

# Procurement and Tendering Policy

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## Related policies and documents

- Expenses Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy

## Definitions

- Where the word 'Trust' is used in this document it refers to The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust.
- Where the word 'Governing Body' is used it refers to the Local Governing Body of an individual academy within the Trust.
- Where appropriate the Local Governing Bodies of individual academies will publish details of the procedures and practices to implement Trust policies.

## Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Vision and Values

### Vision

The Elliot Foundation was created as a safe place for children and teachers where all are nurtured to achieve beyond even their own expectations. Our motto, "Where children believe they can because teachers know they can" reflects our conviction that raising expectations for all children and teachers is at the heart of a successful and inclusive society.

### Values

#### **For children**

We help children to discover themselves and aspire beyond any limitations that their context might appear to place upon them. We help them understand that they can be, 'Heroes of their own lives' building the foundations for healthy and successful lives.

#### **For schools**

In addition to the essential functional skills of reading, writing and mathematics, children need to learn how to learn and to believe that they can continue to do so. They must also possess the critical thinking skills to sift fact from fiction to be able to think for themselves, freely and creatively.

#### **For success**

To thrive, whatever their chosen path, children need confidence, curiosity and commitment. We will nurture these attitudes across all their learning experiences

#### **For communities**

Children at Elliot schools will be raised with an awareness of the world around them and their role in shaping a better future through volunteering and contributing in their communities.

## 1. Policy statement and objectives

- 1.1. As the custodian of public funds, the Trust is required to achieve the best value for money from all purchases at all times. This means purchases need to be in the correct quality, quantity and completed within the appropriate timeframe and at the best price possible.
- 1.2. The objective of this policy is to ensure that all staff who make procurement decisions achieve value for money and can demonstrate that they have done so.

## 2. Scope and principles

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Trust staff who may make purchasing decisions.
- 2.2. Purchases should follow the general principles of:
  - Probity - it must be clear that there is no private gain in the academy's contractual relationships;
  - Accountability - the academy is accountable for its expenditure and the conduct of its affairs;
  - Fairness - that all those dealt with by the academy are dealt with on a fair and equitable basis.
- 2.3. The Trust/academy is publicly accountable for its expenditure and the conduct of its affairs and as well as the specific requirements relating to disclosure of financial information relating to the academy. Principals and academy staff need to be mindful that, with few exceptions the Trust will be required to provide information in response to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 3. Routine Purchasing

- 3.1. Budget holders should be informed of their budgets before the start of the academic year. It is their responsibility to manage the budget and to ensure that the funds available are not overspent. A report detailing actual expenditure (including commitments) against budget will be supplied to each budget holder by the Finance team no more than two weeks after the end of each month.
- 3.2. A quote or price must always be obtained before any order is placed. The academy may create approved supplier lists for some types of outgoing. If a relevant approved supplier list exists, budget holders must obtain the finance lead's agreement to purchases from alternative suppliers.

- 3.3. All requisitions from budget holders must be made in line with the academy's scheme of delegation. Where a new supplier is to be used, a new supplier form should be completed and passed to head office finance to put on the finance system. This minimises the risk of duplication across the shared purchase ledger.
- 3.4. Once authorised budget holders can 'dispatch' orders to suppliers who have email addresses on the system. If not orders can be placed by either the budget holder or finance as agreed between the parties.
- 3.5. The budget holder must make appropriate arrangements for the delivery of goods to the academy. On receipt the budget holder (or delegated individual) must undertake a detailed check of the goods received against the goods received note (GRN) and make a record of any discrepancies between the goods delivered and the GRN. Discrepancies should be discussed with the supplier of the goods without delay. Any issues should also be copied to finance to avoid paying for goods still in dispute.
- 3.6. If any goods are rejected or returned to the supplier because they are not as ordered or are of sub-standard quality, the Finance Office should be notified. The finance team will keep a central record of all goods returned to suppliers.
- 3.7. All invoices should be sent to the Finance Office. All orders need to be authorised by the relevant individual before payment procedures are initiated. Orders are authorised in line with the Trust's scheme of delegation.
- 3.8. If a budget holder is pursuing a query with a supplier the Finance Office must be informed of the query and periodically kept up to date with progress.
- 3.9. Each week the finance team will produce a list of outstanding invoices from the purchase ledger and this list together with supporting documentation will be reviewed by the finance lead. The finance lead will authorise those invoices which should be paid.
- 3.10. The finance team will then input the details of payments to be made to the purchase ledger and generate the payments.

