

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

Financial Regulations



**If you would like this document in an alternate format
Please contact the Finance Department**

Policy Prepared by:	Judith Saunderson
Job Title/Role:	Group Chief Financial Officer
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Approved by:	Corporation
Date:	6 July 2023

SGS College – Financial Regulations

MANDATORY INITIAL IMPACT SCREENING	
I have read the guidance document: Completing a Policy Impact Assessment?	✓
If this policy raises equality, diversity or inclusion concerns, the Inclusion Committee has been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If this policy raises environmental or sustainability issues, the Estates Team have been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If this policy has been up-dated, please tick to confirm that the initial impact screening has also been reviewed:	✓



Please list each College Strategic Priority that this policy is designed to address/implement:		
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IMPACT ASSESSMENT		
Characteristic	This policy seeks to:	
Age	No appreciable impact	
Disability	No appreciable impact	
Faith or Belief	No appreciable impact	
Gender	No appreciable impact	
Race or Ethnicity	No appreciable impact	
Orientation	No appreciable impact	
Gender reassignment	No appreciable impact	
Economic disadvantage	No appreciable impact	
Rural isolation	No appreciable impact	
Marriage	No appreciable impact	
Pregnancy & maternity	No appreciable impact	
Carers & care leavers	No appreciable impact	
Vulnerable persons	No appreciable impact	
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to maximise opportunities to improve diversity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:		
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to improve equality of opportunity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:		
Is there any possibility that this policy could operate in a discriminatory way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: red; margin-right: 5px;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: green; margin-right: 5px; text-align: center; color: white; font-size: 10px;">*</div> <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> If you have ticked yes (red), which characteristic will be most affected? Choose an item. </div> </div>
If yes please confirm that the Policy has been sent for a full Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment, and note the date:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap to enter a date.

Note: if the policy does not seek to increase diversity or improve equality you should go back and review it before submitting it for approval.

MAPPING OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS	
Which United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Right does this policy most protect:	Art. 17 Access to information Art. 28 Right to education Art. 42 Right to know your rights
Which Human Right (HRA) does this policy most protect:	Art. 7 No punishment without law Art. 5 Right to liberty and security
DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY BY DESIGN SCREENING	
Tick to confirm that you have considered any data protection issues as part of the design and implementation of this policy; and, that implementing this policy will <u>not</u> result in the collection, storage or processing of personal data outside of official College systems:	✓
Tick to indicated that this policy has or requires a Data Privacy Impact Assessment:	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT	

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Does this policy relate directly or indirectly to any legal, regulatory environmental or sustainability standard(s)?				Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If so, please list them:	FE Charities Action 1992, Charities Act 1993, Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, HM Treasury: Managing Public Money				
Will any aspects of this policy result in:					
Reduced miles travelled or provide / improve / promote alternatives to car based transport (e.g. public transport, walking and cycling car sharing, the use of low emission vehicles, community transport, environmentally friendly fuels and/or technologies)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Reduced waste, environmental hazards and/or toxic materials for example by reducing PVC, photocopier and printer use, air pollution, noise pollution, mining or deforestation? Or increase the amount of College waste that is recycled or composted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Reduced water consumption?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Reduced instances of single use plastic?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Reduced use of natural resources such as raw materials and energy to promote a circular economy?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Improved resource efficiency of new or refurbished buildings (water, energy, density, use of existing buildings, designing for a longer lifespan)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Will this policy improve green space or access to green space?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Please list the sections of this policy which specifically target an improved environment:					
Will any aspects of this policy result in:					
The promotion of healthy working lives (including health and safety at work, work-life/home-life balance and family friendly practices)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Greater employment opportunities for local people?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
The promotion of ethical purchasing of goods or services for example by increasing transparency of modern slavery in our supply chain?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Greater support for the local economy through the use of local suppliers, SMEs or engagement with third sector or community groups?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
The promotion of better health, increased community resilience, social cohesion, reduced social isolation or support for sustainable development?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Mitigation of the likely effects of climate change (e.g. identifying proactive and community support for vulnerable groups; contingency planning for flood/snow, heatwaves and other weather extremes)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
The promotion of better awareness of sustainability, healthy behaviours, mental wellbeing, living independently or self-management?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Please list the sections of this policy which specifically target improved sustainability:					
What is the *estimated* carbon impact of this policy (in terms of tCO2e)	Increased (+tCO2e) <input type="checkbox"/>	Decreased (-tCO2e) <input type="checkbox"/>	Net Zero CO2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mandatory initial impact screening completed by:	Jude Saunderson				
Date	01/06/2023				
Initial impact screening supported by (Please list each individual)					

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A. TERMINOLOGY

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee is independent of Executive responsibility, and advises the Corporation on issues related to internal audit, external audit and financial control. It must issue an Annual Report to the Corporation which comments on the College's system of internal control.

BUDGET HOLDER

A member of staff who has been assigned his or her own budget and is accountable for it.

GROUP

Reference to the Group includes SGS College and its subsidiary undertaking.

COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

The College Principal is responsible for the continued development and growth of the College's provision and for the day to day running of the College and is the operational lead for ensuring the College delivers the annual financial plan.

DESIGNATED FUNDING BODY

This refers to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

EXECUTIVE

The Executive is the Senior Management Team that assists the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal in running the College. This includes senior post-holders and other members of staff.

FUNDING BODIES

This refers to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Office for Students (OfS) and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA).

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) & EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

Under the Financial Memorandum, the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal is the College's Accounting Officer with the ultimate Executive responsibility for the finances and the management of the College.

GROUP CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Group Chief Financial Officer is the Chief Financial Officer of the College and its subsidiary, responsible for the design and implementation of the internal control framework, financial and management accounting.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/FACULTY

The Head of an Academic or Non-Academic department/faculty who is responsible for the performance against targets and budget of their whole department/faculty.

THE CORPORATION (BOARD OF GOVERNORS)

The Corporation (Board of Governors) is ultimately responsible for the affairs of the Group. The membership, powers and procedures are defined within the Instrument and Articles of Government and Corporation Standing Orders. The Corporation is supported by the following Committees: Audit, Search, Remuneration and Learning and Quality.

B. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Background

- 1.1.** South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (“The College”) is a Further Education Corporation created under the provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The College is accountable through its Corporation, which has ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of its management and administration.
- 1.2.** The College is an exempt charity by virtue of the Charities Act 1993 as amended by the Charities Act 2006.
- 1.3.** The College and subsidiary are part of central government which means that they are subject to the framework for financial management set out in HM Treasury: Managing Public Money.
- 1.4.** The Financial Memoranda between the Funding Bodies and the College set out the terms and conditions on which grants are made. The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that conditions of grants are met. As part of this process, the College must adhere to the Funding Bodies’ Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, which requires it to have sound systems of financial and management control. The Financial Regulations of the Group form part of this overall system of managing risk and accountability.

2. Status of Financial Regulations

- 2.1.** This document sets out the Group’s Financial Regulations. It translates into practical guidance the College’s broad policies relating to financial control. It applies to the College and any subsidiary undertakings it may have.
- 2.2.** These Financial Regulations are subordinate to the College’s Instruments and Articles of Government, to any restrictions contained within the College’s Financial Memoranda with the Funding Bodies and the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice and HM Treasury: Managing Public Money.
- 2.3.** The purpose of these Financial Regulations is to provide control over the totality of the Group’s resources and provide management with assurances that the resources are being properly applied for the achievement of the College and its subsidiary’s strategic plans and business objectives:
 - financial viability
 - achieving value for money
 - fulfilling its responsibility for the provision of effective financial controls over the use of public funds
 - ensuring that the Group complies with all relevant legislation
 - safeguarding the assets of the Group.
- 2.4.** Compliance with the Financial Regulations is compulsory for all staff connected with the Group. A member of staff who fails to comply with the Financial Regulations may be subject to disciplinary action under the Group’s disciplinary policy. The Corporation must be notified of any such breach through the Audit Committee. It is

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the responsibility of Budget Holders to ensure that their staff are made aware of the existence and content of the Group's Financial Regulations.

- 2.5.** The Audit Committee is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the Financial Regulations, through the Group Chief Financial Officer, and for recommending Corporation approval of any additions or changes necessary.
- 2.6.** The College's detailed Financial Procedures set out precisely how these regulations will be implemented and are contained in a separate manual.

C. GOVERNANCE

1. The Corporation

1.1. Financial Responsibilities

One of the main responsibilities of the Corporation is for the oversight of Group activities. Its financial responsibilities are to:

- ensure the solvency of the Group and the safeguarding of the Group's assets;
- appoint, grade, suspend, dismiss and determine the pay and conditions of service of the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal, College Principal, other senior post-holders including the Clerk, and other posts determined by the Corporation;
- set a framework for pay and conditions of service of all other staff;
- ensure that the financial, planning and other management controls, including controls against fraud, bribery and theft, applied by the Group are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard public funds;
- approve the appointment of external auditors and an internal audit service;
- assure the efficient, economical and effective management of all the Group's resources and expenditure, capital assets and equipment, and staff, so that the investment of public funds in the Group is not put at risk;
- ensure that appropriate financial considerations are taken into account at all stages in reaching decisions and in their execution;
- ensure that the Group plans and conducts its financial and academic affairs so that its total income is not less than sufficient, taking one year with another, to meet its total expenditure;
- approve an annual budget and 2-year financial forecast before the start of each financial year;
- approve the Fees & Refunds Policy and HE Fee & Bursary Policy;
- ensure that the College complies with the Funding Bodies' Post-16 Audit Code of Practice;
- ensure that the College complies with HMT: Management Public Money;
- approve the College's Strategy;
- approve the annual Report and Financial Statements;
- approve long term financing arrangements.

1.2. Corporation Committee Structure

The Corporation has ultimate responsibility for the Group's finances, but it delegates specific powers and processes to the committees detailed below. These committees are accountable to the Corporation.

1.2.1. Audit Committee

Colleges must, by their Accountability Agreements with the Funding Bodies and by the Funding Bodies' Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, appoint an Audit Committee. The Committee is independent, advisory and reports to the Corporation. It has the right of access to obtain all the information it considers necessary and to consult directly with the Internal and External Auditors. The audit requirements of the College are set out in the Funding Bodies' Post-16 Audit Code of Practice.

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The Committee is responsible for identifying and approving appropriate performance measures for internal and external auditors and for monitoring their performance. The Audit Committee is also responsible for assuring the Corporation that the Group has adequate and effective assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets.

In order to provide the Corporation with the appropriate assurance the College has appointed an Internal Audit Service reporting to the Audit Committee.

However, responsibility for risk management, control and governance processes remains fully with management, who must recognise that internal audit can only provide 'reasonable assurance' and cannot provide any guarantee against material errors, loss or fraud. Internal audit also plays a valuable role in helping management to improve systems of risk management, control and governance processes and so to reduce the potential effects of any significant risks faced by the Group. Risk assessment provides the opportunity for internal audit work to be efficient and focused. It does not necessarily imply that internal audit activity has to be increased.

Internal audit can also provide independent and objective consultancy advice specifically to help management improve the risk management, control and governance processes. In such circumstances, internal auditors apply their professional skills in a systematic and disciplined way to contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives. Such advisory work contributes to the opinion that internal audit provides on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

1.2.2. Remuneration Committee

Consideration of senior post-holders, other posts designated by the Corporation and the Clerk's pay and conditions is the responsibility of the Remuneration Committee. It has the power to make recommendations to the Corporation on their remuneration, including pay and other benefits, as well as contractual arrangements.

1.2.3. Search Committee

The Committee is responsible for the selection and nomination of any new external member for the Corporation's consideration in accordance with the Procedure for the appointment, reappointment, induction and training of Corporation Members. The Committee is also responsible for monitoring the diversity balance of the Corporation and recommending appointments to remedy any under-representation when appropriate. The Committee also has due regard to the Group's obligations under all aspects of discrimination legislation.

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1.2.4. Learning and Quality Committee

The Learning & Quality Committee is responsible to the Corporation. The main purposes of the Committee are:

- to monitor progress against the College's strategic aim of achieving outstanding teaching, learning and assessment and quality standards.
- to review the Skills Strategy, Higher Education Strategy, Quality Strategy and College Self-Assessment Report ahead of their presentation to Corporation for approval.
- to gain assurance that the curriculum responds to and meets the needs of learners, employers, and other key stakeholders at local, regional, and national levels.
- to monitor the continuous improvement of the learner experience.
- to hold the College Executive to account for the academic standards, quality of teaching, behaviour and attendance across the College.

2. Accounting Officer

The Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal is the College's Accounting Officer and has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the financial administration of the Group's affairs in accordance with the Financial Memoranda with the Funding Bodies.

As the Accounting Officer, the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal may be required to justify any of the Group's financial matters to the Public Accounts Committee at the House of Commons.

The articles of government 5. (1). (b) and (c) charge the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal with responsibility for:

- 5. (1) (b) *Reviewing and approving annual estimates of income and expenditure prepared by the Principal and taking such annual estimates to the Corporation for consideration and approval.*
- 5. (1) (c) *Overall management of budget and resources within the estimates approved by the Corporation.*

The Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal must demonstrate his or her oversight of financial matters by signing the Statement of Corporate Governance, Balance Sheet and the Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance within the annual Financial Statements, and the Two-Year Financial Forecasts submitted to the Designated Funding Body.

