



APUC

Advanced Procurement
for Universities & Colleges

Annual Report

2024/25

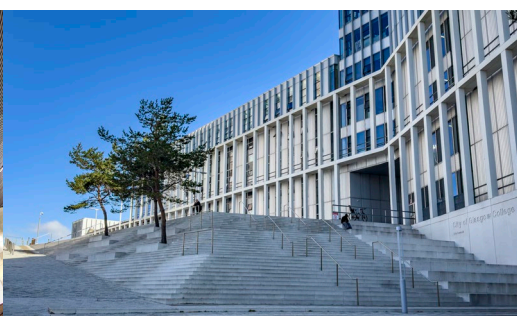
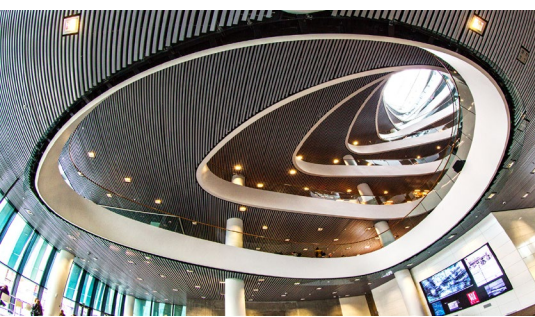




"To maximise the value of Scotland's investment in further and higher education by working in partnership with institutions to support and enable sustainable innovation in procurement and shared service optimisation"

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Introduction from the Chair of APUC

Welcome to the 2024/25 APUC Annual Report.

The 2024/25 academic year marked a period of resilience and progress for APUC as we continued to deliver ethical, sustainable, and value-driven procurement services for Scotland's universities and colleges. Despite ongoing supply chain volatility and financial pressures across the sector, APUC maintained its commitment to supporting institutions through innovative strategic sourcing, responsible procurement, systems support and professional development.

We successfully embedded throughout 2024/25 the new Strategic Sourcing model introduced in Spring 2024, enhancing flexibility and responsiveness to market challenges, while our Hunter platform continued to evolve, now serving both Scottish HE/FE and rUK HE sectors. System development priorities included improved contract management, GHG emissions reporting, and enhanced supplier due diligence.

APUC played an active role in sector-wide efficiency and transformation initiatives, including the UUK E&T Taskforce and Universities Scotland workshops. As the year drew to a close, we were preparing proposals for a Shared Service Catalyst to unlock further collaborative opportunities beyond procurement. The well established and well regarded Institutional Procurement Services unit within APUC supported 28 institutions, with circa 60 staff embedded across university and college campuses, throughout the year.

Our commitment to sustainability remains strong. The Responsible Procurement team advanced the Supply Chain Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and expanded EcoVadis assessments, now covering nearly 300 suppliers. We continue to provide GHG emissions reporting for all member institutions and integrate low GHG options into framework agreements wherever feasible.

Fair Work principles are embedded across all relevant frameworks and internal operations. APUC remains a champion of equality and human rights, actively engaging with Electronics Watch and the International Working Group on Ethical Public Procurement. Our Modern Slavery Statement was updated at the end of July 2025 and provided to the APUC Board for endorsement for the 2025/26 year at our forthcoming Board meeting.

Strategic Sourcing delivered significant savings, with early indications suggesting targets will be exceeded for 2024/25. The proportion of collaborative spend continues to deliver positive results at circa 37% of recurrent spend validated for the previous year during 2024/25, reinforcing the value of shared procurement models.

No health and safety incidents occurred within APUC during the year in question and data protection compliance remains robust.

As we approach the end of our current strategy period, work will begin on a new corporate strategy for 2026–2031. This will build on our achievements and address emerging challenges, including talent retention, climate action, and digital transformation.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all APUC staff, member institutions, and partners for their continued support and collaboration. Together, we remain committed to delivering procurement excellence that drives economic, social, and environmental benefits for Scotland's tertiary education sectors.

Veronica Strachan,
Chair of the APUC Board



Collaboration Benefits & Savings



IPS

The Institutional Procurement Services team now consists of circa 60 staff providing a procurement shared service to 28 institutions across Scotland. A series of continuous reviews of procurement operations in each client institution has been offered (where it has not been recently done) to ensure that the correct resource mix is deployed in light of current demands on time/staff.

Hunter

Further development of the new web-enabled version of Hunter continues in liaison with the client community with more (originally) separate functions being integrated into the Hunter tool including the Buyers Portal from Summer 2024.

