

Position/Job Title:	Procurement Category Manager - Academic and Professional Services
Ref:	754
Location/Building:	Studland House, Lansdowne Campus
Faculty/Professional Service:	Finance & Performance
Group/Section:	Procurement
Normal hours per week:	1 FTE (37 hours per week) (Some flexibility will be required in order to ensure that key time scales and deadlines are met)
Grade:	8
Accountable to:	Head of Procurement & Contract Management

Context

The leadership & management of Academic and Professional Services category-based procurement at the University is a strategic role, imperative to both fully comply with Public Procurement Regulations and to achieve value for money across all non-pay expenditure. The University spends up to £40 Million on external goods, services and works annually. It is fundamental to the financial health of the University that prices paid for these goods, services and works contracts represent best value for the University and the public finances. Effective procurement is fundamental to the University's financial sustainability and its ability to reinvest in academic excellence, student experience, estates, innovation and digital transformation. This role is central to enabling the ambitions of our new strategy *BU2035 – To Learn is to Change*, ensuring procurement supports a connected, future-ready and financially sustainable university through strategic investment in digital capability, systems, infrastructure, partnerships and innovation.

Job Purpose

To provide expert public procurement leadership, category management and strategic business partnering across the University's Academic and Professional Services spend portfolio.

The postholder will lead complex tenders, framework agreements and contracts covering areas such as:

- Professional services (including consultancy, legal and advisory services)
- Learning, teaching and student experience services
- Research-related services and specialist academic requirements
- HR, recruitment and organisational development services
- Marketing, communications and student recruitment services
- Finance, audit and insurance services
- Library resources, subscriptions and academic content
- Facilities-related services not aligned to Estates capital programmes
- Business support and outsourced service provision

The role will work closely with senior stakeholders to shape demand, challenge requirements, identify commercial opportunities, manage supplier risk and deliver sustainable value for money.

The postholder will provide expert advice on the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Procurement Act 2023, associated regulations and best practice.

Main Responsibilities

Strategic Procurement & Category Leadership

1. Develop, lead and implement innovative category strategies across Academic and Professional Services that support the University's operational and strategic objectives.
2. Ensure category plans are aligned to the BU2035 strategy and contribute to the delivery of institutional priorities including digital capability, partnership growth, sustainability and financial resilience.
3. Deliver medium and high-value complex procurement exercises from business case and specification through to award, mobilisation and contract management.
4. Develop bespoke category management approaches that maximise value, service quality, resilience and continuous improvement.
5. Lead robust procurement processes that minimise risk, ensure transparency and prevent supplier challenge.
6. Maintain accurate contract pipelines, category plans and contract registers ensuring strong governance and visibility of future opportunities.

Procurement Business Partnering

7. Act as the dedicated procurement business partner to senior stakeholders including Deans, Directors, Heads of Department and operational leaders.
8. Build trusted relationships across Faculties and Professional Services to understand strategic priorities, operational needs and future demand.
9. Provide commercially focused advice that helps stakeholders make informed decisions, shape requirements early and improve outcomes.
10. Challenge demand constructively, identify opportunities for aggregation, standardisation, innovation and process improvement.
11. Support leaders in business planning through market insight, commercial options appraisals and procurement delivery roadmaps.
12. Represent procurement on cross-University boards, working groups and change programmes where commercial input is required.

Supplier & Contract Value Management

13. Develop supplier relationship management approaches proportionate to risk and value.
14. Introduce performance frameworks to monitor supplier delivery, risk, service levels, sustainability outcomes and continuous improvement.
15. Identify opportunities for added social value, innovation, efficiency and partnership working through the supply base.
16. Benchmark category performance internally and externally across Higher Education and wider public sector organisations.

Savings, Performance & Governance

17. Deliver defined savings and value targets including cashable and non-cashable benefits.
18. Produce high-quality management information including savings reports, pipeline updates, risk registers and value-for-money metrics.
19. Ensure procurement activity complies with legislative requirements, University Financial Regulations and internal governance frameworks.
20. Work closely with Legal Services and external advisers on contractual matters, tender strategy and risk mitigation for major procurements.

Leadership, Culture & Continuous Improvement

21. Contribute to the development of a high-performing procurement function that is collaborative, customer-focused and continuously improving.

22. Support and influence colleagues and stakeholders to embed best practice procurement and commercial awareness across the University.
23. Build strong external networks with consortia, sector bodies, HE institutions and regional partners.
24. Undertake continuing professional development and remain current on procurement legislation, market developments and sector best practice.
25. Operate at all times in accordance with professional, ethical and regulatory standards.

Special requirements

1. All professional staff within Procurement must adhere to the CIPS Code of Ethics.
2. All professional staff within Procurement will be required to contribute to and implement the principles of sustainable procurement.
3. Identify and complete appropriate professional CPD to ensure that specialist skills are fully up to date and relevant.
4. This post will involve occasional travel to attend supplier, regional consortia and other procurement working group meetings.

Information Governance Responsibilities

Data User

- i. Comply with the associated data protection, information security, information management and information technology regulations, policies, processes and procedures.

Additional Information

NB:

The purpose of the job description is to indicate the general level of responsibility and location of the position. The duties may vary from time to time without changing their general character or level of responsibility.

BU is an equal opportunities employer which values a diverse workforce. The post holder must at all times carry out their responsibilities with due regard to the University's Dignity, Diversity and Equality Policy Statement.

Our highly skilled and creative workforce is comprised of individuals drawn from a broad cross section of the globe, and who reflect a variety of backgrounds, talents, perspectives and experiences to build our global learning community. Through fused activity, the post holder must have an understanding of and commitment to promoting a global outlook.

All employees have an obligation to be aware of the University's Sustainability Policy, Climate and Ecological Crisis Action Plan, Travel Plan and associated documents, and to ensure that they carry out their day-to-day activities in an environmentally responsible manner and inspire students to do the same.

April 2026

Person Specification

Position / Job Title: Procurement Category Manager – Academic and Professional Services	
Position No:	
Faculty / Service: Finance and Performance	Date: April 2026
SELECTION CRITERIA	Essential / Desirable
Knowledge (including experience & qualifications)	
Degree in a relevant subject or equivalent	D
Full Membership of CIPS	E
Significant procurement experience in IT / Digital categories	E
Experience of acting as a strategic procurement business partner with senior stakeholders	E
Track record of developing and implementing category strategies	E
Experience of complex IT procurements including software, services or infrastructure	E
Strong technical procurement knowledge across goods, works and services	E
Successful delivery of complex end-to-end procurement projects	E
Strong knowledge of contract law	E
Knowledge of Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Procurement Act 2023	E
Evidence of delivering savings / value for money outcomes	E
Experience of supplier and contract performance management	E
Experience of change management and process improvement	E
Experience of working in a large, complex organisation	E
Higher Education or public sector experience	D
Understanding of the Higher Education landscape and challenges	E
Skills	
Highly developed stakeholder management and business partnering skills	E
Leadership skills to manage complex cross-functional teams	E
Excellent interpersonal, negotiation and influencing skills	E
Strong commercial acumen and decision-making ability	E
Ability to challenge constructively and influence senior stakeholders	E
Contract drafting / negotiation capability	E
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills	E
Excellent project and change management skills	E
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	E
Reporting and presentation skills	E
Strong IT and systems capability	E
Attributes	
Highly commercial and strategically aware	E
Customer focused and solutions orientated	E
Collaborative and relationship driven	E
Able to work at pace across multiple priorities	E
Strong personal organisation	E
Resilient and adaptable	E
Motivated to deliver results	E
Continuous improvement mindset	E
Effective team player	E
Values-led and ethical approach	E