3. College Principal

Under the articles of government 5. (2) (c) and (d) the College Principal is responsible for:

- 5. (2) (c) *Preparing annual estimates of income and expenditure for consideration and approval first by the Chief Executive and subsequently the Corporation.*
- 5. (2) (d) *day-to-day management of budget and resources within the estimates approved by the Corporation.*

4. Group Chief Financial Officer

Day-to-day financial administration is controlled by the Group Chief Financial Officer, who is responsible to the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal for:

- preparing annual capital and revenue budgets and financial plans;
- preparing accounts, management information, monitoring and control of expenditure against budgets and all financial operations;
- preparing the College's annual accounts and other financial statements and accounts which the College is required to submit to other authorities;
- ensuring that the Group maintains satisfactory financial systems
- oversight of risk management systems;
- providing professional advice on all matters relating to financial policies and procedures;
- day-to-day liaison with internal and external auditors in order to achieve efficient processes;
- treasury management and relationship with the banks;
- pension changes;
- procurement.

5. The Executive

The College's Executive team, led by the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal, plays a key role in monitoring and challenging the financial performance of the Group.

6. The Senior Leadership Team

The College Senior Leadership Team, led by the College Principal, plays a key role in monitoring and challenging the financial performance of the Group. In addition, individuals in the team have financial management responsibilities if they are Budget Holders.

7. Budget Holders

Budget Holders are responsible to the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal for financial management for the areas or activities they control. They are advised by the Group Chief Financial Officer in executing their financial duties. The Group Chief Financial Officer will also supervise and approve the financial systems operating within their departments, including the form in which accounts and financial records are kept.

Budget Holders are responsible for establishing and maintaining clear lines of responsibility within their department for all financial matters and are expected to comply with the procedures set out in the Financial Regulations and the Financial Procedures, including the rules on procurement. Where resources are devolved to Budget Holders, they are the accountable to their Head of Department/Assistant Principal for these budgets.

Budget Holders must provide the Group Chief Financial Officer with such information as may be required to enable:

- compilation of the College's Financial Statements
- implementation of financial planning

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- implementation of audit and financial reviews, projects and value for money studies.

Level of budgetary authority is set out in detail in Appendix 1.

8. All members of staff

All members of staff must be aware and have a general responsibility for the security of the Group's property, for avoiding loss and for due economy in the use of resources.

They must ensure that they are aware of the Group's financial authority limits and the values of purchases for which quotations and tenders are required (Appendix 1).

They must make available any relevant records or information to the Group Chief Financial Officer or his or her authorised representative in connection with the implementation of the Group's Financial Policies, these Financial Regulations and the system of financial control.

They must provide the Group Chief Financial Officer with such financial and other information as he or she may deem necessary, from time to time, to carry out the requirements of the Corporation.

They must immediately notify the Group Chief Financial Officer whenever any matter arises which involves, or is thought to involve, irregularities concerning, *inter alia*, cash or property of the Group. The Group Chief Financial Officer must take such steps as he or she considers necessary by way of investigation and report.

9. Students' Union

The Students' Union is a separate legal entity from the College but is recognised to fulfil a valuable role in relation to the College's students.

The Students' Union is responsible for maintaining its own bank account and financial records and preparing its own annual Financial Statements, although this function is performed by the College's Finance Department on their behalf.

At year end the Students' Union Financial Statements must be presented to the Corporation for information.

In accordance with an agreement between the College and the Students' Union, the College's internal auditor must have access to records, assets and personnel within the Students' Union in the same way as other areas of the College.

D. PLANNING AND BUDGETING

1. Financial Planning

1.1. Financial Plan

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for preparing annually a rolling two-year financial plan for approval by the Corporation and for preparing financial forecasts for submission to the Designated Funding Body. Financial plans must be consistent with the College Strategy, Curriculum Strategy, Estates Strategy and Digital Strategy approved by the Corporation.

1.2. Budget

The Corporation will annually set budget objectives for the Group. These will help the Group Chief Financial Officer in preparing more detailed financial plans for the College and its subsidiary undertaking.

1.3. Resource allocation

Resources are allocated annually by the Corporation on the basis of the above objectives. Budget Holders are responsible for the economic, effective and efficient use of resources allocated to them.

1.4. Budget preparation

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for preparing each year an annual revenue budget and capital programme for consideration by the Corporation. The budget must also include monthly cash flow forecasts for the year and a projected year-end balance sheet. The Group Chief Financial Officer must ensure that detailed budgets are prepared in order to support the resource allocation process and that these are communicated to Budget Holders as soon as possible following their approval by the Corporation. Budget preparation is shown in more detail in the Financial Procedures.

During the year, the Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for submitting revised forecasts to the Corporation.

1.5. Capital programmes

The capital programme includes all expenditure on land, buildings, equipment, furniture and associated costs whether or not they are funded from capital grants or, from internal resources capitalised for inclusion in the College's Financial Statements. General annual expenditure of this type is approved by the Corporation as part of the financial plan. Expenditure on individual capital projects in excess of £500,000 is approved by the Corporation as separate capital projects.

The Capital Bids process is shown in more detail in the Financial Procedures.

1.5.1. Capital Projects

The Group Chief Financial Officer must establish protocols for the inclusion of capital projects for approval by the Corporation. These must set out the information that is required for each proposed project as well as the financial criteria that they are required to meet.

The Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal must establish procedures for the approval of variations, including the notification of large variations to the Designated Funding Body, as laid down in Designated Funding Body guidelines.

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for providing regular statements concerning all capital expenditure to the Corporation for monitoring purposes.

Following completion of a capital project, a post-project evaluation or final report must be submitted to the Corporation by the Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal, including actual expenditure against budget and reconciling funding arrangements where a variance has occurred as well as other issues affecting completion of the project. Post project evaluations may also need to be sent to the relevant Designated Funding Body, as laid down in the Designated Funding Body guidelines.

1.6. Overseas activity

In planning and undertaking overseas activity, the College must have due regard to the relevant guidelines issued by the Designated Funding Body.

1.7. Other major developments

Any new aspect of business, or proposed establishment of a subsidiary company or joint venture, which may require an investment in buildings, resources or staff time must be presented for approval by the Corporation.

The acquisition or establishment of a subsidiary company or joint venture requires prior DfE approval.

The Group Chief Financial Officer must establish protocols for these major developments to enable them to be considered for approval by the Corporation. These must set out the information that is required for each proposed development as well as the financial criteria that they are required to meet. They are summarised at Appendix 4.

1.8. Novel, contentious and repercussive transactions

Transactions by colleges or their subsidiaries that may be considered novel, contentious and/or repercussive must always be referred to DfE for prior approval. If supported, DfE will refer to HMT for final consent.

1.8.1. Novel transactions are those of which a college has no experience or which are outside its range of normal business.

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1.8.2. Contentious transactions are those that might cause controversy or criticism of the corporation by Parliament, the public or the media.

1.8.3. Repercussive transactions are those that set a precedent or are likely to cause pressure on other colleges to take a similar approach, and hence have wider financial implications.

If a transaction could reasonably be considered to be novel, contentious or repercussive, then it must be treated as such.

2. Financial Control

2.1. Budgetary control

The control of income and expenditure within an agreed budget is the responsibility of the designated Budget Holder, who must ensure that day-to-day monitoring is undertaken effectively.

Budget Holders are responsible to their Executive member for the income and expenditure appropriate to their budget.

Significant departures from agreed budgetary targets must be reported immediately to the Group Chief Financial Officer, Head of Finance or College Principal by the Budget Holder concerned and, if necessary, corrective action taken.

2.2. Financial information

The Budget Holders are assisted in their duties by management information provided by the Head of Finance. The types of management information available to the different levels of management are described in the detailed Financial Procedures, together with the timing at which they can be expected. The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for supplying budgetary reports on all aspects of the Group's finances to the Corporation on a basis determined by the Corporation but subject to any specific requirements of the Designated Funding Bodies. These reports are presented to the Corporation, which has overall responsibility for the Group's finances, by the Group Chief Financial Officer.

2.3. Changes to the approved budget

Changes proposed to the approved budget must be made to the Corporation, unless they fall within the delegated approval arrangements, as set out in Appendix 1.

2.4. Virement

Where a Budget Holder is responsible for pay and non-pay budgets, in-year virement is allowed within each of these categories and from pay to non-pay. Virement from non-pay to pay budgets or between different Budget Holders may only be made with the prior approval of the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance.

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for submitting requests for virement of resources above £500,000 to the Corporation for approval.

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Where monies are allocated from the College's Capital budget for a specific purpose, the monies must be used for that purpose. Virement may only be made with the prior approval of the Group Chief Financial Officer.

2.5. Treatment of year-end balances

At the year end, Budget Holders will not normally have the authority to carry forward a balance on their budget to the following year, unless the Group Chief Financial Officer has approved a specific scheme for carrying forward all or part of unspent amounts, or unless it relates to funds received for a specific activity in the future. Any amounts carried forward must be in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

E. FINANCIAL REPORTING

1. Financial year

The College's financial year runs from 1 August until 31 July the following year.

2. Basis of accounting

The consolidated Financial Statements are prepared on the historical cost basis of accounting and in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

3. Format of the Financial Statements

The Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting for Further and Higher Education, 2019 (the 2019 FE HE SORP), subject to any specific requirements of the Funding Bodies, and in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, where that is appropriate.

4. Capitalisation and depreciation

New land and buildings will be recorded in the balance sheet at actual build or acquisition cost, except where they are received as gifts, where they will be recorded at depreciated replacement value. Buildings will be depreciated in equal instalments over their estimated remaining useful life. Land will not be depreciated.

Expenditure incurred on repair, refurbishment or extension of existing buildings will not be capitalised unless it can be demonstrated that the resultant value of the building, on the basis of depreciated replacement value, is greater than the current net book value.

Expenditure incurred on the acquisition of assets other than land and buildings will be recorded in the balance sheet where the acquisition cost per item is £1,000 or more. Grouped items (e.g. a suite of computers) with an individual value of less than £1,000, but a group value of £1,000 or more, will also be capitalised. Capitalised assets other than land and buildings will be depreciated as follows:

- Motor vehicles – 5 years
- Computer equipment – 5 years
- Other equipment – 5 years

5. Accounting records

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the retention of financial documents. These must be kept in a form that is acceptable to the relevant authorities.

The Group is required by law to retain prime documents for six years. These include:

- official purchase orders
- paid invoices
- accounts raised
- bank statements
- copies of receipts

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- paid cheques
- payroll records, including part-time contracts.

The Group Chief Financial Officer must make appropriate arrangements for the retention of electronic financial records, ensuring that these arrangements enable the Group to comply with GDPR and Freedom of Information requirements.

Members of staff must ensure that retention arrangements comply with any specific requirements of funding organisations.

Additionally, for auditing and other purposes, other financial documents must be retained for three years or as determined by the funding organisation.

6. Public access

Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Corporation must supply information, reasonably requested by external organisations and individuals. Details as to the College's compliance and response to requests for information are contained within the Group Freedom of Information Policy. The SGS Group Freedom of Information Policy also contains details as to the definitions adopted in relation to the model publication scheme and any charges levied for information made available under that publication scheme. The Group Freedom of Information Policy complies fully with obligations laid out within our funding agreement with the Education and Skills Funding Agency. However, please note that matters contained within the Conditions of Funding (Grant) (for Colleges) may render some information exempt or otherwise confidential; and these conditions override our model publication scheme.

By virtue of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 these provisions also apply to SGS Commercial Services as a wholly owned subsidiary of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College.

Under the terms of the Charities Act 2022, the Corporation is required, within two months of a request, to provide any person with reasonable access to the College's most recent financial statements. Therefore, the College's financial statements will be published on the College website or made otherwise reasonably available following payment of a reasonable fee, charged at the discretion of the Group Chief Financial Officer.

SGS Commercial Services does not have charitable status. However, the College will provide any person with reasonable access to the most recent financial statements, relating to SGS Commercial Services, on request and following payment of a reasonable fee, charged at the discretion of the Group Chief Financial Officer.

7. Taxation

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for advising Budget Holders, in the light of guidance issued to the Group by the appropriate bodies, and of relevant legislation as it applies, on all taxation issues relevant to the Group. The Group Chief Financial Officer will issue instructions to departments on compliance with statutory requirements including those concerning VAT, PAYE, national insurance, corporation tax and import duty.

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The Head of Finance is responsible for maintaining the Group's tax records, making all tax payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by their due date as appropriate.

8. Control Accounts

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring the following reconciliations are performed each month, and that any reconciling or balancing amounts are cleared:

- Sales ledgers control account;
- Purchase ledger control account;
- Payroll control account;
- All suspense accounts and
- Bank balance per the nominal ledger to the bank statement.

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring there are processes in place to review all reconciliations and documentary evidence of such a review. Any unusual or long outstanding reconciling items must be brought to the attention of the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance. The reconciliations will not be performed and confirmed by the same staff member.