Development of new functionality is now prioritised via the eSolutions Systems Prioritisation and Development Advisory Group (ESPDAG).

Market Insights

APUC undertakes annual resilience reviews within the Strategic Sourcing Team.

Due to increasing volatility, Market Insights reporting to the sector by category has been increased in frequency to quarterly throughout the entirety of the 2024/25 AY.

New "Strategic Sourcing" model implemented from March 2024 to provide a more flexible category fluid approach which brings enhanced resilience and flexibility in meeting dynamic needs and impacts. A fine-tuning review of the model commenced at the end of the 2024/25 year.

Collaborative Agreements

Over 170 collaborative Framework Agreements were available to the sector throughout the year with high levels of utilisation across active categories

Savings* - During the 2024/25 year, savings for the 2023/24 AY were confirmed as:

- **BT1: £13.4m (using a benchmark that generally means against previous price paid)**
- **BT2: £37.2m (using a benchmark that is generally against open market pricing)**

Collaborative spend across the sector in Scotland as a percentage of recurrent spend for that period was 37% - significantly higher than elsewhere in the UK.

*These are reported against the Scottish Publicly Funded Sectors Benefits Reporting Methodology. Figures for the 2024/25 AY will be available mid-way through the 2025/26 AY when institutions and collaborative partners have finalised their financial data and validated relevant spend reports. Newly adopted savings type "BT7" is now being used to gather further savings data.

Environmental and Ethical Supplier Assessments

Electronics Watch

APUC continued its membership of Electronics Watch throughout 2024/25 and actively engaged with them in the promotion of human rights and equality in our electronic supply chains recently expanding the scope to include electric vehicles

Over 294 (EcoVadis) deep dive assessment reports are now available as of end July 2025, with 108 in-progress. Outcomes and actions have been incorporated into the contract management process. A report to be published in Q4/2025 has been developed to report on progress over recent years until the end of the 2024/25 year.

GHG Reporting & Net Zero

Reporting functionality has been enhanced which allows the capture of GHG data at contract value so that data from specific improvements (versus the DEFRA “averages” based data) can be reported where appropriate. It is hoped that this functionality will be utilised more from the 2025/26 AY onwards. APUC is also involved in a UK wide HE sector working group (commenced early 2025) to work collectively to improve accuracy and consistency of GHG reporting across UK HE. (and FE).

The APUC Responsible Procurement team will, if invited, visit institutions to run GHG reduction workshops with procurement managers and wider stakeholders to assist them in developing GHG actions plans etc. These workshops can also include the wider aspects of responsible procurement.



Fair Treatment & Economic Wellbeing

APUC operates as a major champion and promoter of equality, with the three aims of the ‘Equality Duty’ embedded as part of the process of decision-making and in business process design. Fair Work is embedded in how the organisation manages its activities and this has a significant relevance on several Framework Agreements.

APUC continues to utilise approaches to ensure that potential business is available and accessible to SMEs wherever there are appropriate supply chains. This includes tailored regional and technical lotting strategies and consideration of flexible specifications in tenders, all assisting in sustainable local economic development across Scotland.

Fair Work

Fair Work principles are integrated into relevant templates etc. and considered wherever relevant in tendering and contract management activity.

Capability and Continuous Improvement

Procurement Capability Assessments – Procurement & Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP)

The last round of PCIP assessments were undertaken during early to mid 2024 with an outcomes workshop taking place with sector procurement leaders in October 2024. Results were positive indicating a continuation of improvement of procurement practice across the sector. The cross-sector PCIP project team met in December 2024 to review the 2024 PCIP, looking at emerging themes and identifying strengths and development areas. It not expected there will be another wave of national assessments for 2-3 years. The focus now will be developing improvement approaches for the key areas of development identified.



Corporate Services



APUC Corporate Services supports all of APUC’s client facing functions as well as delivering some services directly to member institutions. It encompasses People & Operations, Governance, and Finance. It provides its services not just for APUC but also for fellow HE/FE sector shared service HEFESTIS Ltd (also co-owned by Scotland’s HE/FE sector institutions).

Construction Procurement Development Programme

Early in 2025, APUC, the institutional Heads of Procurement and a representative from the sector’s Estates Directors, jointly formed a steering group to established a Construction Procurement Development Programme – this is a comprehensive programme to fully equip procurement staff with a high level of capability in managing construction procurement (which was identified as a significant gaps in the sectors procurement skills) – delivery of this programme is due to commence in the 2025/26 AY.

