

CANDIDATE PACK

Category Manager

Finance and Commercial Activities

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER 



OUR UNIVERSITY

Under the inspirational leadership of Professor Peter Bonfield OBE, the University of Westminster is a place where discoveries are made, barriers are broken, diversity is celebrated and where everyone is welcome. Serving more than 21,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, apprentice and executive students, our mission is to transform the lives of young people from all backgrounds. We seek to make the world a more inclusive, sustainable, better and healthier place through our educational, research and knowledge exchange endeavours.

Since our founding in 1838 we have stood out as innovators, committed to tackling social inequalities. In 2021, our University ranked 2nd in England out of more than 100 higher education institutions for social mobility. The ranking - produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Sutton Trust - compares the number of students from low-income backgrounds at universities, and the extent to which their studies helped them to move up the income ladder. Westminster has the second highest performance among universities in England.

As we focus forward to 2029, we will continue to do so in a way that is true to our progressive, compassionate and responsible values. Our education offer will be more personalised and authentic, giving students from all backgrounds an opportunity of transformative learning, helping them succeed in their studies and professional lives. Our curriculum will be employability-linked, leading to stronger outcomes and helping prepare our graduates for the world of work and for life. Our research and knowledge exchange will enable us to maximise our positive impact on societies in the UK and around the world in an environment where everyone is inspired to succeed. Our priorities of wellbeing, inclusion and sustainable development will help us as we navigate through the challenges and opportunities towards 2029.



OUR PRIORITIES

The University's 2022-2029 strategy, Being Westminster, sets us apart and builds on our unique history and achievements. In our University, we value social justice, moral conscience, inclusivity and equality, acting positively together to make change for good.

The University of Westminster has three priorities.

WELLBEING

Working and studying together at Westminster as a community of students and colleagues is a big part of our lives – doing so in an environment that places our wellbeing front and centre helps us to be safe and feel safe. We care for the safety, health and wellbeing of those around us as well as ourselves.

INCLUSION

All Westminster, colleagues and students are in a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and is a place where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated. As a responsible institution, we strive to ensure and to champion equality. As a progressive institution, we take pride in our diversity. As a compassionate institution, we commit to an inclusive culture that allows students and colleagues to reach their full potential.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We take inspiration from the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in how we drive our actions and activities and governance across our University. As a community, we bring together our collective energies to play our part in addressing the climate crisis and inequalities to enable a more sustainable and socially just world. We are one of the top 20 universities in the world in SDG 5 for providing equal access and supporting the academic progression of women. We are one of the top 25 universities in the world in SDG 10 tackling economic, health based and international inequalities. We are in the top 50 universities in SDG 12 for promoting resource and energy efficiency, having a sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services for all.



OUR OBJECTIVES 2022-2029

Against a backdrop of a changing and challenging higher education environment, the University has recently completed a major review of its objectives and strategy, and has published its commitments for the period 2022-29.

EDUCATION

We will offer personalised and authentic education, underpinned by an inclusive curriculum, to enable all our students, from all backgrounds, to engage in transformative learning and to succeed in their studies and professional lives. We will address global, political, and social challenges through a relevant demand-led and forward-looking portfolio. We will do this by offering authentic teaching, learning and assessment modes which immerse students in the wider-world through live projects, work-based learning and global opportunities. We will invest in our people to enable all teaching colleagues to plan and deliver exceptional learning experiences and professional colleagues to offer exceptional support. Students will be empowered by working in partnership with colleagues and fellow students to shape the Westminster experience. We will develop an integrated physical and digital environment that supports excellent practical, active and collaborative learning for all our students.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Research and knowledge exchange are fundamental to our commitment to making a positive difference to the world and transforming lives. We are committed to research in four priority areas: Diversity and Inclusion; Health Innovation and Wellbeing; Sustainable Cities and the Urban Environment; Arts, Communication and Culture. Our excellence in research and knowledge exchange will infuse our education endeavour, inspiring and equipping our students as agents of change locally as well as globally. We will continue to grow our community of PhD researchers, ensuring that the Westminster postgraduate research experience remains sector leading and the foundation for great careers. In knowledge exchange we will focus on engagement with government, business and with the public and local community. We will achieve more when we identify shared interests and build partnerships with our communities and collaborate for the public good with a clear civic purpose.