9. Management Accounts

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring the prompt and accurate preparation of monthly management accounts and the accompanying commentary. These will be completed by the tenth working day of the following month and, after review by the Group Chief Financial Officer or College Principal, shall be circulated to all members of the Corporation and made available to the funding agency and bank as required. Detailed cost centre reports will be made available to all Budget Holders through the main Finance system.

10. Reserves

10.1. Purpose

10.1.1. The purpose of the reserves policy is to ensure the stability of the Group's operations, to protect it from the impact of unplanned large expenditure and to enable it to plan for the future. The Group holds reserves to make sufficient provision for future cash flow requirements, to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies, to take advantage of new opportunities, and to build up funding for planned future capital projects.

10.1.2. To provide maximum flexibility to longer-term plans, Colleges are able to carry forward any surpluses at year end without limit, including for investment in capital assets.

10.2. General Reserve

Unrestricted funds are funds that do not have restriction as to their use. These Reserves can be used to smooth the impact of uneven cashflows or can be held in the case of unexpected events or emergencies.

10.3. Restricted Fixed Asset Reserve

Restricted fixed asset reserves are resources which are held for capital reinvestment in further fixed assets, (see section J Asset, 5.2).

The use of the Restricted Fixed Asset Reserve must be authorized by the Corporation, having due regard to the Group's Estates Strategy.

10.4. Pension Reserve

The pension reserve is the surplus or deficit of the value of the College's portion of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

10.5. Level of General Reserves

The level of the General Reserve will be based upon a risk assessment of the Group's main areas of income and expenditure and consider any provisions and contingencies that may be required. Items to be considered can include:

- Contractual inflation greater than budgeted
- Unexpected essential repairs or maintenance work
- Unplanned capital works.

10.6. Designation of Reserves

The Group must build and maintain sufficient working balances to cover the key risks it faces and must keep a minimum balance to pay one month's average administration expenses, including staff salaries, at all times.

The use of General Reserves must be authorised by the Corporation, having regard to this policy and the Group's financial health.

F. Audit Requirements

1. General

External auditors and internal auditors have authority to:

- access Group premises at reasonable times;
- access all assets, records, documents and correspondence relating to any financial and other transactions of the Group;
- require and receive such explanations as are necessary concerning any matter under examination;
- require any employee of the Group to account for cash, stores or any other Group property under his or her control;
- access records belonging to third parties, such as contractors, when required.

The Head of Finance is responsible for drawing up a timetable for final accounts purposes and will advise staff and the external auditors accordingly.

The Financial Statements must be reviewed by the Audit Committee and on the recommendation of the Audit Committee, they will be submitted to the Corporation for approval.

2. Financial Statements Audit

The appointment of external auditors for the main Financial Statements of the Group is reviewed annually, in line with the provisions of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, and is the responsibility of the Corporation. The Corporation will be advised by the Audit Committee.

The primary role of the external audit is to report on the Group's Financial Statements, and to carry out such examination of the statements and underlying records and control systems as are necessary for the external auditors to reach an opinion on the statements and to report on the appropriate use of funds. Their duties must be in accordance with advice set out in the Designated Funding Body's Post-16 Audit Code of Practice and the International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), Auditing Practices Board.

3. Internal audit

The Internal Auditor is appointed by the Corporation on the recommendation of the Audit Committee. The appointment is reviewed annually.

The main responsibility of internal audit is to provide the Corporation, the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal and the Executive team with assurances on the adequacy of the internal control system, governance, and the management of risk.

The internal audit service remains independent in its planning and operation but has direct access to the Corporation, Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal, College Principal and Chair of the Audit Committee. The formal responsibilities of internal audit are detailed in Section C. The internal auditor will also comply with the Auditing Practices Board's auditing guideline: Guidance for Internal Auditors.

4. Value for money

It is a requirement of the Financial Memoranda that the Corporation is responsible for delivering value for money from public funds. It must keep under review its arrangements for managing all the resources under its control, taking into account guidance on good practice issued from time to time by the Designated Funding Body, HM Treasury, the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee or other relevant bodies.

Internal audit must have regard to value for money in its programme of work. This will be used to enable the Audit Committee to refer to value for money in its Annual Report.

5. Other auditors

The College may, from time to time, be subject to audit or investigation by external bodies such as the Funding Bodies, National Audit Office, European Court of Auditors and HM Revenue and Customs. They have the same rights of access as external and internal auditors.

G. Treasury Management

1. Treasury management policy

The Corporation is responsible for approving a treasury management policy statement setting out a strategy and policies for cash management, long-term investments and borrowings. This will be based on CIPFA's Treasury Management in Higher Education: A Statement of Best Practice and will require compliance with HMT: Managing Public Money and the Designated Funding Bodies' rules regarding approval for any secured or unsecured loans. The Corporation has a responsibility to ensure implementation, monitoring and review of such policies.

Executive decisions concerning borrowing, investment or financing (within policy parameters agreed by the Corporation) are delegated to the Group Chief Financial Officer and an appropriate reporting system set up. All borrowing must be undertaken in the name of the College or one of its subsidiary undertakings. The Group Chief Financial Officer and their staff must act in accordance with CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice (Revised 2021).

The Group Chief Financial Officer must report to the Corporation annually on the activities of the treasury management operation and on the exercise of treasury management powers delegated to him or her.

2. Appointment of bankers and other professional advisers

The Corporation is responsible for the appointment of the Group's bankers and other professional financial advisers (such as investment managers). The appointment must be for a specified period after which consideration must be given to competitively tendering the service.

3. Banking arrangements

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible, on behalf of the Corporation, for liaising with the Group's bankers in relation to the Group's bank accounts. The College does not hold or issue cheques.

Only the Group Chief Financial Officer or the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal may open or close a bank account for dealing with the Group's funds. All bank accounts must be in the name of the College or its subsidiary undertaking.

All automated transfers on behalf of the Group, such as BACS or CHAPS, must be authorised in the appropriate manner and on the basis approved by the Corporation as detailed in Appendix 1.

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring that all bank accounts are subject to regular reconciliation and that large or unusual items are investigated as appropriate.

4. Private Sector Borrowing

The College may borrow from private sector sources only if the transaction delivers better value for money for the Exchequer. Private sector borrowing refers to any borrowing from

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commercial lenders but also loans from local authorities and any other non-public sector organisations.

Any amendments to existing borrowing or any new borrowing which increase private sector interest costs are unlikely to be compliant.

The College must obtain the written consent of the DfE before entering into any amendment to arrangements for existing borrowing within the scope of MPM and provide evidence how the change meets HMT: Managing Public Money rules. This includes, but is not limited to, changes relating to the term of a loan, repayment profile change, interest rate change outside of the existing agreement terms and providing additional security.

New finance arrangements will be subject to MPM rules and colleges are required to obtain the written consent of the Secretary of State, before entering into new arrangements for borrowing money or for any amendment to such arrangements, in advance of committing to any new private sector borrowing.

H. Income

1. Systems

1.1. Procedures

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures are in operation to enable the Group to receive all income to which it is entitled. All receipt forms, invoices, tickets or other official documents in use and electronic collection systems must have the prior approval of the Group Chief Financial Officer.

Levels of charges for contract research, services rendered, goods supplied and rents and lettings are determined by procedures approved by the College Principal or Group Chief Financial Officer.

The Head of Finance is responsible for the prompt collection, security and banking of all income received.

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring that all grants notified by the Funding Bodies and other bodies are received and appropriately recorded in the College's accounts.

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring that all claims for funds, including research grants and contracts, are made by the due date.

1.2. Maximisation of income

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that revenue to the Group is maximised by the efficient application of agreed procedures for the identification, collection and banking of income. In particular, this requires the prompt notification to the Group Chief Financial Officer or relevant member of the Finance team, of sums due so that collection can be initiated.

2. Receipt of cash, cheques and other negotiable instruments

All monies received within departments from whatever source must be recorded by the department on a daily basis together with the form in which they were received, for example debit/credit card payment, cash and cheques.

All monies received must be paid to the Income Team promptly, and in accordance with a timetable set out in the Financial Procedures. The custody and transit of all monies received must comply with the requirements of the Group's insurers.

All sums received must be paid in and accounted for in full, and must not be used to meet miscellaneous departmental expenses or be paid into any departmental petty cash float. Personal or other cheques must not be cashed out of money received on behalf of the Group.

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2.1. Receipts by credit or debit card

The College may only receive payments by debit or credit card using procedures approved by the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance.

2.2. Internet receipts

Any member of staff wishing to arrange for payment to be made to the Group via the internet must seek guidance from the Finance Department at an early stage. A Fee Payment Gateway is in place for collection of student fees via debit or credit card, as well as a Payment Portal for the collection of miscellaneous income where an invoice is not raised (e.g. non-essential trips).

3. Collection of debts

The Head of Finance must ensure that:

- debtor's invoices are raised promptly on official invoices, in respect of all income due to the Group;
- invoices are prepared with care, recorded in the ledger, show the correct amount due and are credited to the appropriate income account;
- any credits granted are valid, properly authorised and completely recorded;
- VAT is correctly charged where appropriate, and accounted for;
- monies received are posted to the correct debtors account;
- swift and effective action is taken in collecting overdue debts, in accordance with the protocols detailed in the Financial Procedures;
- outstanding debts and sales ledger credits are monitored and reports prepared for management.

3.1. Credit Arrangements

Only the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance can implement credit arrangements and indicate the periods in which different types of invoice must be paid. These are contained within the College's Fees & Refunds Policy and HE Fee & Bursary Policy, which are approved annually by the Corporation. Any subsequent changes must be submitted to Corporation for approval.

3.2. Bad Debts

Requests to write off debts in excess of £3,000 must be referred in writing to the College Principal or Group Chief Financial Officer for consideration. Debts below this level may be written off with the permission of the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance.

All bad debts written off must be reported to the Audit Committee annually.

Before proposing a write-off, the Group must consider and clearly document (with legal advice as appropriate): The circumstances, cost effectiveness, good/bad faith, consistency, timing, fraud and internal controls.

The Group should maintain an up-to-date record of losses, which includes:

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- the nature, gross amount and cause of each loss, and
- the action taken, total recoveries and date of write-off, where appropriate.

DfE consent to a write-off will be required if the individual loss/write-off exceeds 1% of annual income or £45k individually (whichever is smaller), or 5% of annual income cumulatively (subject to a £250k cumulative ceiling).

3.3. Student fees

The procedures for collecting tuition fees must be approved by the Group Chief Financial Officer. He or she is responsible for ensuring that all student fees due to the College are received.

Students who have not paid their fees should be prevented from re-enrolling at the College and from using any of the College's facilities unless appropriate arrangements have been made for the payment of the outstanding fees. Students who have not paid their fees may be withdrawn from their course, in accordance with the protocols detailed in the Financial Procedures

3.4. Student loans

Appropriate records must be maintained to support all transactions involving student loans.

3.5. Emergency/hardship loans

Any College schemes for emergency/hardship loans for Students and Staff should be approved by the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal.

This includes the maximum assistance that can be given in any individual case. Under no circumstances must payments be made other than in accordance with the approved schemes.

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for ensuring the adequacy of the systems in place for:

- approving loans in accordance with the scheme
- paying loans that have been approved
- recovering loans that have been paid.

4. Other Income-Generating Activity

4.1. Private consultancies and other paid work

Unless otherwise stated in a member of staff's contract:

- outside consultancies or other paid work must not be accepted without the consent of the Director of People & Organisational Culture – HR;
- applications for permission to undertake work as a purely private activity must be submitted to the Director of People & Organisational Culture - HR, as appropriate, and include the following information:

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- the name of the member(s) of staff concerned
- the title of the project and a brief description of the work involved
- the proposed start date and duration of the work
- full details of any College resources required (for the calculation of the full economic cost)
- an undertaking that the work will not interfere with the teaching and normal College duties of the member(s) of staff concerned.

4.2. Full Cost Recovery Courses

In this context a full cost recovery course is any course which does not include the receipt of any public funding.

Any staff wishing to run a full costs recovery course must have the permission of their Assistant Principal. The course organiser will be responsible to the Assistant Principal for day-to-day management of the course.

4.3. Lease/Rental Income

All proposals for leasing College property must comply with the Group Lettings Policy. If the lease is required to be enacted by the Deed, approval to apply the Corporation Seal must be obtained from Corporation.

4.4. Subcontracting (Partnership activity)

All subcontract arrangements, whereby a third party organisation delivers ESFA funded provision on behalf of the College, must be in accordance with the current Subcontracting Policy, which is updated annually in line with the current ESFA Subcontracting rules and approved by Corporation.

4.5. European Union (EU) and other matched funding

Any European Union or match funded project requires the approval of the College Principal or Group Chief Financial Officer prior to any commitment being entered into. Such approval should be dependent upon the relevant Budget Holder being able to demonstrate that eligible matching funds are available and that the project is financially viable by the application of the College's Costing and Pricing Model.

Individual applications for funds in excess of £100,000 must be the subject of a report by the College Principal to the Corporation which will set out, amongst other things, the potential risks generated by the project. Assurance that the College is dealing with a fit and proper organisation is important, therefore, a due diligence review on the contracting party should take place if deemed appropriate by the College Principal or Group Chief Financial Officer.

