

SUPPLY CHAIN CODE OF CONDUCT

Queen's University Belfast is committed to carrying out 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. The Supply Chain Code of Conduct sets out the values and principles expected of suppliers. Those engaged on University work, whether as suppliers or sub-contractors, are expected to comply with the Code as well as the standards of their own professional bodies. Suppliers will be asked to acknowledge their compliance with the values and principles of the Code and it is expected they will adopt requirements similar to those contained in this Code in their own organisation and their supply chain.

The University is also committed to supporting the achievement of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) set out by the United Nations, which are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, and this Code has been linked to the relevant goals.

On 19 October 2023 Queen's University launched an ambitious [Net Zero Plan](#) to focus on tackling the climate crisis. As part of the University's [Strategy 2030](#) the plan sets out a number of ambitious commitments. These include a commitment to embrace the UN Sustainable Development Goals across all our activities and a commitment to transition to a Carbon Neutral society. The University's strategy for tackling our carbon emissions will be critical in meeting these commitments.

Queen's will be working with suppliers to enhance sustainable procurement practices across the university, supporting the integration of sustainability into procurement policies, processes, strategies, and supply chains.

SOCIAL COMPLIANCE

Not use forced, involuntary or underage labour



Suppliers shall:

- Ensure employees are free to choose their employment and leave that employment without hold by financial deposit or personal items.
- Ensure 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 14, whichever is the higher unless a lower local minimum age is permitted under International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 138.
- Provide support for any child found to be engaged in or performing child labour 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.
- Confirm that it has not been convicted of any slavery or human trafficking offenses anywhere around the world.
- Confirm that to the best of its knowledge it is not currently under investigation, inquiry or enforcement proceedings in relation to any allegation of slavery or human trafficking offenses anywhere around the world.
- Make reasonable enquiries to ensure that its officers, employees and sub-contractors have not been convicted of slavery or human trafficking offenses anywhere around the world.
- Not use, nor allow its employees or sub-contractors to use physical abuse or discipline, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse or other forms of intimidation, on its employees or Subcontractors.
- Comply with the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) and obligations under the University's [Modern Slavery Statement](#).

Provide suitable working conditions and terms



Suppliers shall ensure that:

- All wages and benefits paid for a standard working week meet, as a minimum, national legal standards in the country of employment. Wages and benefits should be paid without discrimination to all workers and all non-statutory deductions should be reasonable and with the consent of the worker.
- Working hours are not excessive (not over 48 hours per week, excluding overtime) and allow for at least 1 day off for each 7 day period on average. Working beyond this should be non-regular and of employees' own will.
- Working hours that exceed 60 hours in any seven day period do so only in exceptional circumstances and where all of the following are met:
 - ✓ it is allowed by national law;
 - ✓ it is allowed by a collective agreement freely negotiated with a workers' organisation representing a significant portion of the workforce;
 - ✓ appropriate safeguards are taken to protect the workers' health and safety; and
 - ✓ the employer can demonstrate that exceptional circumstances apply such as unexpected production peaks, accidents or emergencies.
- A safe and hygienic working environment is provided, including any catering or accommodation areas. Any [hazardous working](#), as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), should only be carried out by persons aged 18 years or over.
- All equipment is safe for use and processes allow a safe working environment. Workers should receive training (which should be mandatory to attend and be in a language they can understand) in safe operation of all equipment and tools, which should be provided ongoing as frequently as required to remain effective.
- They endeavour to eliminate (in the first instance) or reduce the threat to worker health from all hazards, including any hazardous chemical agents used in manufacturing and/or supply chain activities and provide mandatory training (in a language they can understand) in the safe use of any harmful chemicals.
- All personal protective equipment necessary to ensure the health and safety of workers carrying out the tasks is provided free of charge by the employer.
- Policies and processes are in place for recording and eliminating occurrence/reoccurrence of health and safety related incidents and should have regard for avoiding the cause of any mental health issues affecting workers.

Treat employees fairly



Suppliers shall:

- 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 organisation.
- Comply with the University's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).
- Remunerate all employees equally at the same employment grade, regardless of education, social class/caste, nationality, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation unless statutory conditions require otherwise.
- Ensure effective worker engagement practises are in place ensuring all workers are clear of their duties and their employment rights under local and international laws.

- Ensure 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.

ETHICAL COMPLIANCE



Suppliers shall:

- Act in compliance with all laws and regulations of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with, as applicable.
- Not be involved with acts of corruption or bribery, or support acts of violence or terrorism or abuse of individual people or communities.
- Support fair trade conditions for producers, where applicable.
- Take reasonable steps to 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.).
- Act at all times with respect and integrity.
- Have undertaken due diligence of their supply chains and impacts caused by their activities, and actively seek out ways in which to minimise negative impacts.
- Comply with the University's [Bribery Act Policy](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Suppliers shall:

- Not impose unnecessary or unfair contract terms on their suppliers, or throughout their supply chain.
- Comply with all financial regulations and taxations of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with, as applicable.
- Appoint sub-contractors through an open and fair process such as public advertising of such opportunities wherever possible.
- Ensure risk is allocated to the party best placed to manage it. This means not flowing risk inappropriately down to sub-contractors and not asserting that sub-contractors can manage risk that is in fact better managed by the supplier.
- Ensure payments to their supply chain are made in accordance with [The Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2013](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE



Suppliers shall:

- Conduct their business in accordance with local and national environmental laws, regulations and directives of the countries they are working in, manufacturing in or trading with, as applicable.
- Mitigate against and avoid, if possible, causing environmental damage and/or negative environmental impact through manufacture and supply of the goods or services and disposal of supply chain waste.
- Identify opportunities to develop/innovate more environmentally friendly products/service solutions and take manufacture, use and disposal into consideration, including the possibility of circular supply chains.
- Have or develop an action plan and act on it to minimise environmental impact year on year and adopt or work towards internationally recognised environmental standards and/or behaviours. The University is committed to positive action on sustainability and suppliers to the University are required to register with and utilise NETpositive, a tool that has been developed for the Higher Education sector to enable its suppliers to create a simple, free sustainability action plan for their business.
- Encourage the development and use of environmentally friendly technologies.
- Measure and monitor its environmental impacts, and ensure measures are in place to effectively reduce identified environmental impacts (e.g. recycling, single use packaging, general plastic usage, waste and water management, pollution levels and energy efficiency measures).
- Meet the applicable [Government Buying Standards](#).
- Comply with the University's [Environmental Policy Statement](#).

MONITORING AND REVIEW



Suppliers shall:

- Take all reasonable steps to monitor and minimise Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG) and energy consumption from its own operations including CO2 emissions from transportation and travel and support providing relevant data to the University or recognised third parties appointed by the University to measure improvements.
- Collaborate with Electronics Watch if requested to do so by disclosing suppliers and compliance data to the fullest extent possible and taking effective action to remedy labour rights and safety breaches in supply chains. The University is an affiliate member of [Electronics Watch](#) and committed to compliance with labour and safety standards in its electronics supply chains through an on-the-ground monitoring network now spanning major electronics production regions worldwide.
- Report any instances, of illegal or unethical behaviour or breaches of this Code in relation to the goods and services being provided to the Procurement Office procurement@qub.ac.uk without delay with the action plan to put right the situation.
- Use, where applicable, the [University's Whistleblowing](#) process and/or the confidential [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) on 08000 121 700.

RESOURCES

The [Home Office Guidance](#) on Transparency in Supply Chains provides helpful guidance regarding the matters in this code and Annex G - useful information and resources is particularly helpful to give wider context and guidance on these important matters.