note should be given to the Chief Financial and Operating Officer for filing).
- Above £5,000 and up to £10,000, two written quotations.
- Above £10,000 and up to £25,000, three written quotations
- Above £25,000 and up to £50,000 three formal quotations to be submitted in writing by a specified date and time and based on a written specification and evaluation criteria.
- Above £50,000 and up to the 'Find a Tender' thresholds, four tenders.

For goods, services and works over the 'Find a Tender' thresholds the DfE recommend that Trusts obtain legal advice or support from an approved procurement specialist. Thresholds are currently as follows:

- goods – £189,330
- works – £4,733,252.
- most services – £189,330

Some services for education, health and care are covered by the 'light touch regime'. The threshold for these is £663,540 – details of the light touch regime can be found within The Public Contract Regulations 2015. Examples of light touch services include catering,

For emergency premises works which, if not attended to, would pose a risk to health and safety or a potential school closure the procurement process will be waived and permission to proceed with works requested from the Chair or Vice Chair of Trustees. In these cases trusted contractors who have previously been assessed as offering value for money will be used.

5. PROCEDURES

All purchases with a value greater than £50,000 must be put out to formal tender. The following procedures must be followed in such circumstances:

1. A specification will be prepared, authorised by the chair of the relevant committee/CEO/Academy Head and sent to at least three suppliers. It is anticipated that for any major building works the services of an architects would be engaged to deal with the handling of specifications and suitability to tender.
2. Where appropriate, the suppliers invited to tender should be drawn from an approved list **or** from those agreed with the architect. Otherwise, invitations to submit tenders will be advertised in local newspapers and trade journals if appropriate. The invitations to tender will include:
 - (a) an introduction/background to the project.
 - (b) the scope and objectives of the project;
 - (c) any technical requirements;
 - (d) implementation details for the project;
 - (e) the terms and conditions of the tender; and
 - (f) the form and date of response to the academy, or in the case of building works, to the architect or quantity surveyor.
3. The invitation to tender should state the date and time by which the completed tender document should be received by the academy. Tenders should be submitted in plain envelopes clearly marked to indicate they contain tender documents. The envelopes should be time and date stamped on receipt and stored in a secure place prior to tender opening. Tenders received after the submission deadline should not normally be accepted.
4. All tenders submitted should be opened at the same time and the tender details should be recorded. The people that should be present for the opening of tenders are as follows:

- i. For contracts up to £100,000 - the CEO or Headteacher, the CFO; plus a Trustee (ideally member of the UET Finance Committee)
- ii. For contracts over £100,000 - the Chief Executive Officer, the CFO; plus at least two Trustees

A separate record should be established to record the names of the firms submitting tenders and the amount tendered. This record must be signed by people present at the tender opening.

5. For purchases exceeding £50,000, provided the expenditure is included in the budget, the decision as to which tender to accept will be taken by the CEO, in consultation with the chair of UET Finance Committee and the Academy Head (where relevant).
6. Where expenditure is not included in the budget or anticipated expenditure exceeds the budget allocation, the decision as to which tender to accept will be taken by the UET Finance Committee, in line with their terms of reference and then ratified by the Board of Trustees; and
7. The reasons for accepting a particular tender must be documented, especially if it is decided to accept other than the lowest tender. All decisions must be reported to the full Board of Trustees.

6. ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER

The following points will be considered when deciding which tender to accept:

1. The overall price and the individual items or services which make up that price.
2. Whether there are any 'hidden 'costs; that is additional costs which the Trust/academy will have to incur to obtain a satisfactory product.
3. Whether there is scope for negotiation, while being fair to all tenderers.
4. The qualifications and experience of the supplier, including membership of professional associations.
5. Compliance with the technical requirements laid down by the Trust/school.

6. Whether it is possible to obtain certificates of quantity.
7. The supplier's own quality control procedure; pre-sale demonstrations, after sales service and, for building works, a six-month defects period and insurance guarantees.
8. The financial status of the supplier.
9. References from other establishments.
10. Understanding & compliance with Health & safety, CDM regulations and Child Protection issues related to working on a school site. In the case of building works, where the tendering process is being carried out by the architect or quantity surveyor, they will be responsible for checking the documents of the lowest tender before making a recommendation to the academy.

Once a tender is accepted an order should be issued immediately to the supplier in the normal way.

The successful contractor should be informed that UET and its academies are NON-SMOKING sites.