If the College sub-contracts such work to external providers, the relevant Budget Holder must ensure that:

- this is on the basis of a written contract which allows for full audit access to detailed records;
- appropriate monitoring procedures are in place to ensure that the outputs are achieved and the provision is of suitable quality;

- payments are only made against detailed invoices.

4.6. Profitability and recovery of overheads

All other income-generating activities must be self-financing or surplus generating unless it is intended that a new course is to be launched as a loss leader. If that is the case, the reason for it must be specified and agreed by the Budget Holder and the Group Chief Financial Officer.

Other income-generating activities organised by members of staff must be costed and agreed with the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance before any commitments are made. Provision must be made for charging both direct, indirect and overhead costs in accordance with the College's Costing and Pricing Model.

4.7. Deficits

Any unplanned deficits incurred on other income-generating activities will be charged to departmental/faculty funds.

4.8. Additional contributions to departments

Distribution of any surpluses from other income-generating activity between central funds of the College and individual departments must be approved by the Group Chief Financial Officer.

4.9. Additional payments to staff

Any proposal that involves additional payments to members of staff must be supported by a schedule of titles and values and reasons for such payments and must be recommended by the Budget Holder, and in the case of a Budget Holder, the relevant Executive member, for approval by the College Principal or Group Chief Financial Officer in advance of any work being undertaken.

5. Intellectual Property Rights and Patents

5.1. General

Certain activities undertaken within the Group including research and consultancy may give rise to ideas, designs and inventions which may be patentable. These are collectively known as intellectual property.

5.2. Patents

The College Principal is responsible for establishing procedures to deal with any patents accruing to the Group from inventions and discoveries made by staff in the course of their research.

5.3. Intellectual property rights

In the event of the Group deciding to become involved in the commercial exploitation of inventions and research, the matter must then proceed in accordance with the intellectual property procedures issued by the Group.

I. PURCHASING AND PAYMENTS

1. Scheme of delegation/financial authorities

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for making payments to suppliers of goods and services to the Group.

The Head of Department is responsible for purchases within his or her department. Purchasing authority may be delegated to named individuals within the department. In exercising this delegated authority, Budget Holders must observe the Financial Regulations and Procedures. Budget Holders are set up as such within the core Finance system, enabling purchases to be placed against the cost centre codes and budgets authorised for their use. New Budget Holders requires the approval of the Group Chief Financial Officer or the Head of Finance.

Under procedures agreed by the Group Chief Financial Officer, Finance department control must be exercised over the creation of requisitioners and authorisers and their respective financial limits.

The Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance must be notified immediately of any changes to the authorities to commit expenditure.

Heads of Department and Budget Holders are not authorised to commit the Group to expenditure without first reserving sufficient funds from their budget to meet the purchase cost.

The member of staff (or Budget Holder) authorising the invoice for payment must be different from the member of staff responsible for signing or electronically approving the purchase order request.

Approval limits and requirements are detailed in Appendix 1 – Summary of Financial Limits.

2. Procurement

The Group requires all Budget Holders, irrespective of the source of funds, to obtain supplies, equipment and services at the lowest possible cost consistent with quality, delivery requirements and sustainability, and in accordance with sound business practice.

The Procurement Manager is responsible to the Group Chief Financial Officer for:

- approving any new suppliers or contractors;
- ensuring that the Group's purchasing guidelines details in the Financial Regulations and Procedures is known and observed by all involved in purchasing for the Group;
- advising on matters of Group purchasing guidelines and practice;
- advising and assisting departments where required on specific departmental purchases;
- developing appropriate standing supply arrangements on behalf of the Group to assist Budget Holders in meeting their value for money obligations;
- supporting with procurement process for all orders above £30,000;

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- negotiating all large-scale purchase contracts (generally in excess of £50,000) undertaken by the Group, in collaboration with the responsible department;
- ensuring that the Group complies with EU regulations on Public Procurement. .

Staff involved in procurement exercises for and on behalf of the Group, should keep records that show a clear audit trail of how conflicts of interest have been identified and managed as part of procurement processes. At every stage of procurement, steps should be taken to identify and manage conflicts of interest, to ensure and to protect the integrity of the process.

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring that all new suppliers and contractors are approved, ensuring IR35 compliance where applicable.

Budget Holders are responsible for ensuring that expenditure within their budget units does not exceed funds available.

3. Purchase orders

The ordering of goods and services must be in accordance with the Group's Financial Procedures.

Official College or subsidiary orders must be placed for the purchase of all goods or services, except those made using corporate credit cards pre-loaded cash cards, the ePayment system, or any other payment method in operation approved by the Group Chief Financial Officer. In exceptional circumstances, urgent orders may be given verbally, but must be confirmed by an official purchase order endorsed 'confirmation order only' not later than the following working day.

Official orders must be issued to suppliers for all goods and services with the exception of utilities and certain other services approved by the Group Chief Financial Officer, as set out in Appendix 3.

It is the responsibility of the Group Chief Financial Officer to ensure that all purchase orders refer to the College's Conditions of Contract.

4. Corporate cards

Corporate cards include credit cards, procurement cards, pre-payment cards and ePayments.

The operation and control of the Group's corporate cards is the responsibility of the Group Chief Financial Officer.

The cards or access to ePayment system is provided to staff who require the flexibility that such payment methods offers. Budget Holders should nominate staff to be card holders or payment system users. The Head of Finance is responsible for setting procedures for the approval and issuing of corporate cards or payment system access to staff.

Holders of corporate cards must use them only for the purposes for which they have been issued, on valid business expenses and within the authorised purchase limits. Cards must not be loaned to another person, nor must they be used for personal or private purchases. The misuse of such cards will be grounds for disciplinary action. Cardholders must obtain

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approval to purchase from the relevant Budget Holder and must ensure that there is sufficient budget available to meet the costs.

The Head of Finance is responsible for setting in place a system to monitor the use of Group corporate cards and other payment systems and account for expenses charged through them. He, she or they must determine what information is required on purchases made with corporate cards from cardholders and deadlines for receipt in the Finance Department to enable financial control to be maintained and cardholders must provide that information. The Head of Finance must ensure a register is maintained of all cardholders, card numbers and location. Any changes to these details must be notified to the Finance Operations Manager.

Further details of the operation of the payment schemes are set out in the Financial Procedures.

5. Tenders and quotations

Budget Holders must comply with the Group's tendering and quotation requirements as set out in Appendix 1 and the Group's tendering procedures contained in the Group's Financial Procedures.

Only partnership arrangements for the supply of goods or services specifically approved by the Corporation will fall outside these arrangements for tenders and quotations.

The Procurement Manager must be engaged to advise on proposed spend on goods or services in excess of £30k. For spend between £30k and £50k, as a minimum, there is a requirement of at least 3 quotes but the use of frameworks or a formal tender process may be recommended. For spend in excess of £50k, the Group must use a framework or formal tender process.

The Group Chief Financial Officer or the Head of Finance are authorised to waive the Financial Regulations with respect to tenders and quotations where the interests of the Group are best served by so doing. This authorisation is strictly subject to the following provisions:

- approval must be obtained prior to placing the orders;
- where the Group Chief Financial Officer places or authorises the order, then the waiver (Procurement Validation Form) must be authorised by the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal or College Principal;
- where the Head of Finance places or authorises the order, then the waiver must be authorised by the Group Chief Financial Officer (or College Principal in their absence);
- all waivers for goods and services exceeding £30,000 must be reported to the Audit Committee;
- The Audit Committee may restrict the circumstances under which a waiver may be granted.

Requests to seek such exceptions must be made in writing to the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance who shall retain records of all agreed exceptions for six years for inspection by the Internal Audit Service.

Normally waivers will relate to such matters as where the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance is satisfied that goods or services are:

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- only available from one source and no satisfactory alternatives exist;
- are controlled prices by Government order or trade practice;
- urgently required and delay would cause organisational disruption;
- where unforeseeable additional work is discovered during a contract, taking the total price above the original category in regard of quotations or tenders.

Occasionally it may be necessary to engage a consultant directly without entering into a competitive selection process. Approval must be given by the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance in advance. Examples of when this may be necessary include:

- No other known or available consultants are capable of providing the service at the level of expertise required;
- The task is so time limited that there is insufficient opportunity to go through the competitive process;
- The work is an essential extension of the consultant's existing work and the total value of the work does not exceed £30,000;
- The consultant has previously been engaged on a project within the Group and has extensive background knowledge of past and current work required.

5.1. Post-tender negotiations

Post-tender negotiations (i.e. after receipt of formal tenders but before signing of contracts) with a view to improving price, delivery or other tender terms may be entered into, provided:

- it will not put other tenderers at a disadvantage
- it will not affect their confidence and trust in the Group's tendering process

In each case, a statement of justification must be approved by the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance prior to the event, showing:

- background to the procurement
- reasons for proposing post-tender negotiations
- demonstration of the improved value for money.

All post-tender negotiations must be reported to the Audit Committee.

5.2. Framework Agreements

Frameworks usually have 1-6 suppliers who have already tendered on price and quality. A further competition of these suppliers of 'call-off' can result in lower prices, due to the bulk spends negotiated as part of these frameworks. Where a framework agreement is utilised, this must be processed through the Procurement Manager in accordance with Appendix 1.

5.3. Public Contracts Regulations 2015

The Procurement Manager is responsible for ensuring the College complies with its legal obligations concerning The Public Contract Regulations 2015. The Public Contract Regulations 2015 apply to written contracts for all forms of procurement,

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purchase or hire (whether or not hire purchase) with a total value exceeding a threshold value of £213,477 for Goods and Services and £5,336,937 for Works.

The 2015 Regulations apply if:

- a contract is being procured which meets the definition of a "public service contract", "public supply contract" or "public works contract" in the 2015 Regulations; and
- the body procuring it is a "contracting authority" for the purposes of the 2015 Regulations; and
- the value of the contract is over the relevant value threshold

If the contract is for one of the "light touch regime" services expressly listed at Schedule 3 (for example, health, social, education, cultural, legal and catering services) then the 2015 Regulations will only apply if its value is over a higher threshold of £663,540.

Whilst the EU Directives on public procurement no longer bind the UK, they are a part of UK law in the form of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("PCR 2015") and will continue to be so until the Procurement Regulations bill passes through parliament in 2024. However, the PCR 2015 have been amended by The Public Procurement (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, in order to create a UK based procurement regime. The amendments remove obligations and references to the Directives and replace them with UK based equivalents.

The thresholds are detailed in Appendix 1.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure that their members of staff comply with The Public Contract Regulations 2015 by notifying the Procurement Manager of any purchase that is likely to exceed the thresholds. This must be done well in advance in order to permit advertisements in the Find a Tender Service portal, which replaced *Official Journal of the European Union* (OJEU). Alternatively, the College may complete a further competition through a framework, which has already met The Public Contract Regulations and are common place in Education.

The Group Chief Financial Officer is also required to submit to the Designated Funding Body annually where relevant, details on expenditure which exceeds the threshold.

6. Building Contracts

Building contracts over the value of £500,000 are the responsibility of the Corporation and require approval from the Corporation.

Proposals must be initiated by the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal in respect of planned replacements, general improvement schemes, space planning or in response to requests from departments.

Consultants may be appointed if the project is too large or too specialised to be managed internally. Appointments must be subject to tendering and other procedures where appropriate.

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Proposals must be presented in the form of costings or investment appraisals prepared in conjunction with the Group Chief Financial Officer as appropriate for Corporation consideration. Assurance that the Group is dealing with a fit and proper organisation is important, therefore, a due diligence review on the contracting party should take place if deemed appropriate by the Group Chief Financial Officer.

Investment appraisals must comply with appropriate Designated Funding Body guidance.

Following consideration by the Corporation, submissions must be forwarded to the Designated Funding Body where appropriate. If the required agreement is secured from the Designated Funding Body, Designated Funding Body procedural rules must be followed. Designated Funding Body guidance on best practice must be followed even when Designated Funding Body approval is not required.

The achievement of value for money must be an objective in the awarding of all contracts.

Conditions of contract for the purchase of goods must be followed as described in the Group's detailed Financial Procedures.

7. Receipt of goods and services

All goods must be received at designated receipt and distribution points. They must be checked for quantity and/or weight and inspected for quality and specification.

Whenever possible goods received must be recorded as such on the Finance system on the day of receipt. If the goods are deemed to be unsatisfactory, the record must be marked accordingly and the supplier immediately notified so that they can be collected for return as soon as possible. Where goods are short on delivery, the record must be marked accordingly and the supplier immediately notified.

All persons receiving goods on behalf of the Group must be independent of those who and authorised the official order.

The Group requires all Budget Holders, irrespective of the source of funds, to obtain suppliers, equipment and services at the lowest possible cost consistent with quality, delivery requirements and sustainability, and in accordance with sound business practice.

8. Payment

8.1. Payment of invoices

The procedures for making all payments must be in a form specified by the Head of Finance.

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring processes are in place to identify the most appropriate method of payment for categories of invoice. Payments to UK suppliers will normally be made by BACS transfer every 7-10 working days. In exceptional circumstances bank transfers may be made for urgent payments to suppliers.

