



**Sustainability Statement**  
**Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium**  
**February 2016**

The Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) is a membership-based organisation that works to deliver greater value to the Higher Education (HE) sector by providing collaborative agreements, procurement advice and guidance, and leadership on the national HE procurement agenda. We are a division of Southern Universities Management Services, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (no. 2732244) and registered charity No 1042175 and also a Small to Medium Enterprise (SME). We are committed to sustainable operations and subscribe to the DEFRA Flexible Framework, currently operating at level 3. We have a limited impact on the local economy but the use of local business and SME's is considered as part of all our procurement activities (see SME statement). We have recycling facilities and encourage all our employees to minimise waste from day to day activities. Business travel is by public transport where practicable and we use technology (e.g. webinars, conference calls) where possible to minimise the amount of travel required to undertake our activities.

We are committed to embedding sustainability in all aspects of the procurement process and its wider activities. We are also committed to supporting and promoting sustainability within our member institutions. Our activities aim to address the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability.

Specifically, SUPC is committed to ensuring that we implement procedures and policies to support:

- The elimination of human slavery and human rights abuses in supply chains.
- The removal of barriers for SMEs to participate in our procurement activities.
- The implementation of environmental policies that support reducing our negative impact on the environment and maximising our positive impact.

To learn more about how SUPC is addressing each of the aspects of sustainability outlined above, please read our Statements on Modern Slavery, SME Engagement Strategy and our Sustainability Policy.

As a member of Procurement England Ltd (PEL), we recognise that SUPC has a significant role to play in influencing the sustainability behaviours of the HE sector. We are committed to working with suppliers and members to act as a sustainable and responsible organisation.

SUPC is committed to carrying out its procurement activities in an environmentally, socially, ethically and economically responsible manner and to enter into agreements and contracts with suppliers that share and adhere to its vision. To demonstrate this commitment, current and potential suppliers are asked to confirm their compliance with the principles of the PEL Sustainability Policy with respect to their organisation and their supply chain.

### **With respect to Social Compliance Suppliers shall:**

- Not use forced, involuntary or underage labour.
- Employees should be free to choose their employment and leave that employment without hold by financial deposit or personal items.
- Forced, bonded or involuntary prison labour shall not be used.
- Support the effective abolition of child labour.
- Comply with the national minimum age for employment, or minimum age 15, whichever is the higher unless a lower local minimum age is permitted under International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 138.
- Where any child is found to be engaged in or performing child labour, to provide support for that child to enable them to complete, as a minimum, their compulsory education (even if they shall cease to be involved in child labour), or an equivalent education level, as provided for under the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Such support by the supplier should recognise and not prove detrimental to the conditions of the child or those that their work supports.

### **Provide suitable working conditions and terms**

- At least statutory minimum wages (or if none, a realistic living wage) must be paid without discrimination to all employees and all non-statutory deductions must be with the consent of the employee.
- Working hours must not be excessive (not over 48 hours per week, excluding overtime) and must allow for at least 1 day off for each 7 day period on average. Working beyond this should be non-regular and of employee's own will.
- A safe and hygienic working environment must be provided, including any catering or accommodation areas. Any hazardous working, as defined by ILO, should only be carried out by persons aged 18 years or over.
- All equipment must be safe for use and processes must allow a safe working environment.
- Policies and processes must be in place for recording and eliminating occurrence/reoccurrence of health and safety related incidents.

### **Treat employees fairly**

- Allow employees the freedom of association to join (but not be forced to join), or be represented by, a trade union or similar organisation of their choice, and be free to leave such organisations.
- Not discriminate or unfairly treat any employee for any reason including education, social class / caste, nationality, trade union membership or any of the 9 Protected Characteristics of the UK Equality Act 2010.
- Provide a workplace free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Treat all employees with respect and dignity, and not accept inequality as justifiable on a basis of culture.

- Remunerate all employees equally at the same employment grade, regardless of any characteristics listed above, unless statutory conditions require otherwise.

**With respect to Ethical Compliance and Economic Development Suppliers shall:**

- As a minimum, comply with all laws and regulations of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with, as applicable.
- Not be involved in any way with acts of corruption or bribery, or support acts of violence or terrorism or abuse of individual people or communities.
- Not force unsustainable or unfair contract terms on their suppliers, or throughout their supply chain, nor allow unfair exploitation of a dominant market or customer position.
- Support fair trade conditions for producers, where applicable.
- As a minimum, comply with all financial regulations and taxations of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with, as applicable.
- Include community benefit delivery in the locality of where the contract is performed (including publishing and delivering levels of local training and employment opportunities etc.).
- Appoint sub-contractors through an open and fair process such as public advertising of such opportunities wherever possible.
- Act at all times with respect and integrity, including open and transparent accounting.
- Allow staff protection if reporting misconduct or raising concerns with respect to their own, or another organisation, and ensure all affected staff are treated in a fair and transparent manner.

**With respect to Environmental Compliance Suppliers shall:**

- As a minimum, comply with all applicable local and national environmental laws, regulations and directives of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with.
- Actively avoid causing environmental damage and/or negative environmental impact through manufacture and supply of the goods or services and disposal of supply chain waste.
- Have a business plan in place, and be acting on it, to minimise their environmental impact year on year and adopting or working towards internationally recognised environmental standards and/or behaviours.
- Encourage the development and use of environmentally friendly technologies.
- Promote positive environmental impacts (such as reduced carbon emissions, better carbon management, waste management and water management, reduced pollution levels and technological improvements) through their activities.

This statement has been approved and published by the SUPC Board and will be reviewed at least once annually. If you have any questions, please contact us at [supc@reading.ac.uk](mailto:supc@reading.ac.uk).