

University of Southampton - Supplier Code of Conduct

Introduction

The University of Southampton (the University) is research intensive and a founding member of the Russell Group. The University is committed to the highest quality standards in everything we do, ensuring we work collaboratively in delivering world-class education, research and innovation that makes a real impact on society's biggest challenges. Underpinning its mission to change the world for the better are four core pillars of collegiality, quality, internationalisation, and sustainability.

To deliver these commitments, this Supplier Code of Conduct sets out the standards and practices we expect from our suppliers, their employees, and supply chain when providing goods, works, or services to the University. These standards are based on our university policies and values and always require environmentally responsible behaviour. We expect our suppliers to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and licenses. Corporate conduct, ethical behaviour, and compliance which are all essential to the University's success.

This document is not legally binding, and it does not override the terms of our contracts, or any procurement regulations stipulated within and must comply with all relevant laws and regulations applicable in managing their business in any country it operates.

Behaviours

The University expects ethical and anti-discriminatory behaviour from Suppliers' representatives and visitors to maintain an environmentally responsible workplace. The University upholds high standards of corporate conduct and compliance and expects the same from suppliers and their supply chain. We reject all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within the workplace and on any university site and endorse the Equality Act 2010.

The University expects all staff, students, and visitors (including suppliers) to commit to [Inclusion and Respectful Behaviour Policy](#) and [Student Charter](#) which creates an inclusive University community.

Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

High standards of ethical behaviour and compliance with laws and regulations are essential to protecting the reputation and long-term success of the University. We expect suppliers to behave honestly, ethically, environmentally, and responsibly to comply with legal and industry requirements and within the countries they are working in. All suppliers and individuals are expected to always seek to implement best practices in their industries.

Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Laws

The University has a zero-tolerance towards slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, and human trafficking, all of which deprive a person of their liberty for them to be exploited by another for personal or commercial gain.

We require all suppliers and supplier chain to comply with all applicable anti-slavery and human trafficking laws of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and all applicable Equality Laws (whether about race, sex, gender reassignment, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy, maternity, or otherwise). The Act requires all large businesses to produce an annual statement setting out the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their business and supply chains. [modern-day-slavery-human-trafficking-statement](#)

The University encourage all companies to meet the minimum standards as stated in the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code [ETI Base Code \(English\) 0.pdf](#) which is viewed as a global reference standard and is widely used as a benchmark against which to conduct social audits and develop ethical trade action plans.

Health & Safety Responsibilities

The University has a clear approach to Health & Safety which reflects and recognises the benefits of a safe and healthy working environment, and we have various policies and procedures in place, which may require suppliers to provide additional information and/or attend site briefings before the commencement of any work can take place. [health-and-safety-policy-statement-2021.pdf](#)

All suppliers must ensure that their employees, contractors, visitors, and people in the surrounding community are provided with proper health, safety, and welfare measures. We require our suppliers to commit to legal and industry regulations and that they will strive to implement the best industry practices. Legal responsibilities for employers and employees are set out in the Health & Safety Executives [Law Leaflet](#)

Information and Cyber Security

[Cyber security](#) is the practice of protecting systems, networks, data and programs from digital (cyber) attacks. These cyber-attacks are usually aimed at accessing, altering, or destroying personal and sensitive information to extort money from its targets and/or to maliciously derail the day-to-day operations of organisations.

The University has been awarded NCSC Cyber Essentials certification which is a government-backed scheme overseen by the [National Cyber Security Centre \(NCSC\)](#) and is designed for organisations and companies to demonstrate best practice in cyber security, helping them build resilience against cyber-attacks and protecting sensitive data.

Suppliers and their supply chains must ensure that their organizations are protected from cyber-attacks and have strong, resilient systems in place. It is essential for suppliers to safeguard the integrity and security of their systems. Any security incident that affects or has the potential to affect University data must be reported to the University immediately.

[Report a data breach](#)

Data Protection

The University has an Information Governance Framework to effectively manage the information that the University holds. As part of our information governance framework, we work within a set of regulations, policies, and guidelines that form a consistent set of rules that determine how we operate. They ensure that the University meets its legislative and regulatory requirements including the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and the GDPR and that it commits to best practices and the reduction of reputational damage.

We expect all suppliers to comply with all data protection laws and requirements (including the UK GDPR) when processing any personal data on the University's behalf.

Our expectations are for Suppliers to have in place appropriate measures to:

- protect the integrity and confidentiality of information (including information belonging to or supplied by the University) held on its systems (which include physical and online or electronic systems); and
- ensure that there is no unauthorised access to the information by third parties.

Suppliers are required to promptly notify their Senior Managers in strict accordance with their contractual obligations.

Social Value

Social Value is considered as the wider benefit gained by a local community from the delivery of public contracts. These advantages can contribute to the rejuvenation of local communities and economies, especially through the creation of employment opportunities, re-training and return-to-work programs, community support, innovation in working methods, and support for the health and well-being of those affected by these initiatives.

The University acknowledges its responsibility to ensure sustainability and social value are considered at every opportunity as its impacts are widespread.