The APUC People & Operations Team delivered the sector’s face to face procurement training programme for the 2024/25 AY maintaining the high volume of offerings of the previous year with a mix of in person and virtual events. As well as the comprehensive face to face sector training programme organised by APUC, APUC also provide access to eight eLearning modules available 24/7/365 to provide highly flexible learning opportunities.

- ✓ The highly effective Finance Team provide support to the business, for staff and external stakeholders, with clean Audits received for APUC Group (APUC and UCSS) and HEFESTIS during the year. The 2024-25 Financial Statements and associated reports are available on request from APUC.
- ✓ The APUC Governance Manager ensured that all APUC’s governance arrangements operated smoothly throughout the year and that all statutory reporting was completed in line with relevant requirements.

Fig 1a - Collaborative Framework Agreements available with Buyers' Guides

ESTATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road Surfacing & Minor Civil Engineering Works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering Innovation and Concept Solutions (CICS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitness & Sports Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floor Coverings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office, Paper, EOS & Library Supplies (OPELS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwiches and Associated Products (Supply and Distribution of)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing Consumables and Commercial Heating Products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional Merchandise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Coolers (20-21)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Franking Machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Textiles, Student Starter Packs and Window Coverings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and Installation for the Customer Experience (Catering and Social Spaces)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Professional Services RM6165 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washroom Services & Associated Products & Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Electricity Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lift Maintenance, Installation & Refurbishment Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Goods & Associated Products & Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering Light and Heavy Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh Dairy Products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building & Construction Consultancy SXL0920 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh Fish & Seafood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EV Charging Infrastructure (SXL 2119) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenience Retail 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh Fruit & Vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh Bakery Products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposables and Kitchen Chemicals 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh Butcher Meat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPOS Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleaning & Janitorial Products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Materials (SXL 1422) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grocery, Frozen and Chilled
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timber Products and Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot Beverage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water & Wastewater Billing Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asbestos related Works & Services (SXL 0722) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vending Machine Services, Concepts & Innovation DPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Safety Products (Supply & Service) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatic Doors and Roller Shutters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering Outsourced Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estates Management Services (RM6168) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical Sundries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washroom Solutions and Sanitary Products (0122)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fleet Solutions - Sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle Purchase (CCS Ref RM6244) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Gas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery App 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle Lease (CCS REF RM6268) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liquid Fuels

Fig 1b - Collaborative Framework Agreements available with Buyers' Guides (continued)

ESTATES CONTINUED	ICT	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance, HR/Payroll Systems and Associated Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water & Wastewater Billing Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Data Centre, Jisc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasting Equipment and Integration Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning Equipment (SXL 0523) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Buying Tools - PCS Tender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni & Fundraising CRM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Services and Cash Collection (SXL 2322) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Streaming and Online Training Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple Equipment and Services Framework Agreement - Individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courier Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet of Things (IoT) - Dynamic Procurement System (DPS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Management Systems and Associated Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Client Devices (National Framework for) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative, Value-Adding VLE System(s) and Associated Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Minor Building Works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple Equipment and Services Framework Agreement - National 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jisc Text Short Message Service (SMS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Efficiency Contractors Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephony Purchasing Services, Jisc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking - HE, Supply & Services (HENS2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs and Wayfinding Solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Information Management Systems and Associated Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephony and Communication Services Dynamic Purchasing System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Businesses DPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Integrity and Assessment Management Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement (Business to Business) CRM Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catering Sundries (Scotland Excel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software Licence Resellers Agreement (SLRA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supply and Installation of Audio-Visual Equipment & Associated Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removals and Relocations Services (PCR2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servers, Storage and Solutions National Agreement (SSSNA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop Client Devices (National Framework for)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Maintenance and Refurbishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eMarketplace for Tail End Spend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Technology and Cyber Services Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Furniture and Furnishings (SXL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Office Supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software Value Added Re-seller (SVAR)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Accommodation, Conference/Event, Delivered Catering & Hotel Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Centre Equipment & Infrastructure 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed Print Solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Phones - Ethically Sourced
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Peripherals and Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCS Network Services 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop & Notebook (NDNA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Products and Associated Services 2

Fig 1c - Collaborative Framework Agreements available with Buyers' Guides (continued)