## 4. Procurement Thresholds

- 4.1. At all levels and in all cases, it is the responsibility of the ultimate budget holder to manage the budget and to control all expenses under their responsibility.
- 4.2. The value of the order for goods and services in total excluding VAT will determine the procurement process that is required to be followed. The following are the current thresholds in place:
- 4.3. **Routine Purchasing of up to £3,000 (exc. VAT)**
- A quote or price must always be obtained before all orders for goods and services placed. All personnel should ensure that best value is achieved.
  - The School Business Manager/Finance Manager can authorise orders of £3,000 or less once the budget holder has confirmed agreement to proceed with the order.
- 4.4. **Orders over £3,000 (exc. VAT) and up to £10,000 (exc. VAT)**
- Where practicable three written quotations should be obtained for all orders over £3,000 and up to £10,000 to identify the best source of the goods/services.
  - For audit purposes, there should be supporting documentation retained which details:
    - Why a supplier has been selected
    - Prices for the goods/services
    - How the decision to go with a supplier has been reached
  - Telephone quotes are acceptable. Confirmation of these quotes should be e-mailed before a purchase decision is made. Where possible the academy should upload quotes and supporting documents into PS Financials for audit purposes.
  - In some cases, for orders of this value, it may not be feasible or possible to obtain three quotations for specific goods or services – e.g. due to the lack of available suppliers or the requirement to request a specific supplier. In these cases, the written approval of the Executive Principal, Regional Director or Finance Director should be obtained and the reason for not providing three quotations documented. This approval should be included in the supporting documentation.
  - The Principal can authorise orders up to a limit of £10,000.
- 4.5. **Orders over £10,000 (exc. VAT) and up to £25,000 (exc. VAT)**

- Except in exceptional cases, a minimum of three written quotations should be obtained for all orders over £10,000 and up to £25,000 to identify the best source of the goods/services. This requirement can only be avoided in exceptional circumstances and with documented support from the Executive Principal, Regional Director or Finance Director.
- For audit purposes, there should be supporting documentation retained which details
  - Why a supplier has been selected
  - Prices for the goods/services
  - How the decision to engage a supplier has been reached
- Telephone quotes are acceptable. Confirmation of these quotes should be e-mailed before a purchase decision is made
- Where it is not possible to obtain three quotations for specific goods or services, the reasons and the written approval of the Regional Director or Finance Director should be obtained and included in the supporting documentation.
- The Local Governing Body can authorise orders up to a limit of £25,000.

#### 4.6. **Orders over £25,000 and below the OJEU threshold (exc. VAT)**

- All goods/services ordered with a value over £25,000 must be subject to formal tendering procedures. Purchases over £181,302 (threshold from 01/01/2018) excluding VAT fall under EU procurement rules outlined in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).
- Ordering goods or services to a value which will exceed £25,000 must be discussed with the Head Teacher, the Regional Director, the LGB and Head Office Finance Director prior to any communication with suppliers. This is to ensure correct procedures are followed from the outset.
- All tenders for orders for goods and services more than £25,000.00 will be managed under the supervision of the Regional and Financial Directors and monitored by the Finance Committee.
- The Operations Committee can authorise orders for goods and services up to £50,000, orders of more than £50,000 require authorisation of the TEFAT Finance Committee.



#### 4.7. **Transactions over the qualifying Official Journal of the European Union OJEU threshold £181,302 (exc. VAT) (from 1 January 2018)**

- Transactions more than £181,302 (threshold from 01/01/2018) excluding VAT fall under EU procurement rules which requires advertising in the Official Journal of the European Union.
- All tenders for transactions greater than the relevant EU procurement threshold need to be authorised by the Board of Directors. These will be managed by the Director of Finance/Project Director and monitored by the Finance Committee.

