

The University of Manchester

Flexible Framework Level 5

We are pleased to announce we are at Level 5 of the Flexible Framework!

1. Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to celebrate our achievement and to explain the process of scrutiny that was undertaken to give us assurance that we can confidently assert that we are operating at Level 5 of the Flexible Framework.

The document has been compiled by the University of Manchester's Central Procurement Office (CPO) and NETpositive Futures Ltd.

2. Background and Context

It is almost two years since we successfully embedded sustainability into all areas of policy and practice within procurement. In doing this The University of Manchester demonstrated practice consistent with Level 4 of the Flexible Framework.

External scrutiny of our Level 4 activity was provided by NETpositive Futures Ltd. who has a proven track record of providing consultancy and support for sustainability and procurement within the public and private sectors. Following Manchester's lead NETpositive Futures has provided similar assessments across the Higher Education sector.

Level 5 of the Flexible Framework relates to the theme lead and challenges an organisation to consider what this means in their context.

Foundation -> Embed -> Practice -> Enhance -> Lead

As part of our commitment to leadership we elected to invite peer scrutiny of our Level 5 activity. We wanted to ascertain the views of fellow professionals from within the sector, from our home area of Greater Manchester and, because of our global connections, internationally as well. We retained the services of NETpositive Futures to oversee the external review of our Level 5 claim to ensure an independent and impartial review was undertaken.

3. Scrutiny Panel Membership and Process

Our expert panel was made up of:

- Leanne Denby - Director of Sustainability, Macquarie University and President of Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability
- Alan Glover MCIPS, Head of Procurement, Kingston University & St. George's University London
- Emma Keenan MCIPS - Procurement Specialist, Higher Education Procurement Academy
- Simon Walsh MCIPS - Procurement Director, Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

This panel has an appropriate range of experience and expertise covering both sustainability and procurement.

We asked each of our scrutiny panel to:

- Participate in discussions with NETpositive Futures who co-ordinated the scrutiny process;
- Review the evidence provided, and in the public domain, detailing our progress against the detail of the Flexible Framework;
- Attend a meeting, or take part in a teleconference, with representatives from the Central Procurement Office to challenge, question and generally scrutinise the evidence provided.

Following this process the panel was asked if they believed the University of Manchester was at Level 5 of the Flexible Framework.

4. Feedback: what the panel said

Following scrutiny from the expert panel we asked each of them to provide feedback based on whether they felt we were at Level 5. This is what they told us.

Leanne Denby - Director of Sustainability, Macquarie University and President of Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability

Leanne did not undertake any direct discussions with the University of Manchester. Being based in Australia she undertook a rigorous desk based review of documentation and publicly available information on the University's web-pages. Her sustainability and international perspective complemented the reviews undertaken by domestic panel members, which provided weight and impact to our review process.

Leanne fed back to the university that she believed we were meeting the requirements of Level 5 on most of the key areas of the Flexible framework and provided some feedback on other areas.

Leanne commented that;

"Key level 5 requirements in regards to 'Policy, Strategy and Communications' have mostly been satisfied. Procurement is clearly stated in the broad University strategy - in itself leading practice. It would be useful to have a document that details how the CPO delivers on this (e.g. action plan). This would also explicitly address point 3 regarding 'determining future priorities and (developing) a new strategy ... beyond this framework'. Perhaps this sits behind areas that I couldn't access on the website though. I don't doubt the level of commitment from the University...I hope that the work you are doing becomes well known and others follow suit to up the ante in the procurement area."

The suggested areas for improvement are helpful for our onward journey; whilst we are confident that we have the necessary systems and processes in place we are aware that they need to be continuously improved and that Level 5 is less of a badge to be earned and

more of mind set, and an on-going work in progress, adapting and evolving but with a clear objective in mind.

In respect of our developing strategy we have always had in sight Level 5 as an outcome but are now looking beyond this to consider and prepare the way for adoption of ISO20400. Similarly in terms of processes we are finalising a range of category plans which capture our key suppliers and identify clear KPIs by category, and more granularly by commodity.

Alan Glover, Head of Procurement, Kingston University & St. George's University London

“Further to the documentation sent over to me on the 28th March 2017 and the review completed as part of the Scrutiny Panel Meeting held on the 3rd July at Manchester University. I am pleased to confirm that I believe the University has adequately met the requirements of Level 5 on the Flexible Framework.”

Emma Keenan MCIPS - Procurement Specialist, Higher Education Procurement Academy

“The documentation sent to me, the conversations I have had with yourselves and the discussions with others about the work you have been doing have provided clear evidence to me that you are meeting the requirements at level 5 of the Flexible Framework and you are leading others.

Your work is driving change in other universities and at Consortia level. The reputation of your team precedes you and other Universities (and I) expect that you will know the answer to questions or be able to guide them through processes new to them.”

Simon Walsh MCIPS - Procurement Director, Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

“I have no hesitation in supporting your assessment and confirming your Level 5 status.

You have clearly evidenced how you had embedded sustainability into the life of your Department and the University as a whole.”

5. Level 5 of the Flexible Framework?

Overall we believe this review process has clearly supported our belief that we are operating at Level 5 of the Flexible Framework. If we had ended up with a score at the end of this process it would be 19 out of 20!

However, it has also re-confirmed our belief that we must continue to develop, innovate and improve:

- The importance of documenting our progress with even greater clarity;
- That our journey will never be complete or perfect and;
- Transparency takes time but is worth it!