As a supplier to the University, we expect you to demonstrate the highest ethical standards and be transparent, honest, fair, and environmentally responsible. We also encourage you to engage with the community, inspire innovation, and facilitate market accessibility and growth. By following these principles, you will contribute significantly to the well-being of our societies.

Suppliers are expected to demonstrate how their policies, strategies, systems, and methods contribute to the betterment of both the University and/or the Supplier's the surrounding communities. This approach guarantees that suppliers uphold the University's objectives, principles, and ethical business practices.

Environmental

Sustainability is an integral part of everything the University of Southampton does: our individual behaviours, how we work together, and how we make decisions for the future. This is key to achieving our mission of changing the world for the better.

By 2030 we want to have achieved our target of net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions. To date, we have substantially reduced our Scope 3 emissions and have embedded sustainability into our teaching, learning, research, and professional services operations. We also strive towards continual improvement in areas such as energy reduction, waste and recycling, water consumption, biodiversity, sustainable procurement, and sustainable transport, all of which also contribute to our Sustainability Strategic Plan. As part of our Scope 3 emission plans, we have been exploring different tools and measures and we may request suppliers to sign up to a net zero carbon tool, which will help us reach our goal.

[Strategic Plan - Sustainability | Sustainability | University of Southampton](#)

The University expects its suppliers to comply with environmental laws, regulations, and standards and have procedures in place to identify and minimize their impact on the environment to reach Net Zero.

Suppliers should be aware of the University's [Environment and Sustainability Policy](#), and how their operations relate to its goals.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are essential to creating a thriving, proud, and successful University of Southampton. We believe that everyone has value, and it is through respecting and recognizing the unique qualities of each individual that we achieve excellence.

At the University, we embrace a variety of equality charters such as Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter, Student Minds Mental Health Charter, Disability Confident, Research Concordat, and Technicians Commitment. As EDI is a comprehensive remit, we work closely with colleagues, senior leaders, and at all levels of the student union to ensure we promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across the board.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are embedded in the [University Strategy](#), and we have a dedicated Strategic Plan – [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) (EDI) to help us realise our mission to create an inclusive university community, where individual members of staff and students feel welcomed, safe, included and valued.

The University expects all staff, students, and visitors (including suppliers) to commit to the [Southampton Behaviours](#) and [Student Charter](#) which enables us to create an inclusive University community.

Conflicts of Interest

The University has a Conflicts of Interest Policy in place to ensure that our activities, and those of our staff and individuals working for or with the University are protected from any potential reputational damage or other liabilities.

[Conflicts of Interest Policy](#)

Suppliers who work with the university must ensure that their integrity and impartiality are not compromised. They should refrain from allowing any person or organization to inappropriately influence their decisions or actions. Suppliers must not engage in any activities that would result in them or their close associates receiving financial or material benefits beyond what is agreed upon in their contract with the University. If any conflicts of interest arise, suppliers should disclose them immediately to the University Procurement & Contract Management Team Procurement@soton.ac.uk

Anti-Corruption, Fraud & Bribery

The University like all other public bodies has a duty to conduct its affairs in a responsible and transparent way and has a zero-tolerance policy towards, fraud, bribery, and any form of dishonesty or misconduct in the workplace. It is very important to the University that any fraud, misconduct, or wrongdoing is reported and dealt with properly and therefore has policies and procedures in place to deal with such events.

Suppliers must comply with anti-corruption and anti-bribery laws, including the [Bribery Act 2010](#), in all locations where they conduct business.

Suppliers must have procedures in place that allow employees and other stakeholders to report ethical issues without fear of retaliation, which also includes training and is easily accessible for all members of staff.

[Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower?](#)

Gifts and Hospitality

The University does not tolerate bribery and corruption in any form. Suppliers must not offer or promise any gifts or hospitality that could raise suspicions of an attempt to influence business dealings with the University or suggest that individuals have been unduly influenced in carrying out their responsibilities.

[Gift acceptance.pdf \(southampton.ac.uk\)](#)

Confidentiality

It is expected that both the University and suppliers commit to the provisions outlined in our contracts, as well as any legal requirements that safeguard commercial and sensitive information. Additionally, both parties may possess confidential information that is essential for effective collaboration. Even if this information is not explicitly covered in contractual agreements, it must still be treated with the utmost care and attention.

Compliance Management

We take pride in our supply chain and in selecting suppliers, all our combined policies safeguard that we take steps to ensure we are contracting with reputable organisations. To ensure continuity of service and deliverables, the University expects full transparency and collaboration from our suppliers and supply chain, and assurances they will act in a responsible and ethical way.

The University reserves the right to request information that may include checks, audits, evidence, and/or certifications to verify your compliance with the Supplier Code of Conduct. If non-compliance is identified, we may take appropriate action, starting with a discussion with the supplier and potentially leading to the termination of the contract if necessary.

It is the suppliers' responsibility to ensure all their employees and subcontractors are aware of the requirements laid down within this supplier code of conduct.

The University reserves the right to modify this Supplier Code of Conduct at any time.