

Job Description – Category Manager – Professional Services



Position:	Category Manager – Professional Services
Reporting to:	Head of SUPC
Type:	Permanent – Full time (or 0.8 FTE if preferred by the candidate)
Location:	Agile working, with some work required in our head office in Reading and travel to other locations
Remuneration:	circa £60k depending on experience, plus benefits

SUMS is a dynamic and values-focused organisation dedicated to supporting the UK's Higher Education sector. We have two divisions – SUMS Consulting and Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC), which includes the Procurement Shared Service (PSS). As a charity and not-for-profit, we are a membership-based organisation and part of the community we serve. Our reach currently extends to beyond 50% of the UK Higher Education sector. Our vision is to be the expert partner of choice for universities, delivering tangible, sustainable impact through high-quality consulting and procurement services.

About SUPC – the Procurement and Commercial Division

Our vision is for SUPC to be the leading provider of high-quality, innovative procurement and commercial services to the UK education sector. Our Procurement Shared Service, delivering expert procurement consultancy and the Procurement Maturity Assessment Programme, is embedded within SUPC. We are implementing a new operating model to help us deliver our refreshed strategy and have a clear vision of the competencies we need. SUPC:

- Is the largest universities' purchasing consortium in England. Our members spend approx. £465m p.a.
- Helps universities and colleges buy smarter and deliver value-for-money to students, staff and wider communities
- Supports members who are governed by Public Procurement Regulations and members who have opted- out
- Has a subscription model and are committed to returning the majority of member-earned marketing premium to our members. Last year we returned over £0.8m to our members
- Delivers a comprehensive set of high-quality procurement services that add tangible value
- Leverages the benefits of being part of the SUMS Group, accessing the expertise and knowledge of our sister divisions: SUMS Consulting, and the Procurement Shared Service (PSS)
- Works closely through Universities UK Purchasing Consortia (UKUPC) with the other education purchasing consortia to offer value for money agreements to members.
- Has strategic partnerships with sector leaders in sustainability, including EAUC, to deliver expert sustainability and responsible procurement support to our members and client universities.

Principal Duties & Responsibilities

As a Category Manager you will:

- Develop category strategies and manage, undertaking supplier negotiations, the major national framework agreements across the professional services portfolio, to ensure that maximum value, innovation and value are secured for SUPC members
- Build constructive and beneficial relationships with SUPC members, their procurement specialists and stakeholders, and manage relationships with strategic suppliers. Engaging with other UK purchasing consortia and other sector bodies; representing SUPC across the wider HE community
- Have or develop expertise in professional services markets within HE so that you become a 'go-to' person for our members for related queries
- Develop and manage relationships with our members: each Category Manager is assigned several members as part of our Member Relationship Management Programme, to support delivery of a quality service and identify opportunities for business development
- Collaborate and engage with UKUPC (UK University Purchasing Consortia), supporting UKUPC initiatives, working to deliver the UKUPC and SUPC strategies
- Deliver webinars and create and publish thought pieces, to inform members of innovation and best practice, and increase awareness of SUPC's expertise, and lead Category Group discussions with members and wider UKUPC
- Promote SUMS Group's services, including the PMA (procurement maturity assessment) and PVA (procurement value assessment) tools, to members and across HE.

Reporting to the Head of SUPC you will:

- Manage framework agreements such that they meet key performance indicators and suppliers deliver to contracts agreed within their framework
- Drive assigned category areas, identifying market trends to assist with ongoing contract management and category strategy development as well as market insight which can be shared with SUPC members
- Be the cross-category Practice Lead for an area of core activity (such as responsible procurement, contract management, strategic supplier relationship management L+D)
- Support knowledge transfer across categories, to help build resilience of category operations, supporting the wider SUPC category team in their development by mentoring and coaching where appropriate.
- Horizon-scan and research category developments and service trends, identifying market trends and conditions
- Take data-informed decisions
- Lead supplier engagement and sourcing activities end to end from definition of business requirements, sourcing, tender analysis and negotiation and ongoing supplier performance and life cycle management
- Ensure all SUPC's policies are strictly followed throughout the procurement process and

that all procurement is carried out in an ethical and compliant manner

- Act as an overall champion for Procurement Value for Money and efficiency across all activities
- Champion risk management within the business, ensuring risk is understood and relevant mitigation is put in place to protect the business.
- Engage with key SUPC Members to ensure collaborative delivery of business benefits from progressive procurement to supplier performance management activities for the frameworks in place.
- Continuously seek realistic ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness in your role, to help the department, and SUPC, achieve its goals working alongside the Special Projects Lead to deliver operational improvements.

The Person

You will be educated to degree level, be an experienced team- player who is tenacious and excited by the opportunity of working in the fast-developing HE procurement environment. You will have:

- Expertise in data analysis
- Understanding of a range of professional services that may include HR and Travel
- Expertise in stakeholder engagement including influencing and excellent communication skills
- Understanding of key Category Management tools, processes and approaches
- Commercial experience, including the ability to identify opportunities for growth and development
- Contract Management experience within Public Contracting Regulations, ideally with experience of having led on placing major frameworks, or use of them
- The ability to drive value from a broad and diverse set of contracts
- A record of identifying and delivering cost and operational opportunities and efficiencies
- CIPS accreditation or a willingness to train.

Benefits:

- Flexible working
- Generous holiday allowance of 38 days, including bank holidays and closure days
- Participation in a company pension plan
- A dynamic work environment where new ideas and innovations are welcomed
- Investment in the development of your competencies, with guidance and support
- The opportunity to support a values-focused sector
- Outstanding contributions recognised through a bonus scheme

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How To Apply:

Please send applications to supc@reading.ac.uk with the role title in the email header.

Applications must include a full CV and a letter of application setting out your interest in the role and details of how your knowledge, skills and experience match the essential criteria (no more than two pages of A4).

Closing Date: 31st January 2024. Applications will be appraised on receipt.