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Suppliers must be instructed by the Budget Holder to submit invoices for goods or services to the Finance Department, electronically via email to: purchase.ledger@sgscol.ac.uk

Care must be taken by the Budget Holder to ensure that discounts receivable are obtained. Payments will only be made against invoices that can be matched to a receipted order.

Receipting of an electronic order will ensure that:

- the goods have been received, examined and approved with regard to quality and quantity, or that services rendered or work done is satisfactory;
- where appropriate, it is matched to the order;
- invoice details (quantity, price discount) are correct;
- the invoice is arithmetically correct;
- the invoice has not previously been passed for payment.

Finance staff and others dealing with any changes to suppliers' details should be made aware of the risk of fraud in this area. Staff should also be advised that they must be careful about the information they give out to callers regarding the organisation's payment processes and any unique supplier identifiers which may be held. Such callers may not be genuine and may help the fraudsters by making their subsequent requests more authentic looking.

8.2. Staff reimbursement

The College's purchasing and payments procedures are in place to enable the majority of goods and services supplied to be procured through the creditors system without staff having to incur any personal expense. However, on occasion, staff may incur expenses, most often in relation to travel and subsistence, and are entitled to reimbursement (see section K – Employment of Staff) and must be claimed through the Group's Expenses system through Payroll.

Staff on College apprenticeships may be reimbursed where courses state that membership of an organisation is required, e.g. CIPD and AAT.

8.3. Petty cash / cash

As the College aims to be as cashless as possible, no petty cash facilities are available outside of the one held in the Finance Department, including Money Management Service (MMS), which is used for emergency hardship payments to learners (i.e. travel costs). Instead pre-paid cards are available to departments who can justify to the Finance Operations Manager or Head of Finance their requirement to hold one (see section 4).

Occasionally fundraising activities are organised within the College and whilst a loan of a credit/debit card machine is available from the Finance Department, it is accepted that some payers still want to pay in cash. Cash floats are available and can be pre-arranged from the Finance Department for such activities.

9. Late payment rules

The Public Contract Regulations 2015 include a requirement for contracting authorities to have regard to Crown Commercial Services guidance on the selection of suppliers and the award of contracts, and to ensure that suppliers pay their subcontractors within 30 days. Key points are:

- small businesses can charge interest on overdue, undisputed invoices
- the rate of interest is currently 8% per annum above the official daily rate of the Bank of England
- the Act also applies to overseas organisations
- the College can be sued for non-payment.

In view of the penalties in this Act, the Corporation requires that invoices must be passed for payment as soon as they are received.

10. Project advances

The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring processes are in place for the approval of pre-payment cards for projects and activities (e.g. College trips) carried out away from the College where pre-booking/payment may be unavoidable.

Other forms of payment must be used wherever possible, such as an official purchase order and subsequent payment or a College purchasing card.

Receipts or paid invoices must be retained for all sums expended in this way. Upon completion of the project to which the advance relates, within one month a final account must be prepared to demonstrate how the advance was disbursed and any unspent balance repaid. Under no circumstances will a second advance be approved when the final accounting for an earlier advance to a project or individual is outstanding.

11. Providing hospitality

Staff entertaining guests from outside bodies should use the College's catering facilities. Where this is not the case, reasons must be stated when submitting a claim for reimbursement.

J. ASSETS

1. Purchase of fixed assets

- 1.1.** The purchase, lease or rent of land, buildings or fixed plant by the College must only be undertaken with authority from the Corporation and with reference to the Designated Funding Body requirements where exchequer-funded assets or exchequer funds are involved.
- 1.2.** The purchase of land, buildings or fixed plant by the College's subsidiary undertaking, must only be undertaken with authority from the Board of Directors and with reference to the requirements within the Memorandum between the College and its subsidiary undertaking.

2. Leases

Where the Group is entering into an agreement to lease land, buildings or equipment, budget holders must comply with approval requirements as detailed in Appendix 1: Summary of Financial Limits and the Group Lettings Policy.

If the lease is required to be enacted by Deed, approval to apply the Corporation Seal must be obtained from Corporation.

Licences are in the main an operational consideration and therefore follow the usual Financial Limits as per Appendix 1. Additional approvals may be required depending on the length of the licence as detailed in the Group Lettings Policy.

3. Control of assets, stocks and stores

3.1. Fixed asset register

The Head of Finance is responsible for maintaining the Group's registers of land, buildings, fixed plant and machinery. Budget Holders must provide the Head of Finance with any information he or she may need to maintain the registers.

3.2. Custody and control of stocks and stores

Budget Holders are responsible for establishing adequate arrangements for the custody and control of stocks and stores within their departments. The systems used for stores accounting in departments must have the approval of the Head of Finance.

Budget Holders are responsible for ensuring that regular inspections and stock checks are carried out. Stocks and stores of a hazardous nature must be subject to appropriate security checks.

Those Budget Holders whose stocks require valuation in the Balance Sheet must ensure that the stock-taking procedures in place have the approval of the Head of Finance and that instructions to appropriate staff within their departments are issued in accordance with advice contained in the College's Financial Procedures.

3.3. All other assets

Budget Holders are responsible for establishing adequate arrangements for the custody and control of all other assets owned by the Group, whether tangible (such as stock – see above) or intangible (such as intellectual property – see Income section), including electronic data.

3.4. Safeguarding assets

Budget Holders are responsible for the care, custody and security of the buildings, stock, stores, furniture, assets and cash under their control. They must consult the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.

Equipment owned by the Group must, so far as is practical, be effectively marked to identify them as Group property.

4. Personal use

Assets owned or leased by the College should not be subject to personal use without authorisation by the Head of Department.

5. Asset disposal

The Group can dispose of fixed assets subject to the following:

The proposed disposal must not be novel, contentious or repercussive, and must maintain the principles of regularity, propriety and value for money.

There are restrictions regarding how the Group may use the proceeds of any fixed asset disposal, depending upon the type of asset:

5.1. Moveable fixed assets

In the case of moveable fixed assets (ie non-land and buildings such as vehicles, equipment, etc) the Group must consider:

- whether the asset or assets concerned have been acquired with the assistance of a grant or donation from a third party, including (but not limited to) DfE and whether the conditions of any such grant or donation set terms relating to the disposal or the use of proceeds of disposal;
- whether there are plans in place to ensure that:
 - investment in moveable fixed assets is sufficient to ensure the ongoing ability of the college to deliver appropriate provision for learners is not depleted, and
 - moveable fixed assets can be replaced and/or upgraded when they reach the end of their economic life, if required.

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Subject to the above, the Group may apply the proceeds of disposal (if any) at its own discretion.

Authorisations from Budget Holder and the Head of Finance or Group Chief Financial Officer must be obtained for the disposal of all Group fixed assets and the Fixed Asset Register must be updated accordingly. Further details are contained within the Financial Procedures.

5.2. Land and buildings

The Group should have an estates strategy that underpins the long-term sustainability of the operation. However, it is recognised that over time certain elements of the estate may become redundant and/or it may make business sense to disinvest in certain elements of the estate and thereby unlock funds to invest in more relevant capital provision. For that reason, in the case of land and buildings (whether freehold or leasehold), the proceeds of disposal must be used for capital reinvestment in further fixed assets and/or to:

- repay loans, to DfE and to banks;
- repay any overpayments of ESFA/DfE grants, or satisfy grant conditions where a repayment to ESFA/DfE is due (for example overage);
- exceptionally, provide working capital for the Group to avoid the risk of insolvency.

If the Group intends to make use of the proceeds of asset disposal for working capital to avoid insolvency, or for any other purpose beyond the permissions outlined above, permission must be obtained from the DfE.

Where approval is not required by DfE, colleges still must be able to show proper scrutiny has been applied to the case. Relevant decisions must be documented and their benefits outlined in a business case.

Disposal of land and buildings must only take place with the authorisation of the Corporation. Designated Funding Body consent may also be required if exchequer funds were involved in the acquisition of the asset.

6. Companies and joint ventures

In certain circumstances it may be advantageous to the College to establish a company or a joint venture to undertake services on behalf of the College. Any member of staff considering the use of a company or a joint venture must first seek the advice of the Group Chief Financial Officer, who must have due regard to guidance issued by the Designated Funding Body and HM Treasury.

Any such proposal may be considered novel, contentious or repercussive by DfE and, as such, must be referred to DfE for prior approval. If supported, DfE will refer to HM Treasury for final consent.

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for advising on the process required in forming a company or a joint venture and arrangements for monitoring and reporting on the activities of these undertakings.

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It is the responsibility of the Corporation to establish the shareholding arrangements and appoint directors of companies wholly or partly owned by the College. These and other arrangements must be set out in a memorandum of understanding.

The directors of companies where the College is the majority shareholder must submit an Annual Report and Financial Statements to the Corporation. They must also submit business plans or budgets as requested to enable the Corporation to assess the risk to the College. The College's internal and external auditors must also be appointed to such companies.

Where the College is the majority shareholder in a company, the Designated Funding Body requires that the company's financial year must be consistent with that of the College.

K. EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF

1. Remuneration policy

All College staff must be appointed to the salary scales approved by the Corporation and in accordance with appropriate conditions of service. All letters of appointment must be issued by the Human Resources department.

Salaries and other benefits for senior post-holders, and other posts documented by the Corporation, will be determined by the Corporation on the recommendation of the Remuneration Committee.

2. Appointment of staff

All contracts of service must be concluded in accordance with the College's approved Human Resources Policies and Procedures and all offers of employment with the College must be made in writing by Human Resources. Budget Holders must ensure that Human Resources is provided promptly with all information they may require in connection with the appointment, resignation or dismissal of employees.

3. Salaries and wages

The Chief Group Services Officer is responsible for all payments of salaries and wages to all staff including payments for overtime or services rendered. All timesheets and other pay documents, including those relating to fees payable to external examiners, visiting lecturers or researchers, must be in a form prescribed or approved by the Chief Group Services Officer.

Salary payments cannot be made in advance of due date for payment.

The Director of Organisation & Culture - HR is responsible for keeping the Chief Group Services Officer or Head of Finance informed of all matters relating to personnel for payroll purposes. In particular these include:

- appointments, resignations, dismissals, supervisions, secondments and transfers
- absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from approved leave
- changes in remuneration including increments and pay awards

The Head of Finance is responsible for payments to non-employees and for informing the appropriate authorities of such payments. All casual and part-time employees must be included on the payroll.

The Chief Group Services Officer is responsible for keeping all records relating to payroll including those of a statutory nature.

All payments must be made in accordance with the payroll section of the Financial Procedures and comply with HM's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regulations.

4. Senior Pay Controls

Colleges fall within the scope of HM Treasury's senior pay controls. Chief Secretary to the Treasury approval is required for any new or amended reward packages that fall within scope of the controls:

4.1. New appointments – Chief Executive Officer or equivalent:

- Total remuneration at or above £150,000 (pro-rata equivalent if part time);
- Bonus arrangements exceeding £17,500.

4.2. Existing staff – Chief Executive Officer or equivalent:

- Adjustment of remuneration or Terms and Conditions which take the individual to or above the threshold in 4.1;
- Approval is not required for pay awards up to and including 9% (maximum standard base pay award for Senior Civil Servants). A temporary uplift is permissible for approval of unexpected events up to 3 months.

5. Superannuation schemes

The Corporation is responsible for undertaking the role of employer in relation to appropriate pension arrangements for employees.

The Chief Group Services Officer is responsible for day-to-day superannuation matters, including:

- paying contributions to various authorised superannuation schemes
- preparing the annual return to various superannuation schemes
- administering the superannuation schemes

The Director of Organisation & Culture - HR is responsible for administering eligibility to pension arrangements and for ensuring payroll records are amended accordingly when staff deductions must begin or cease.

6. Travel, subsistence and other allowances

All claims for payment of subsistence allowances, travelling and incidental expenses must be completed in a form approved by the Group Chief Financial Officer and in accordance with the rules set out in the College's Travel, Subsistence and Personal Expenses Policy and Procedure.

Claims by members of staff must be authorised by their line manager. The certification by the line manager will be taken to mean that:

- the journeys were authorised;
- the expenses were properly and necessarily incurred as Group-related business costs;
- the allowances are properly payable by the Group;
- consideration has been given to value for money in choosing the mode of transport;
- the relevant budget holder was approved spend where the line manager is not the budget holder.

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Arrangements for travel by the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal, Clerk, or members of the Corporation or Directors of the College's subsidiary undertaking must be approved by the Chair of the Corporation. Arrangements for travel by the Chair must be approved by the Group Chief Executive Officer and Executive Principal.

7. Overseas travel

All arrangements for overseas travel must be approved by the College Principal in advance of committing the College to those arrangements or confirmation of any travel bookings. Arrangements for overseas travel by the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal, Clerk, or members of the Corporation or Directors of the College's subsidiary undertaking must be approved by the Chair of the Corporation. Arrangements for travel by the Chair must be approved by the Corporation.

Where spouses, partners or other persons unconnected with the Group intend to participate in a trip, this must be clearly identified in the approval request. The Group must receive reimbursement for the expected costs it is asked to cover for those persons in advance of confirming travel bookings.