ICT CONTINUED	• Healthcare Student Uniforms	• Insurance Services
	• Life Sciences Equipment, Materials & Services	• Hair & Beauty
	• Lasers and Associated Equipment, Supply of	• Publishing Print Design & Associated Services
	• Multi-Modality Imaging Equipment and Maintenance	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - GENERAL
	General Laboratory Equipment - Supply and Maintenance	• Intellectual Property Services
	LIBRARIES	• Publishing Print Design & Associated Services
	• eBooks, eBook Collections and eTextbooks	• Global Workforce Mobility Services
	• Print Books & Standing Orders	• Audit and Tax Services
	• Periodicals & Associated Services	• Legal Services
	• Supply and Delivery of Library Books and Textbooks	• Media Services Framework
LABORATORIES	• Digital Publications and Services (Supply of)	• Debt Recovery Services
	• Library Equipment, Software & Maintenance	• Banking Services
	• SHEDL eBook Collections - Springer Nature	• Graduation and Ceremonial Gowns, Photography and Event Services
	• SHEDL eBook Collections - Elsevier	• Management Consultancy Framework 3
	• SHEDL eBook Collections - Oxford University Press (OUP)	• Student Assistance and Support Services
	• Digital Preservation DPS	• Hair & Beauty
	• Karger SHEDL 2023-2025	• Teaching Qualification Further Education
	• Springer Nature Read and Publish 2023-2025 (SHEDL)	• Marketing Services

Fig 1d - Collaborative Framework Agreements available with Buyers' Guides (continued)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - GENERAL - CONTINUED	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - HR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreting, Translation and Transcription Services • Travel Management Services • Print & Associated Services Framework 2023 • Media Planning, Buying & Associated Services • Payment Solutions 2 • Procurement Cards • Payment Acceptance 2 • Vertical Application Solutions (Electoral Services) • Pension Scheme (Defined Contribution) and Employee Benefits • Travel Services Contract (Available to Named in Call Off Only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Engagement Surveys • Temporary & Permanent Staff • Occupational Health Services • Temp Interim Professional – National • Executive and Senior Specialist Search and Associated Recruitment Services • Temp Interim IT – National • Temp Admin, Catering & Manual - South • Temp Admin, Catering & Manual - North • Education Recruitment Advertising and Resourcing Services (National) NERARS 2022 • Employee Benefits and Services • Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and Welfare Services • Recruitment Advertising and PINs
	CORPORATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance, Brokerage and Associated Risk Management Services • SPS: Occupational Health Collaborative Framework

Annex A

Full members - HE Institutions and Other Full Member Bodies (20)

Abertay University
Edinburgh Napier University
Glasgow Caledonian University
Glasgow School of Art
Heriot-Watt University
Queen Margaret University
Robert Gordon University
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS)
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
The Scottish Funding Council
University of Aberdeen
University of Dundee
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
University of St Andrews
University of Stirling
University of Strathclyde
University of the Highlands and Islands
University of the West of Scotland

Full members – FE Institutions (21)

Ayrshire College
Borders College
City of Glasgow College
Dumfries and Galloway College
Dundee and Angus College
Edinburgh College
Fife College
Forth Valley College
Glasgow Clyde College
Glasgow Kelvin College
UHI Inverness
UHI Moray
New College Lanarkshire
Newbattle Abbey College
North East Scotland College
UHI North, West and Hebrides
UHI Perth
Sabhal Mor Ostaig
South Lanarkshire College
West College Scotland
West Lothian College

Associate members (7)

UHI Argyll
Fraunhofer UK Research Ltd
UHI Orkney
UHI Shetland (including NAFC Marine The
James Hutton Institute
The Highland Theological College
University of Sussex

Associated bodies (19)

College Development Network
Colleges Scotland
David MacBrayne Ltd / Group
East Lothian Council
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow Life
HEFESTIS Limited
Orkney Council
Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
Scottish Police Authority
Scottish Prison Service
The Scottish Government
Universities Scotland
Visit Scotland
National Library of Scotland
NHS Highland
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Crown Estates Scotland

Annex B

Directors at year end / 31 July 2025

Andy Goor, *Chief Financial Officer, The University of St Andrews*¹
Nicky Anderson, *Director of Finance, Dundee and Angus College*²
Pete Smith, *Principal, Borders College*
Gemma Lines, *non-sector director*
Phil McNaul, *non-sector director*
Harpreet Paul, *non-sector director*
Veronica Strachan, *University Secretary and Vice Principal Corporate Services, Robert Gordon University*
Angus Warren, *Chief Executive, APUC Ltd*

1. Andy Goor joined the Board in February 2025 replacing Lee Hamill who resigned in December 2024.

2. Nicky Anderson joined the Board in February 2025 replacing Tracy Elliott who resigned in December 2024.

3. Jim McGeorge resigned in March 2025.

4. Margaret Cook resigned in May 2025.

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