

Sustainable Procurement

Winner: Leeds Metropolitan University - Procurement For The Long Term

Key Points

- Leeds Met began its initiative in 1993 and continues to develop it
- Sustainable procurement rests on whole life costing – and is therefore good purchasing practice
- Continuous dialogue with both suppliers and devolved buyers is crucial

Leeds Met's commitment to sustainable procurement began in 1993, when the Purchasing and Environment Office was established. An Environmental Purchasing Policy was produced in 1995 and has since been implemented through environmental purchasing criteria (see graphic below) and a detailed environmental purchasing guide, which has been replicated by other universities in the UK, US and Australia. The criteria are used to assess each new contract. And they are publicised to devolved buyers via a Pocket Guide to Purchasing, and an environmental session within their procurement training.

Environmental issues are also incorporated into Leeds Met's biennial Supplier Fairs, which promote contracted suppliers to devolved buyers. In the 2004 event, a university supplier, Premier Paper, gave a keynote speech on environmental issues in paper supply.

The university also assesses the environmental performance of its top 100 suppliers through an annual questionnaire. Individual scores - together with data on the average performance of the relevant supplier group – are fed back. Leeds Met has committed to engage in two way dialogue with at least 20 suppliers and share best practice with and between them by December 2005. The commitment is one of the targets introduced as part of the Office's certification to the environmental management standard ISO14001 in September 2003 – making Leeds Met one of the first universities to achieve it.

The benefits from sustainable procurement to date include:

- Weekly delivery of stationery, which has cut out 400 deliveries, reduced packaging, cut purchase costs by 1%, and saved on porter's time.
- Sourcing 85% of electricity needs from renewable sources at no extra cost – and a 7,000 tonnes reduction in indirect CO2 emissions.
- Diverting 28% of waste from landfill to recycling through contract incentives – producing unchanged expenditure on waste disposal despite inflation and increases in landfill tax.



Before you buy –
Think environment

- Does the product include recycled materials?
- Does the product carry an eco-label?
- Does the equipment have low energy/emission rating?
- Is there a way of reducing packaging?
- How will the product be disposed of?
- Is the supplier ISO 14001 or EMAS accredited?

University Comment - Mike Briggs, Purchasing and Environment Manager

"The perception that environment makes purchases more expensive is largely incorrect when whole life costing is applied – so sustainable procurement is also good purchasing practice. But environmental purchasing is not an additional task or a short term policy. To succeed it must be integrated into normal purchasing processes."