8. Expenses for Corporation and Board Members

Members are not entitled to payments to attend meetings or for loss of earnings. They are entitled to claim for expenses incurred. These include travel to and from Corporation and Committee meetings, other travelling and subsistence, in accordance with the Group's expenses policy; fees for agreed attendance at conferences or other training events; and other incidental expenses, such as telephone calls, postage and photocopying.

Claims must be submitted through the Clerk to the Corporation and must be authorised by the Chair of the Corporation.

9. Severance and other non-recurring payments

Severance payments must only be made in accordance with relevant legislation and under a scheme approved by the Corporation.

9.1. Special severance payments

Severance payments which are discretionary and additional to those arising from statutory and contractual redundancy or severance terms should only be considered in exceptional cases. Such payments may be permitted when there is a clear, evidenced justification for doing so and when all relevant internal policies and procedures have been followed, and all alternative actions have been fully explored and documented.

DfE's prior approval is required in any of the following circumstances:

- The non-statutory / non-contractual element is the greater of £50k or 3 months' salary;
- Proposed payments linked to a non-disclosure agreement (where supported this would be referred to HMT for final consent).

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- an exit package which includes a special severance payment is at, or above, £100,000; and/or
- the employee earns over £150,000.

9.2. Compensation and Ex gratia payments

Compensation payments provide redress for loss or injury, for example personal injuries, traffic accidents or damage to property. College must base its decision on a careful appraisal, including legal advice where relevant, and ensure value for money where the college is considering a non-contractual payment of £50k or more, DfE's prior approval must be obtained.

Ex gratia payments could include payments to meet hardship caused by official failure or delay, and to avoid legal action due to official inadequacy. Ex gratia transactions must always be referred to DfE for prior approval, whatever the amount.

9.3. Payments

Professional advice should be obtained where necessary. No amounts may be expended that exceed the budget allocated for the purpose. All such payments must be authorised by the College Principal and Group Chief Financial Officer and calculations checked by the Director of Organisation & Culture - HR, Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance. Amounts paid must be disclosed in the Financial Statements.

All matters referred to on industrial tribunal shall be notified to the Group Chief Financial Officer at the earliest opportunity in order that budget provision may be made as necessary. All determination of tribunals must be similarly notified.

L. FUNDS HELD ON TRUST

1. Gifts, benefactions and donations

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for maintaining financial records in respect of gifts, benefactions and donations made to the Group and initiating claims for recovery of tax where appropriate. The Group must not make donations to another charity without it being made in furtherance of its own objects, and any decision around this should be made by the Corporation.

2. Trust funds

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for maintaining a record of the requirements for any trust fund and for advising the Corporation on the control and investment of fund balances.

The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that any College trust funds are operated within any relevant legislation and the specific requirements for each trust. It is also responsible for investment of fund balances.

3. Voluntary funds

The Group Chief Financial Officer must be informed of any fund that is not an official fund of the College which is controlled wholly or in part by a member of staff in relation to their function in the College.

The accounts of any such fund must be audited by an independent external person and must be submitted with a certificate of audit to the appropriate body. The Group Chief Financial Officer will be entitled to verify that this has been done.

4. Bursaries, grants and other authorised expenditure

The Group Chief Financial Officer will prescribe the format for recording the use of learner support funds.

Records of Learner Support funds must be maintained according to the Designated Funding Body requirements.

Payments may be made to students for bursaries, grants and other authorised expenditure. All payments must be supported by detailed claims or other appropriate evidence and approved by Money Management Services personnel or the Budget Holder as appropriate. Policies for bursaries and other students' payments must be approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

M. SECURITY

1. Security

Keys to safes or other similar containers must be retained securely at all times. The loss of any such keys must be reported to the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance immediately. The Head of Finance is responsible for maintaining procedures governing security of and access to information held in safes or other similar secure containers.

The Group IT Director is responsible for maintaining proper security and privacy of information held on the Group's computer network. Appropriate levels of security must be provided, such as passwords for networked computers together with restricted physical access for network servers. Information relating to individuals held on computer is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. Deputy Principal is the Data Protection Officer, nominated to ensure compliance with the Act and the safety of documents.

The Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal is responsible for the safekeeping of official and legal documents relating to the Group. All deeds and lease must be held in an appropriately secure, fireproof location and copies held at a separate location. All other agreements and contracts must be held in secure locations appropriate to the risk of loss. Copies of all leases, agreements and contracts must be forwarded to the Group Chief Financial Officer.

2. Indemnities, guarantees and letters of comfort

Any member of staff asked to give an indemnity, for whatever purpose, must consult the Group Chief Financial Officer before any such indemnity is given. The Group must maintain a contract register, including known indemnity clauses with any necessary assessments.

2.1. Indemnities

An indemnity is a contractual agreement of one party (indemnifier) to accept the risk of damage or loss suffered by another party and to compensate the other party (indemnity holder), due to the actions of the indemnifier or any other party. Indemnities are included in agreements usually to offer protection to one party in agreeing to the contract, if one party cannot fulfil their contractual obligations.

2.2. Letters of comfort

Letters of comfort, however vague, give rise to moral and sometimes legal obligations. They should therefore be treated in the same way as any other proposal, which may give / gives rise to a liability.

2.3. Guarantees

Typically, a guarantee is a commitment provided by a guarantor to take responsibility for the debt or performance obligations of another party in the case of that party defaulting on its obligations.

2.4. DfE Approval requirements

Commercial contracts which, in the normal course of business, include indemnity clauses are not be restricted and DfE consent is not be required.

DfE consent is required in respect of indemnities, guarantees and letters of comfort in excess of:

- 1% of annual income or £45k (whichever is smaller); or
- 5% of annual income cumulatively (subject to a cumulative ceiling of £250k).

For these purposes, income is the budgeted total income for the current year, as approved by the Corporation.

N. RISK & COMPLIANCE

1. Use of the College's seal

The application of the seal of the Corporation shall be authenticated by the signature of any two members authorised either generally or specifically by the Corporation to act for that purpose.

A record of each application of the Seal must be kept by the Clerk to the Corporation and reported to the next meeting of the Corporation.

The Clerk to the Corporation must ensure that the Seal is kept in a safe location.

2. Money Laundering

In response to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds [Information on the Payer] Regulations 2017 the Group and its employees must comply with the legislation and ensure that the highest standards of due diligence are applied in relation to 'know your customer' principles. College staff are required to follow the Anti-Money Laundering Policy if money laundering is suspected. This policy also defines the responsibility of individual employees in the process.

3. Data Protection Act

The College Principal shall be responsible to the Corporation for maintaining proper security and compliance with the Data Protection Act in respect of information held in the computer installations or for their use. It shall be released only to those officers authorised by the College Principal.

4. Code of Conduct

4.1. The Group is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs in a responsible manner, having regard to the principles established by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, which members of staff at all levels are expected to observe. These principles are set out at Appendix 5. In addition, the Group expects that staff at all levels observe its code of conduct, which is outlined within the induction process.

4.2. Additionally, members of the Corporation, Executive, Head of Finance and the Procurement Manager, must disclose interests in the College's Register of Interests maintained by the Clerk to the Corporation. They are also responsible for ensuring that entries in the register relating to them are kept up to date regularly and promptly.

4.3. In particular, no person must be a signatory to a Group contract or authorise a purchase order where he or she also has an interest in the activities of the other party or parties to that contract/order.

5. Insurance

The Group Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the College's insurance arrangements, including the provision of advice on the types of cover available. As part of the overall risk management strategy, all risks must be considered and those most effectively dealt with by insurance cover must be identified. This is likely to include important potential liabilities and provide sufficient cover to meet any potential risk to all assets.

The Procurement Manager is responsible for effecting insurance cover as determined by the Executive. He or she is therefore responsible for obtaining quotes, negotiating claims and maintaining the necessary records. The Procurement Manager must keep a register of all insurances affected by the Group and the property and risks covered.

He or she must also deal with the Group's insurers and advisers about specific insurance problems.

Budget Holders must ensure that any agreements negotiated within their departments with external bodies cover any legal liabilities to which the Group may be exposed. The Procurement Manager's advice must be sought to ensure that this is the case. Budget Holders must give prompt notification to the Procurement Manager of any potential new risks and additional property and equipment that may require insurance and of any alterations affecting existing risks.

Budget Holders must advise the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance immediately of any event that may give rise to an insurance claim. The Group Chief Financial Officer, Head of Finance or Procurement Manager must notify the Group's insurers and, if appropriate, prepare a claim in conjunction with the Budget Holders for transmission to the insurers.

The Head of Estates is responsible for keeping suitable records of plant which is subject to inspection by an insurance company and must ensure that inspection is carried out in the periods prescribed.

All staff using their own vehicles on behalf of the Group must maintain appropriate insurance cover for business use.

6. Risk Management

6.1. The Group acknowledges the risks inherent in its business, and is committed to managing those risks that pose a significant threat to the achievement of its business objectives and financial health. Detailed guidance on the level of risk considered to be acceptable/unacceptable by the Group is set out in a separate risk management policy.

6.2. The Corporation has overall responsibility for ensuring there is a risk management policy and a common approach to the management of risk throughout the College through the development, implementation and embedding within the organisation of a formal, structured risk management process.

6.3. Budget Holders must ensure that any agreements negotiated within their departments with external bodies cover any legal liabilities to which the Group may

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be exposed. The Group Chief Financial Officer's advice must be sought to ensure that this is the case.

7. Receiving gifts or hospitality

It is an offence under the Bribery Act 2010 for members of staff to accept corruptly any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, anything in an official capacity or showing favour or disfavour to any person in an official capacity.

The test should be whether a fair minded member of the public, knowing all the facts, would see anything improper or suspicious in the receipt or offer of hospitality. All staff (howsoever engaged by the Group) are required to:

- refuse gifts, benefits, hospitality or sponsorship of any kind which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity;
- immediately declare (to the Group Chief Financial Officer) and register gifts, hospitality or sponsorship worth £30 or more, whether the offer was refused or accepted;
- modest offers to pay some or all of the travel and accommodation costs related to attendance at events may be accepted and must be declared. Offers which go beyond most, or are of a type that the Group itself might not usually offer, need approval by the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance, should only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, and must be declared. A clear reason should be recorded on the Gifts & Hospitality register as to why it was permissible to accept travel and accommodation of this type;
- offers of business class or first-class travel and accommodation (including domestic travel) must be declared;
- meals or refreshments of a value between £25 and £75 – may be accepted and must be declared;
- meals or refreshments over a value of £75 – should be refused unless (in exceptional circumstances) Line Manager approval is given. A clear reason should be recorded on the Gifts & Hospitality register of interest as to why it was permissible to accept. A common-sense approach should be applied to the valuing of meals and refreshments (using an actual amount, if known, or a reasonable estimate);
- not misuse or dishonestly abuse their position of trust or information acquired in the course of their normal duties, to further their private interests or the private interests of others;
- ensure that their professional registration (if applicable) and/or status are not used in the promotion of commercial products or services;
- beware of bias generated through sponsorship, where this might impinge on professional judgement and impartiality;
- neither agree to practice under any conditions which compromise professional independence or judgement, nor impose such conditions on other professionals;
- avoid any activities that might be construed as either offering or accepting any form of bribe, as described in the Anti-Bribery, Anti-Corruption and Anti-Fraud policy;
- where gifts or hospitality are declined on the basis that they create a sense of obligation, the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance must be notified.

The guiding principles to be followed by all members of staff must be

- the conduct of individuals must not create suspicion of any conflict between their official duty and their private interest

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- the action of individuals acting in an official capacity must not give the impression (to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom they deal or to their colleagues) that they have been (or may have been) influenced by a benefit to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation.

Thus, members of staff must not accept any gifts, rewards or hospitality (or have them given to members of their families) from any organisation or individual with whom they have contact in the course of their work that would cause them to reach a position whereby they might be, or might be deemed by others to have been, influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting such hospitality. The frequency and scale of hospitality accepted must not be significantly greater than the Group would be likely to provide in return.

On no account should an employee accept secondary employment or a financial payment from any person, body or organisation, e.g. contractors, developers, consultants, with which the Group is involved. Gifts may only be accepted when they are low cost, functional items suitable for business use, rather than personal use, e.g. diaries, calendars, pens. Other gifts which may be sent to employees by outside contractors or organisation, should be returned officially with a suitable letter.

Normally, visits by employees to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals, and social functions, in connection with their official duties shall be at the Group's expense.

Where hospitality, in the form of meals and drinks, is offered by a third party, this is normally only acceptable where it forms parts of, or immediately follows on from, normal business meetings/discussions held during the normal working day.

Where offers of hospitality are made, e.g. invitation to dinners, these should only be accepted if there is a clear and demonstrable benefit to the Group, and the hospitality would not expose the Group to criticism that the provider of the hospitality was achieving undue influence.

Offers of hospitality in the form of purely social events and sporting occasions should on no account be accepted when these are from organisations with which the Group has commercial links. However, invitations to social events from non-commercial organisations with which the Group has a partnership arrangement will be acceptable, but must have the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance's advance approval, and must be recorded in the Gifts & Hospitality register.

