UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM

ILT PROCUREMENT POLICY

One of the major roles of the IT Development Committee (ITDC) is to enable the University to obtain maximum possible benefit from the money it spends on IT equipment, consumables and services by constantly seeking value for money, reliability and innovation. IT spending is co-ordinated through the ITDC as part of the overall ILT strategy. This procurement policy will be used in conjunction with the University's overall procurement policy. The following general principals will be applied in all IT purchasing:

- All IT purchases must be suitable for the purpose for which they are acquired and meet the minimum specifications approved by the ITDC

- All purchases must be of an acceptable quality and meet the minimum specifications approved by the ITDC

- Purchasing decisions will take into account the long-term cost of all acquisitions

- All IT products or services purchased will be on the approved list unless specific permission is given to purchase non-approved products

- Purchasing will be sufficiently flexible to allow rapid response to operational requirements and to enable the University to take advantage of business opportunities arising from new IT products and services

IT Budget Procedure

There is central control and co-ordination of all IT spending which is subject to the approval of the ITDC. The ITDC will receive all proposed budgets for expenditure of IT in each year from every section of the University. The proposal form will specify, in detail, the section's overall strategy and priority of all ILT developments and purchases. Each application will include a project proposal, justification, section's priority and cost breakdown. The ITDC will go through bids in detail and discuss the impact they may have on other sections and across the University. Funding of IT is allocated on the basis of need, investment and innovation in the delivery of the curriculum and the support of the University business. The needs of staff and students are taken into account in this process. Expenditure on IT incorporates support, maintenance and replacement costs. The process of evaluating decisions to resource IT takes into account the potential benefits of the purchase, in addition to the costs. When a decision is made to invest in IT resources, staff are given the time and support to investigate competitive bids in order to obtain value for money.

Once individual requests are approved, a final IT budget is drawn up and incorporated into the University's annual operating statement, with the anticipated timescale for completing the developments. The University Corporation, before the start of each academic year, approves the operating statement and at each subsequent Corporation meeting governors are able to compare actual progress against the operating statement.

Standardisation and Replacement of Hardware/Software

The University believes it is uneconomic to maintain a wide variety of different operating systems, software and hardware. The ITDC therefore standardises these as much as possible. The University will review its list of software and hardware specifications regularly to ensure it takes advantage of the latest specification at the time of any purchase. The University will also ensure that these systems can be integrated with the existing systems and can respond to any anticipated emerging technology. The ITDC will review the following policies to achieve standardisation and replacement of hardware and software.

- Site licence on software

- Purchase of personal computers

- Network infrastructure

- Replacement of hardware and software

European Union Regulations

The ITDC, in conjunction with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Finance) will be responsible for ensuring that the University complies with EU procurement legislation.

Choice of Suppliers

The University, wherever possible, avoids using preferred suppliers. This is particularly important when the University purchases IT consumables. Consumables are identified by a particular brand and standard and therefore, all suppliers are given an opportunity to quote. The University is also a member of Combined Higher Education Software Team (CHEST) which allows for supplies of software at a substantially discounted price, and actively looks for consortia partnership arrangements to attract more bargaining power.

Where there is only one supplier who is capable of supplying the goods and services the University will, wherever possible, broaden the specification or adopt a new specification to allow more suppliers to meet the requirements. Where the use of a sole supplier cannot be avoided, care will be taken to ensure the best value for money is achieved by checking the supplier's price lists and obtaining all available education/volume discounts.

Purchasing Requirements

The ITDC applies purchasing criteria even more stringent than those laid down in the University's financial rules and regulations. For example, wherever possible and irrespective of the value of the goods required, staff will attempt to get quotes from at least three sources (Financial Regulations state £10,000 threshold). This is particularly important in the purchase of IT consumables where prices vary regularly. The central IT purchasing team will ensure that three quotations are obtained wherever possible on all items where potential savings can be made.

The central IT team will prepare all IT tenders in line with the requirements of the ITDC. All tenderers will be clearly requested to mark their return "Tender" and be sent for the attention of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Finance). After the agreed time, tenders shall be opened together in the presence of one member of the Senior Management Team and one member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Corporation. The central IT purchasing team shall then assess the tenders, according to the criteria set, and produce a tender report and recommendation as to which tender is accepted (subject to post-tender negotiations).