

PURCHASING POLICY FOR ABINGDON LEARNING TRUST

Introduction

Purchasing Objectives

The primary concern of the finance team is to ensure that value for money is secured on all relevant areas on non-pay expenditure throughout ALT. The objective is to obtain optimum quality and service taking into account operational needs, delivery, timeliness and supplier performance. In more specific detail this means:

- That the goods/services are of the correct specification to a standard which will ensure adequate quality and fitness for the intended purpose;
- That the goods/services purchased satisfy operational requirements and that the techniques employed in all stages of the purchasing process are aimed at maximising the level of value for money obtained;
- Ensuring that all budget holders (if applicable) are provided with relevant and up to date information and advice on current purchasing policy, supplier information, agreements and other information deemed necessary to promote and ensure good purchasing practice .

Authority to Purchase

- Responsibility for the authority to purchase is determined by the Accounting Officer, however, the Chief Finance Officer must be notified of all staff so delegated.

Purchasing Procedure

- All purchasing activity is subject to compliance with ALT's Financial Regulations with regard to levels of expenditure and the procedures to be followed.
- Purchases should be sourced through existing agreements if remain beneficial to ALT.. Such agreements may have been arranged at local, regional or national level, and may therefore secure value for money and ensure compliance with Academy Financial Regulations and E.C. Directives legislation. However other suppliers should be considered to ensure exiting agreements remain best value for ALT.
- Should the value of the intended purchase exceed £10,000 (inclusive of VAT), the Chief Financial Officer must be informed as soon as the need is identified. An evaluation will then determine the need to instigate a competitive tender process. The only exception to this situation applies where an agreement has already been negotiated at national, regional and local level.
- The following thresholds are applicable to purchases made by all departments within ALT:
 - Ad hoc expenditure of £5000 or less - no quotes required, authorisation from Chief Financial Officer required.
 - From £5,000 to £25,000 - the budget holder is required to obtain at least three written quotations, purchase can proceed with Chief Financial and Headteacher approval.

- From £25,000 to £100,000 and above - the budget holder is required to obtain at least at least three written competitive tenders and the CEO and Finance Committee must approve the tender.
- Where appropriate, purchases should be defined by specifications designed to achieve optimum price benefits.
- All relevant legislation and Health and Safety requirements must be satisfied in full, prior to purchase of goods/services. This includes provision of Insurance where applicable.

Purchasing at Budget Holder Level

Purchasing activities within individual departments of ALT are subject to compliance with the following constraints:

- The budget holder (if applicable) is in agreement that the purchase of the requirements is essential to the operations of ALT, and that funds are available;
- Purchasing policy is satisfied regarding Academy Financial Regulations, and that procedures are followed to ensure that value for money is secured. Full procedural instructions are detailed in the Academies Financial manual.
- Where the purchasing process is managed at budget holder level, assurances must be obtained by the budget holder that the necessary criteria have been satisfied prior to order placement. The criteria to be satisfied are detailed in the Academies Financial Manual.
- Wherever possible purchases are initiated utilising the computerised Purchase Order Processing system, in order to ensure that official documentation is generated, and that correct procedures are followed.

New Supplier Assessment

- The control of risk when selecting a supplier to provide goods or services to ALT will be managed through a structured assessment process.
- Compliance to requirements for all purchases subject to the tender process will be mandatory, and in particular must satisfy the following criteria:
 - Written statement obtained from the supplier, detailing stability of price from the commencement of the contract where appropriate;
 - Appropriate trade references must be supplied, preferably from other higher education referees;
 - Relevant financial information must be provided in order to assess potential viability of supplier relationship.

Conditions of Purchase

All purchases entered into by the ALT will be on the basis of ALT's Financial Manual.

Purchasing Ethics

All staff involved in purchasing activities should be aware of the ethical code of conduct, and should observe the following:

Declaration of interest

Any personal interest, which may impinge or might reasonably be deemed by others to impinge upon impartiality in any matter relevant to purchasing duties, should be declared to the Chief Financial Officer and Headteacher or CEO for approval before conducting the business.

Confidentiality of Information

The confidentiality of information received in the course of duty should be respected and specific details of suppliers' offers must not be divulged to competitors. The information should never be used for personal gain.

Relationships with Suppliers

Any arrangement which may prevent the effective operation of fair competition should be avoided.

Gifts and Hospitality

- Gifts, other than items of very small intrinsic value such as business diaries, calendars etc, should not be accepted. Items for personal use should be declined. The frequency and scale of hospitality should not be significantly greater than ALT would be likely to provide in return.
- If a situation arises where it is not easy to decide what is and is not acceptable in terms of gifts and hospitality, the offer should be declined, or advice sought from the Chief Financial Officer, CEO or Headteacher.
- Personal inducements in any form from suppliers to ALT employees are forbidden. If such instances arise, they must be reported immediately to the Chief Finance Officer, CEO or Headteacher.
- For full details of ALT's policy see its Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

Review of this policy

The Board of Trustees through its Finance Committee review this policy every three years. It may however review this policy earlier than this if the government produces new regulations, or if it receives recommendations on how this policy might be improved.

Approved by Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees of ALT on 11 July 2017.

Signed: (Chair of Trustees)

Signed : (Chief Executive Officer)

Date for Review: July 2020