### **5. PS Financials Procurement Process**

- 5.1. Except for specific cases all goods and services ordered should be processed using PS Financials purchase ordering via the online portal.
- 5.2. The use of requisitions is to ensure that due consideration is given to a purchasing decision before a commitment is made. Therefore the only times when a requisition is not required is when a decision does not need to be made.
- 5.3. Examples of goods and services which are not required to raise requisitions or purchase orders include:
  - Utility costs
  - Business rates
  - Telephone costs
  - Catering contract costs
  - Lease costs
  - Photocopying copy charges
  - Travel and out of pocket expenses
  - Purchases made on the Academy Credit Card
  - Purchases made using Academy Petty Cash
- 5.4. Orders must not be placed until the Requisition is formally approved. In the small number of instances where speed of decision may impact on teaching and learning however, such as the need to get in agency teaching staff when a teacher phones in sick, it is acceptable to place the order before a requisition is formally approved. The requisition however should still be input. The academy must also have its own procedures to ensure that agency costs are not incurred except where necessary.

- 5.5. Only in exceptional circumstances and authorised by the principal or Head Office Finance should the ordering of other goods and services be allowed outside of the PS financials procurement module.

## **6. Setting up Suppliers on PS Financials**

- 6.1. Only approved reputable suppliers of goods and services should be engaged by Trust academies and Head Office. All suppliers of goods and services that are procured by the Trust at Academy or Head Office level should be set up as an approved supplier on the PS Financials procurement module. The process to set up a supplier should involve the supplier completing a form giving all their relevant details:

- Full name;
- Full office address (supplying office);
- Full registered office address;
- Company registration number;
- Unique Tax Reference (for individual persons supplying services);
- VAT number;
- Supplier terms;
- Contact name;
- Contact email;
- Contact phone number;
- Full bank details.

- 6.2. The completed form should be submitted to the School Business Manager who will check the form for completeness and where appropriate check a company / individual screening service and Companies House register to ensure that the supplier is not on any credit watch or banned company listings. The School Business manager will sign the form before forwarding to the head office finance team to set up the supplier in PS Financials as an approved supplier.

## **7. Purchase Requisition & Orders on PS Financials**

- 7.1. Except in cases noted above all other goods and Services ordered should be processed using PS Financials purchase ordering via the Portal. The process is as follows:

- Before any commitment is made to purchase any goods/services a Purchase Order Requisition needs to be completed in full;
- The completed Purchase Order Requisition needs to be properly authorised, as by the approved scheme of delegation. (The authoriser must have sufficient authority and ensure there is sufficient budget to cover the cost).

- Once the Purchase Order Requisition has been authorised a purchase order can be raised on the PS Financials system by the personnel with access to the PO system
  - The Purchase Order is to be checked for accuracy and approved by the Principal/Deputy, Principal/Head Teacher, Schools Business Manager, Head Office Directors in line with their level of authority in the Scheme of Delegation.
  - The order for goods/services can be placed.
  - When the goods are received or services have been completed as per the purchase/work order they are checked for any discrepancies or shortfalls and the goods received note is signed. The details received are entered on to the system and matched with the order. Any discrepancies noted at this stage should be communicated promptly to the supplier
  - If any goods are rejected or returned to the supplier or services supplied are unsatisfactory or because they are not as ordered or are of sub-standard quality the Purchase requisition inputter will record this on the Purchase Ordering system.
  - When the purchase invoice for the goods is received the totals should be checked against the order and once again any errors or discrepancies followed up with the supplier.
  - When invoices are received for the supply of services the invoice is passed to the approver of the original purchase order to authorise that the services have been supplied/completed or an agreed contract milestone has been reached. The details from the approved invoice are entered on the PO system and matched to the order as complete or appropriately partly completed to a pre agreed milestone.
  - The Schools Business Manager/ Finance Manager should ensure that only live orders are on the system and to this end an ordering report should be run off the system at least monthly.
  - Any cancelled orders or obsolete purchase orders still on the system for which no invoice has been received or is expected should be removed from the system.
- 7.2. To minimise duplication, Purchase Orders that match exactly a suitably approved Requisition will be automatically approved. Any alterations will require POs to be approved again.