Regular social contact, e.g. drinks in a public house, with representatives of organisations, which supply, or hope to supply goods or services to the Group, must be avoided. Where such instances do occasionally take place, i.e. after late working, staff should ensure that they "pay their way" and that the other party does not meet the costs of such contact in full. For their own protection, employees should record such events in the Gifts & Hospitality Register.

When it is not easy to decide between what is and what is not acceptable in terms of gifts or hospitality, the offer must be declined or advice sought from the relevant Head of Department, the Group Chief Financial Officer or the Head of Finance.

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For the protection of those involved, the Group Chief Financial Officer will maintain a register of gifts and hospitality received where the value is in excess of £30. Members of staff in receipt of such gifts or hospitality must notify the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance promptly. The register will be reviewed annually by the Audit Committee.

8. Fraud and corruption

It is the duty of all members of staff, management and the Corporation to notify the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance immediately whenever any matter arises which involves, or is thought to involve, irregularity, including fraud, corruption or any other impropriety.

The Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance must immediately invoke the Fraud Response Plan.

More detailed guidance and information regarding anti-fraud policies and procedures can be found within the Group's Anti-Bribery, Anti-Corruption and Anti-Fraud Policy.

9. Bribery

9.1. Under the Bribery Act 2010, it is an offence for members of staff to accept corruptly any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, anything in an official capacity or showing favour or disfavour to any person in an official capacity.

The Group prohibits staff and Corporation members from offering, giving, soliciting or accepting any bribe. The bribe might include cash, a gift or other inducement, to or from any person or organisation, wherever they are situated and irrespective of whether or not they are a public official/body or private person or company, by any individual governor, employee, agent or other person or body acting on the Group's behalf. The bribe might be made in order to:

- Gain any commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for the Group in a way which is unethical;
- Gain any personal advantage, pecuniary, or otherwise, for the individual or anyone connected with the individual.

9.2. This regulation is not intended to prohibit appropriate corporate entertainment and/or hospitality undertaken in connection with the College's business activities, provided the activity is customary under the circumstances, is proportionate, and is properly recorded/disclosed to the Group in accordance with its procedures – all such activities being reported to the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance for all staff, and the Clerk to the Corporation in the case of Corporation members.

9.3. Staff and Corporation members are requested to remain vigilant in preventing, detecting and reporting bribery. Staff and Corporation members are expected to report any concerns regarding any suspected bribery in accordance with the Group's Financial Procedures.

10. Whistleblowing

- 10.1.** Whistleblowing in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is the disclosure by an employee (or other party) about malpractice in the workplace. A whistle-blower can blow the whistle about crime, civil offences (including negligence, breach of contract), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment and the cover-up of any of these. It does not matter whether or not the information is confidential and the whistleblowing can extend to malpractice occurring in the UK and any other country or territory.
- 10.2.** Normally, any concern that a member of staff has about a workplace matter in the Group should be raised with his or her immediate line manager or Head of Department. However, the Group recognises that the seriousness or sensitivity of some issues, together with the identity of the person the member of staff thinks may be involved, may make this difficult or impossible.
- 10.3.** A member of staff may, therefore, make the disclosure to one of the staff designated for this purpose, for example the Clerk to the Corporation. If the member of staff does not wish to raise the matter with this person, or with the Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal, College Principal or the Chair to the Corporation, it may be raised with the Chair of the Audit Committee.
- 10.4.** The full procedure for whistleblowing is set out in the College's Whistleblowing (public interest disclosure) Policy and Procedure, which is available on the College website.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL LIMITS

Approval of proposed cumulative spend on goods or services with a single supplier (see schematics in Appendix 2)

Description	Requirement	Approval - College	Approval - Subsidiaries
Up to £5,000	Discretion to obtain quotations but value for money must be obtained	Budget Holder	Budget Holder
> £5,000 & up to £10,000	A minimum of three written/email quotations. Procurement Manager to support with any alternative route.	Budget Holder	Budget Holder
> £10,000 & up to £30,000	A minimum of three written/email quotations. Procurement Manager to support with any alternative route.	Budget Holder and Head of Finance or Group Chief Financial Officer	Budget Holder and Head of Finance, SGS College or Group Chief Financial Officer
> £30,000 & up to £50,000	The Procurement Manager must be contacted for advice and will confirm with the Budget Holder whether three written / email quotations are acceptable or whether competitive tenders required ⁽¹⁾	Budget Holder and Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance	Budget Holder and Head of Finance, SGS College or Group Chief Financial Officer
> £50,000 & up to £500,000 (one-off and cumulative spend) ⁽²⁾	Tender process applies ⁽¹⁾	Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance, and College Principal or Group CEO & Executive Principal	Group Chief Financial Officer and Managing Director
> £500,000 (one off and cumulative spend)	Tender process applies ⁽¹⁾	Group Chief Financial Officer or College Principal or Group CEO & Executive Principal and Corporation	Group Chief Financial Officer or Managing Director and Board of Directors

(1) Or the College uses a framework agreement where suppliers have already tendered on price and quality. A further competition of these suppliers or 'call-off' can result in lower prices.

(2) Cumulative spend refers to where spend is procured on an ongoing basis and is assumed to have a four year contract term if not specified in the contract

EU Procurement Limits (see section 5.3)

The following thresholds apply from 1 January 2023:

Supply and services contracts	£213,477
Works contracts	£5,336,937
Light Touch Regime contracts for services	£663,540

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Virement of Budget

Virement	Amount	Approval
Within pay budget or within non-pay budget	< £50,000	Budget holder
	£50,000 - £500,000	Group CFO or Head of Finance
	> £500,000	Corporation
From pay budget to non-pay budget	< £50,000	Budget holder
	£50,000 - £500,000	Group CFO or Head of Finance
	> £500,000	Corporation
From non-pay budget to pay budget	£0 - £500,000	Group CFO or Head of Finance
	> £500,000	Corporation
Between different budget holders	< £50,000	Both budget holders
	> £50,000 - £500,000	Group CFO or Head of Finance
	> £500,000	Corporation

Changes to approved budget

Description	Approval
<£50,000	College Principal or Group Chief Financial Officer
£50,000 - £500,000	College Principal and Group Chief Financial Officer
> £500,000	Corporation

Approval of payments within the online banking system

All bank transfers and BACS listings must be authorised in accordance with the requirements below. The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring the approval rights within the online banking system is in line with these Financial Regulations.

Description	Approval
<£2,000	Any Group A or Group B signatory
£2,000 - £100,000	Two signatories from Group A or Group B, including one of either the Group Chief Financial Officer or the Head of Finance
> £100,000	Two Group A signatories of which one must be the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance

SGS College	SGS College Commercial Services Limited
Group A Group Chief Financial Officer Group CEO and Executive Principal Head of Finance College Principal Deputy Principal Chief Group Services Officer	Group A Group Chief Financial Officer Managing Director Head of Finance Any SGCSL Director who is not an employee
Group B Finance Operations Manager Finance Business Partners Planning and Reporting Manager	Group B Finance Operations Manager Finance Business Partners Planning and Reporting Manager

SGS College – Financial Regulations

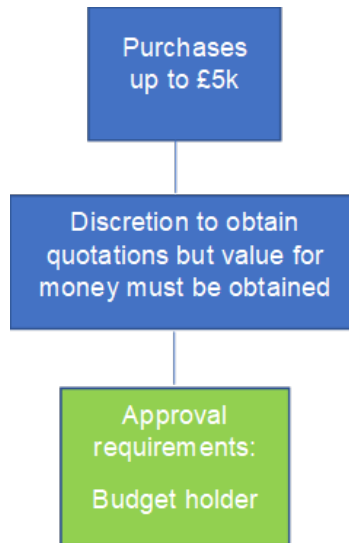
Bank Mandate

As well as approval of payments within the online banking system, the bank holds a bank mandate which is a list of names and signatures of those authorised to sign documents such as a new Direct Debit Mandate or Standing Order. The signatories on the Bank Mandate are as follows:

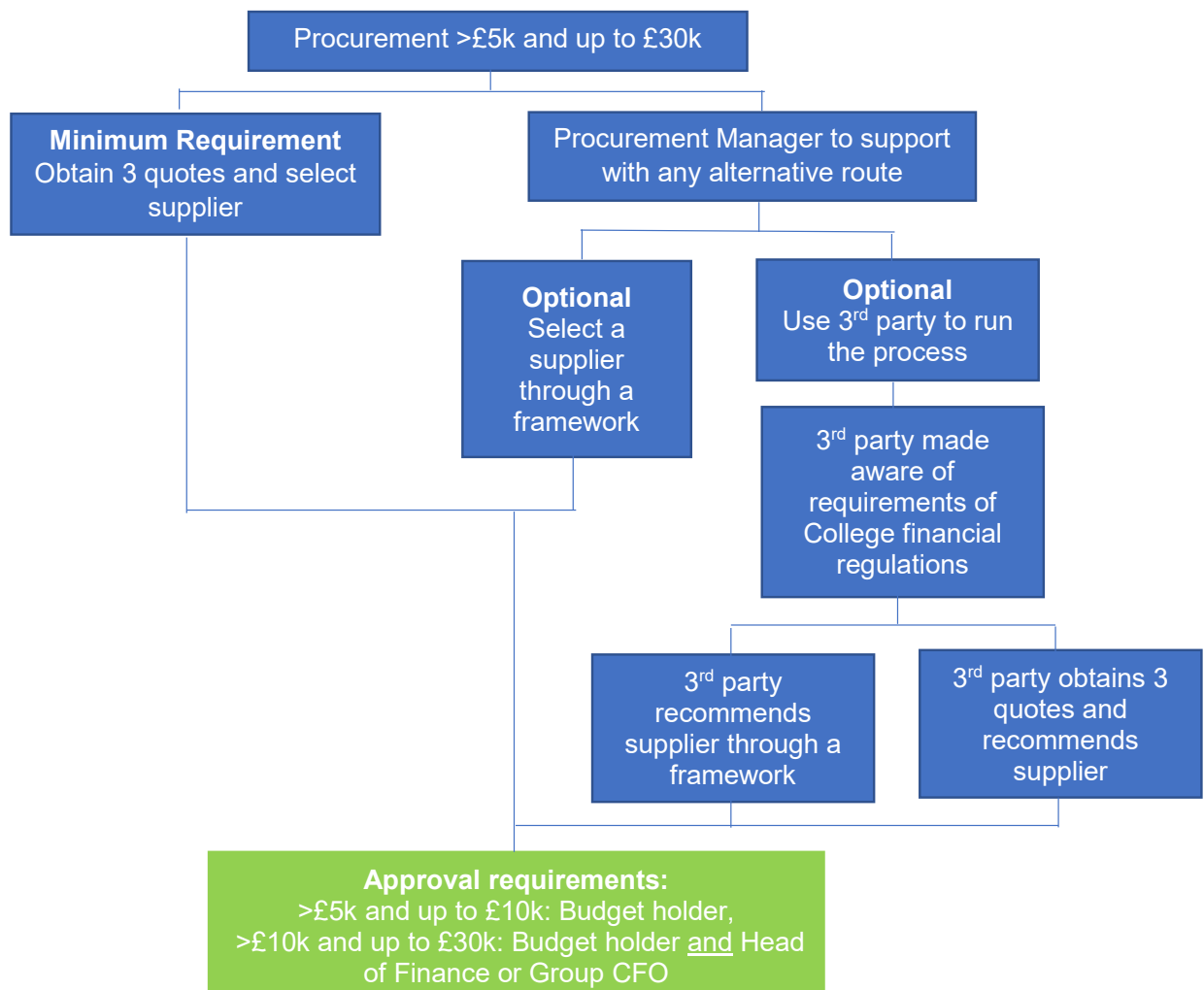
SGS College	SGS College Commercial Services Limited
Group A Judith Saunderson Rich Aitken Kevin Hamblin Moir Foster-Fitzgerald Sara-Jane Watkins	Group A Judith Saunderson Rich Aitken Kevin Hamblin Martin Jones
Group B Caroline Taylor	Group B None

