

Bursars Committee: General Purchasing Sub-Committee

Terms of reference

1. Purpose

The purposes of the General Purchasing Sub-Committee are:

- a. to identify areas of purchasing that could benefit from joint initiatives and initiate co-operative purchasing ventures where feasible.
- b. to oversee collaborative purchasing activities once established.
- c. to promote and disseminate best practice in purchasing among the Colleges.
- d. to provide a forum in which the Colleges can, in conjunction with the University's Procurement Services, maximise opportunities for co-operation in procurement between the Colleges and the University.
- e. to consider any other matters referred to it by the Bursars' Committee or the Bursars' Business Committee.

2. Standing

The General Purchasing Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of the Bursars' Committee. Business is conducted on a confidential basis.

The Sub-Committee is not subject to the direction or control of the Colleges, either jointly or severally.

All recommendations relating to procurement consortia opportunities or changes shall be provided to the Bursars' Committee in the form of written minutes and/or a written report for discussion and approval at the next convenient meeting of the Bursars' Committee, providing that the Chair has discretion to allow for a formal decision to be made by circulation to the Bursars' Committee.

The Sub-Committee has no power to make decisions binding on, or to represent the views of, any College. An individual Bursar with delegated responsibility for an established collaborative purchasing activity (as outlined in the Table of Responsibilities) may be empowered by the individual Colleges participating in a particular collaborative purchasing arrangement to make binding decisions in circumstances where it is impractical for timing reasons to seek separate agreement from the Colleges. Such authority must be given in writing.

In addition, the Sub-Committee does not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Bursars' Committee.

Any advice provided to Colleges and other institutions, either through members of the Sub-Committee, or through staff of the Office of Intercollegiate Services or subsequently through the Bursars' Committee, is provided on the basis that the advice is offered without any warranty as to its accuracy and that no liability shall fall on the Committee or any of its officers or members for such advice.

3. Membership

The membership of the General Purchasing Sub-Committee shall be a maximum of 12 persons elected by the Bursars' Committee, on the nomination of the Sub-Committee or the Bursars' Business Committee. Membership shall include:

- a) The Chair appointed by the Bursars' Committee.
- b) The lead Bursar(s) for each of the established collaborative purchasing initiatives, as set out in the Table of Responsibilities.
- c) A member of the Bursars' Legal Affairs and Employment Sub-Committee.
- d) At least one person who is closely involved in the production of the annual KPI report for the Intercollegiate Committee on College Accounts.
- e) The Head of the Office of Intercollegiate Services Ltd (OIS), or a senior officer of OIS appointed by him or her.

Officers

The Chair of the General Purchasing Sub-Committee shall be a Senior Bursar who is appointed by the Bursars' Committee, on the nomination of either the Sub-Committee or the Bursars' Business Committee. The Sub-Committee will appoint from within its number a Secretary to record the meetings.

The Chair is also *ex officio* a company director of the Office of Intercollegiate Services Ltd.

Attendees

The Chair and/or Secretary of the Sub-Committee, at their discretion, may permit other persons to attend all or part of one or more meetings, provided that permission has been sought in advance of any meeting. Attendees do not have voting rights. Regular attendees are expected to include:

- i. The Head of Procurement for the University's Procurement Services
- ii. The Chair of the Catering Managers' Committee (CMC) and/or its Procurement Management Group (PMG)
- iii. A representative of the Association of Cambridge Colleges Maintenance Officers (ACCMO)
- iv. Representatives from the appointed agents or advisors relating to a particular initiative under discussion.

4. Meetings of the Sub-Committee

Meetings are convened by the Chair and/or Secretary: the Sub-Committee meets not less than four times a year, and at least once each Term. Notice of the date, time and place of meetings, and agenda and papers, is provided by the Chair or Secretary, in a manner to be determined by them.

At the beginning of each meeting, the Chair shall ask those present to declare any possible conflicts of interest. A member with a conflict may be asked to leave the meeting for the particular item of business concerned.

There is no quorum for the approval of business.

Attendance at the Committee may include remote attendance through teleconferencing or other mechanisms, providing it is clear that the members can contribute effectively to any discussion and vote.

In the absence of the Chair, he or she will nominate another member of the Committee to chair that particular meeting. Otherwise, the Committee determines amongst those members present who chairs the meeting as its first item of business: this may be agreed by circulation in advance.

Decisions of the Committee are made wherever possible by consensus. In the event of a vote being required, a decision is carried on a simple majority of the members of the Committee present. In the event of a tie, the Chair carries an additional and deciding vote.

5. Conduct of business outside meetings

In exceptional circumstances, the Sub-Committee may agree to conduct business by circulation.

The Sub-Committee may also agree which matters it wishes to delegate to a single member of the Committee, to decide on its behalf. Any item of delegated business is reported on at its next meeting.

The Committee may, at its discretion, set up (and otherwise suspend or disband) Working Groups, providing that these relate directly to the purposes of the Sub-Committee outlined above. The Sub-Committee may establish the membership, terms of reference, and duration of the Working Group, and shall report on these at least annually to the Bursars' Committee.

6. Reserved business

The Sub-Committee's business shall include consideration of reserved business. Matters which are deemed to be reserved business include:

- information for note or discussion relating to the individual salaries of persons employed by the University or one or more of the Colleges;
- information for note or discussion relating to the performance on individual persons employed by the University or one or more of the Colleges;
- any other matter at the discretion of the Chair and/or Secretary (but normally limited to matters of commercial sensitivity or legal privilege).

Where matters have been identified as reserved business, attendees shall be asked to leave the meeting unless the Chair deems that their continued presence is relevant to the matter under discussion.

Papers and minutes of reserved business shall be circulated only to members of the Committee, and shall not be published.

7. Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee are approved by the Bursars' Committee: the Sub-Committee shall receive the terms of reference at least annually and may make recommendations to the Bursars' Committee on proposed changes at any time.

Approved by the Bursars' Committee on 5 June 2025

Table of Responsibilities

Last updated: September 2025

Membership category	Name and College	Procurement area(s)
b	Giles Greenfield (DAR)	Electricity Gas Water
b	Philip Law (DOW)	
b	Rob Preston (ED)	Insurance
b	Kathryn Smart (SID)	
b	Martin Spooner (CHR)	Catering
c	Helen Hayward (CTH)	Human resources
e	Matthew Russell	Data protection advice Freedom of Information advice Legal advice* Bespoke software (CASC)

* Procurement of external legal advice is managed through the Legal Affairs and Employment Sub-Committee