- 7.3. Although orders between £10,000 and £25,000 require LGB approval, it is not expected that governors will be set up on PS Purchasing. Instead it is expected that the approver for these will be the Principal, who will retain evidence of LGB approval to support their authorisation.

## 8. Payment Process

- 8.1. All schools and head office should schedule a weekly payment run. It may be easiest to schedule the same day each week so that suppliers can know when payments will be made.
- 8.2. All invoices should be sent to the academy/Head Office finance department. The Invoice will then be date stamped, passed to the correct payment area, coded and approved at the correct level and then entered in the purchase ledger of the PS Financial system.
- 8.3. The Purchase Requisition inputter will check the invoice using the information already on PSF for the following:
- invoice arithmetically correct?
  - goods/ services received?
  - goods/services as ordered?
  - prices correct?
  - Any queries with suppliers must be updated on PS Financials.
- 8.4. Correct payment terms are entered on to the supplier records on PSF during the setting up of new suppliers so that invoices are not paid long before they are due. Likewise suppliers should not be inconvenienced by delays beyond payment terms. If cashflow is an issue then a cash advance can be arranged from head office. This is especially important for shared suppliers, such as Amazon Business, to avoid having other academies 'cut off'.
- 8.5. Once the approved invoice details have been entered PSF PO the invoice will be processed for payment in the next appropriate payment run.
- 8.6. Payment will be made through the established Trust payment process via Lloyds Commercial Banking Online.
- 8.7. Remittance advices have to be generated manually from PSF following the release of the payment run on Lloyds. These are then emailed to the supplier through PSF.
- 8.8. Any supplier statements received should be checked and agreed with the supplier account on PS Financials. Missing invoices or other discrepancies should be followed up with the supplier.

## 9. Direct Debits

- 9.1. The payment for some goods and services (particularly utilities) which are made on a regular basis are more conveniently settled by setting up a Direct Debit payment from the Lloyds bank account. In many cases a lower charge can be obtained when payment is by direct debit. Schools can set up the facility directly with Lloyds.
- 9.2. The process to set up a Direct Debit mandate as the means of payment should follow the procurement process and should be approved as defined by the financial scheme of delegation. For approval purposes the value of the direct debit is the annualised value of the agreed direct debit value (monthly, quarterly or annually). The supplier must be set up as an approved supplier on PS Financials before the Direct Debit mandate can be approved.
- 9.3. The annual value of the Direct Debit should be set up as a commitment, in the PSF procurement module, when the amount to be charged is agreed with the service provider. The supporting documentation should be signed and retained.
- 9.4. Each month/quarter when the direct debit is due to be paid an invoice (original documentation) to support the payment should be retained and booked in PS Financials as a payment to be made. The payment should be posted from the bank account and booked to the Purchase ledger to reduce the commitment. Finally, the supplier account is cleared and the payment booked to the expense account.
- 9.5. At the end of the Direct Debit period the commitment should be adjusted to reflect the total charges incurred for the period and cleared from the system. A new commitment should be set up in PS Financials for the next periods direct debit.

## 10. Credit and Debit Cards

- 10.1. To aid purchases where the best deals do not allow for purchase on invoices (i.e. internet purchases) each academy will be provided with a corporate card in the name of the Principal.
- 10.2. Corporate cards can be used for petty cash withdrawals, although academies should be mindful of charges attached to this. Corporate cards should be kept by the finance lead and used sparingly. A full reconciliation should be carried out on receipt of the monthly statement, which can be accessed online. The same level of proof of purchase is required as with other payments, so receipts and print outs of online purchases should be kept and attached to the statement. VAT should be reclaimed where appropriate.
- 10.3. For all expenditure incurred, but especially where cards are used to cover expenses then it is imperative that these are given the same level of scrutiny and challenge as expenditure incurred and invoiced.
- 10.4. Personal costs unrelated to Trust or academy business should never be put on an academy corporate card. Where this happens it may be dealt with under the Disciplinary policy.
- 10.5. The default card limit is set at £3,000. Should this prove insufficient then a temporary increase can be implemented by the Finance Director. Requests for a permanent increase will require further justification.