APPENDIX 2: PROCUREMENT APPROVALS FLOWCHART

Purchases up to £5k

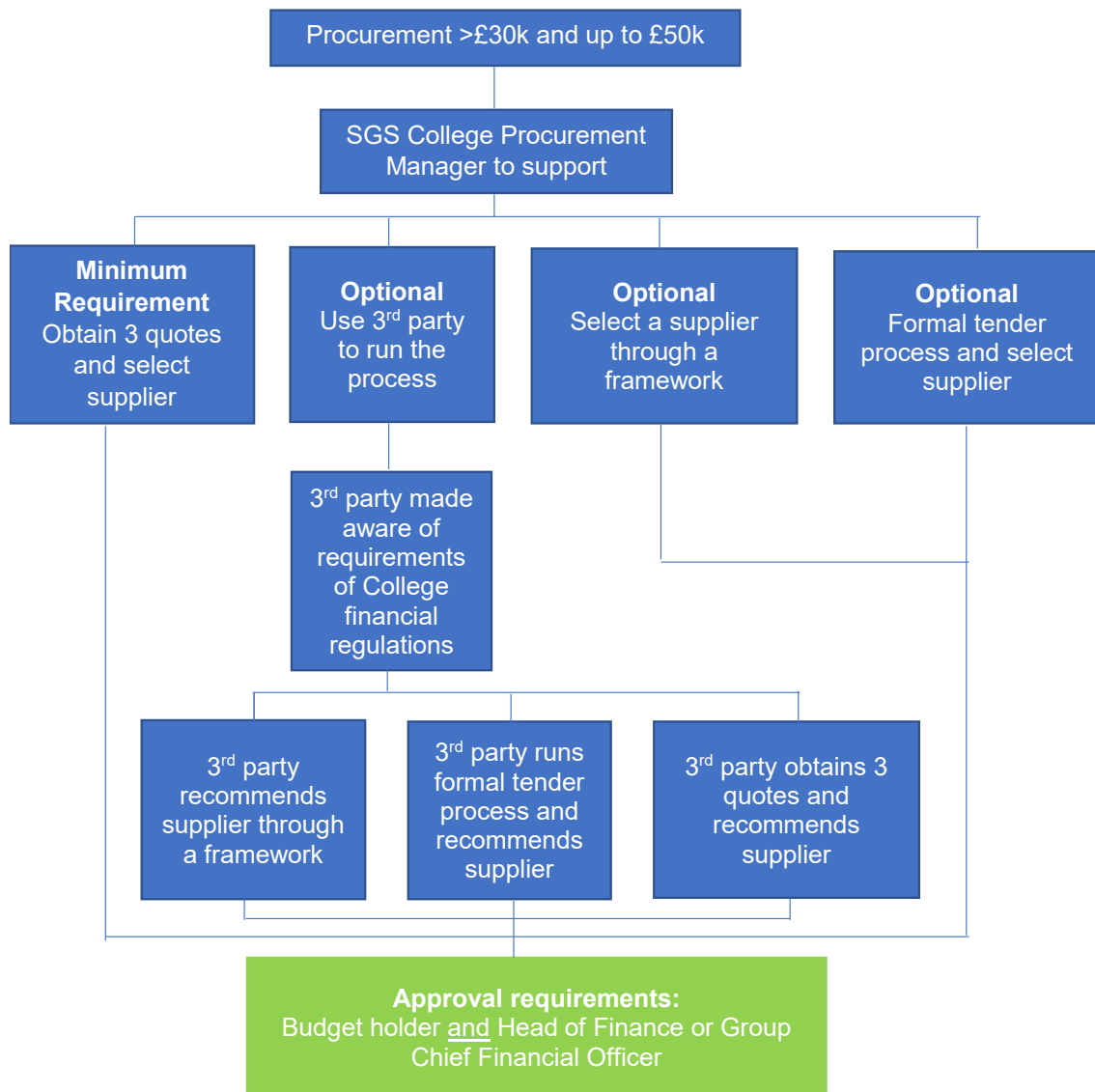


Purchases > £5k and up to £30k



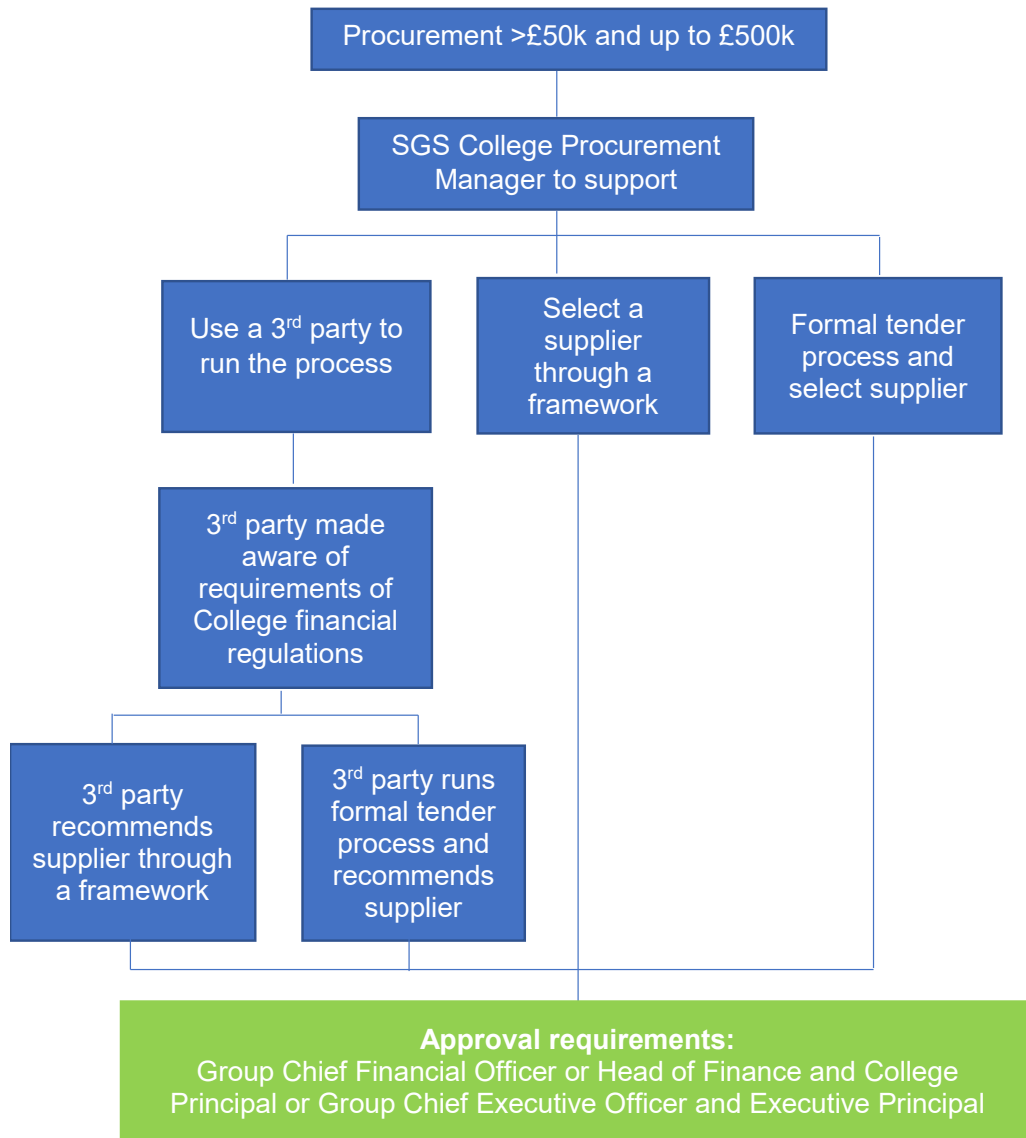
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Purchases > £30k and up to £50k



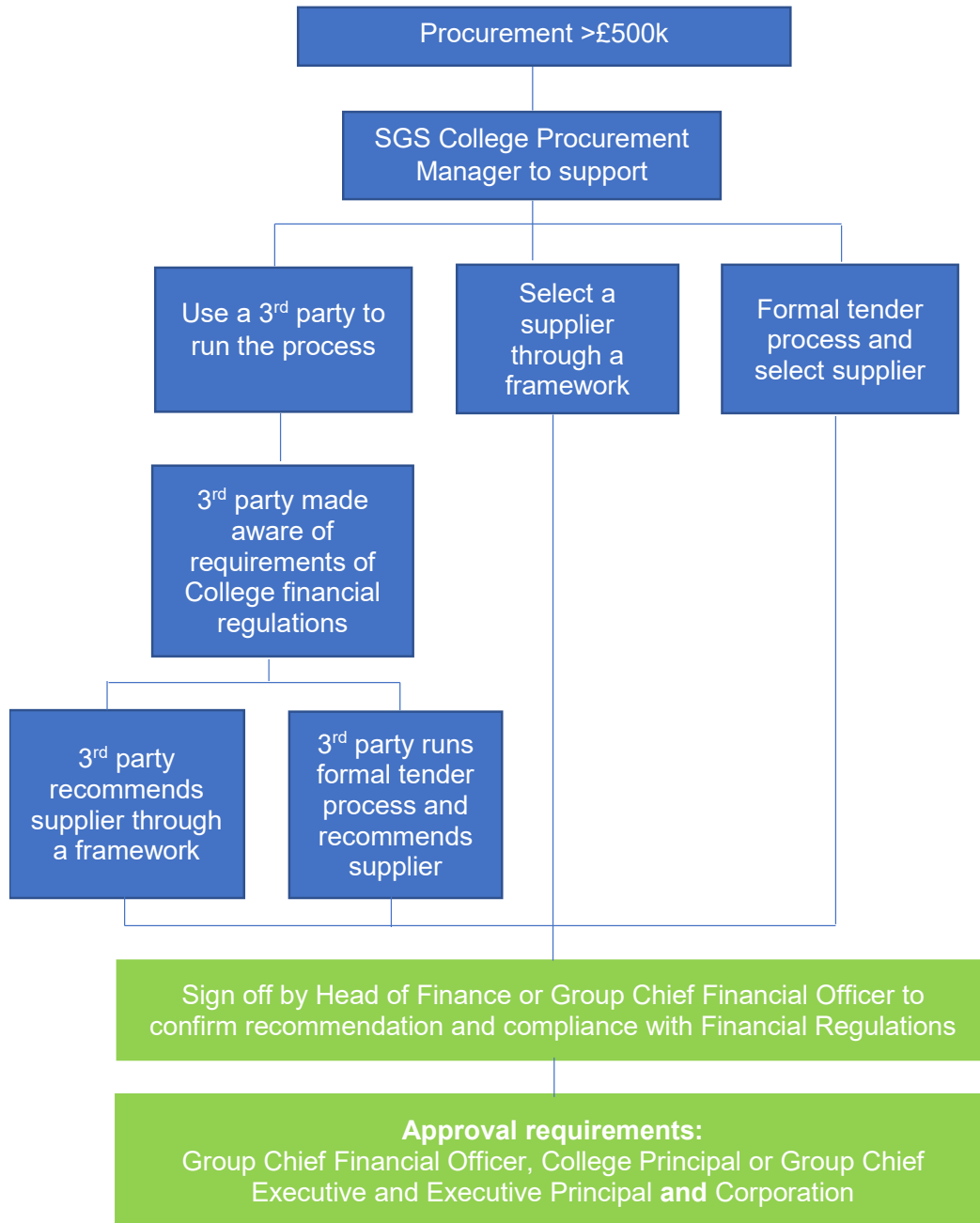
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Purchases > £50k and up to £500k



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Purchases > £500k



APPENDIX 3: ITEMS EXEMPT FROM FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Items which do not require a system generated purchase order

Category	Description
AOC / OfS Membership	AOC & OfS membership is a requirement for the college
Bursary Payments	To students
Catering	Hospitality/meal tickets/tokens
Partner Payments	Sub-contracted funding payments
Exam fees	Exam fees
HR	Requests for doctor's report
Photocopying	Photocopy rental and maintenance
Police checks	Police checks
Postage	Postage
Rates	Rates
Transport	Emergency taxis (excluding pre-booked taxis)
Utilities	Phone lines (excluding BT business)
Utilities	Mobile phones
Utilities	Electricity
Utilities	Gas
Utilities	Water and sewerage

Items where a purchase order can be raised after a supplier has invoiced

Category	Description
Alarm Call Outs	Security call out
Agency Staff	Emergency staffing
DBS	Police checks

APPENDIX 4: PROTOCOLS FOR PROPOSED MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Proposed major developments and associated capital expenditure must be approved in line with the financial approval framework set out in Appendix 1.

The proposal must be supported by a business plan for three years which sets out:

- a demonstration of the proposal's consistency with the Strategic Plan approved by the Corporation and with the Group's powers under current legislation
- details of the market need and the assumptions (based on reference data) of the level of business available
- details of the business and what product or service will be delivered
- an outline plan for promoting the business to the identified market and achieving planned levels of business
- details of the staff required to deliver, promote and manage the business, together with any re-skilling or recruitment issues
- details of any premises and other resources required
- a financial evaluation of the proposal together with its impact on revenue and surplus, plus advice on the impact of possible alternative plans and sensitivity analyses in respect of key assumptions
- contingency plans for managing adverse sensitivities
- consideration of taxation and other legislative or regulatory issues
- a three-year financial forecast, in a format prescribed by the Group Chief Financial Officer or Head of Finance, for the proposal including a monthly cash flow forecast and details of the impact on the Group cash flow forecast for the financial years in question.

Where the development includes capital expenditure, the proposal must be supported by:

- A statement that demonstrates the project's consistency with the Strategic Plan and Estates Strategy approved by the Corporation.
- An initial budget for the project for submission to the Corporation. The budget must include a breakdown of costs including professional fees, VAT and funding sources.
- A financial evaluation of the plans together with their impact on revenue plus advice on the impact of alternative plans.
- An investment appraisal in an approved format which complies with the Designated Funding Body guidance on option and investment appraisal.
- A demonstration of compliance with normal tendering procedures and the Designated Funding Body regulations. This will require careful consideration where partnership arrangements are in place.
- A cash flow forecast.

APPENDIX 5: THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Members of staff at all levels are expected to observe the seven principles of public life established by the Committee on Standards in Public Life:

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or their friends.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that may influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all their decisions and the actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.