EMPLOYABILITY

We will ensure that all our students benefit from employability-led learning and purposeful engagement with employers, business and industry, to give students from every background the best possible preparation for the world of work and enable the best possible employability outcomes. We will do this through the further extension and embedding of programmes such as work-based and placement learning; the Westminster Employability Award; Westminster Working Cultures; mentoring; and student enterprise. Employability-related learning will be a core and critical part of the courses and curriculum we offer, right across the University. It will be front and centre of life at the University for students and colleagues.



A key priority will be the development of a dedicated Centre for Employability and Enterprise at 29 Marylebone Road, intended to transform our student experience and our engagement with business, industry and employers. The Centre will provide a game-changing experience through which undergraduate and postgraduate students from across Westminster will come together and practise enterprise; develop an entrepreneurial mindset and skills; access training, work, projects, business advice and mentoring; and connect directly with employers. The future-focused environment of the Centre will scale up our employability provision, helping our students to be 'fit for the future' in the most challenging of post-pandemic labour markets and economic environments. It will strengthen links between our UK-based and international employer partners and our motivated, bright, work-ready students, affording employers access to a diverse mix of people right for the needs of the contemporary workforce.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

We will raise the international reputation and reach of the University, ensuring that 30% of our undergraduate community and 70% of our taught postgraduates come to us from overseas. Overseas partnerships will remain central to our global engagements. We will prioritise the outward mobility of our students to partner institutions, contributing to students' development of employability skills and competences. We will extend and deepen our Trans-National Education relationships. These partnerships, particularly that with Westminster International University in Tashkent, will move beyond franchised or validated arrangements to embrace employability, alumni-related research, CPD and knowledge exchange connections.



OUR STRUCTURE

ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

Our structure is built to deliver an enhanced learning environment, stronger and broader industrial, international and professional connections and pioneering and impactful research. The University comprises three Colleges:

Westminster Business School

- School of Organisations, Economy and Society
- School of Finance and Accounting
- School of Applied Management
- School of Management and Marketing

College of Creative Arts and Technologies

- School of Architecture and Cities
- Westminster School of Arts
- School of Computer Science and Engineering
- Westminster School of Media and Communications

Liberal Arts and Sciences

- School of Social Sciences
- Westminster Law School
- School of Humanities
- School of Life Sciences

The University Executive Board comprises:

- Vice Chancellor and President
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Employability and Global Engagement)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education and Students)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange)
- Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary
- Three Heads of College

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Our Professional Services teams support the effective and professional delivery of our teaching, research and knowledge exchange and the management of student residences and sports facilities.

- Academic Registry
- Business Engagement and Graduate Futures Directorate
- Digital and Technology Services
- Estates
- Finance and Commercial Activities
- Global Engagement
- Global Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communications
- Graduate School
- People, Culture and Wellbeing
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Office
- Strategy, Planning and Performance
- Student and Academic Services
- Learning Innovation and Digital Engagement



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Category Manager

Reports to: Head of Procurement

Department: Finance and Commercial Activities

Grade: NG8

ROLE PURPOSE

To lead on all aspects of financial and contractual commitments and deliver high-quality, cost-effective procurement within a designated portfolio. This role provides expert knowledge and leadership in all aspects of procurement, facilitating successful contract and supplier relationship management to maximise ongoing efficiencies and savings through effective procurement practices.

The post holder will serve as the university-wide authority on procurement and compliance advice for the specified portfolio stakeholders, ensuring adherence to the Procurement Policy and university-wide strategies. This position will also help foster a culture of high performance across the university and ensure that suppliers align with the university's values.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Support university stakeholders in strategic procurement management, focusing on Estates and Professional Services while ensuring alignment with institutional goals and objectives. The role involves overseeing all contracts primarily within a specified portfolio to ensure compliance with procurement policies and plans. This includes developing initial plans for required goods or services, considering cost, budget, and quality requirements, researching and identifying potential suppliers, conducting due diligence, and ensuring alignment with university values and sustainability requirements. The post holder will also lead tender processes, including contract awards and post-award activities, and will contribute to the ongoing management of supplier relationships.
2. To be responsible for reviewing, negotiating, and executing all contract documentation and procurement plans, starting from the initiation of the tender process to the awarding of contracts for high-risk and high-value procurements and routine business activities. This role is crucial in ensuring the achievement of financial and operational targets. The Post holder is expected to provide expert commercial support, leveraging a solid marketplace understanding. They will proactively advise colleagues on the best courses of action, ensuring that critical requirements for diversity, sustainability, inclusivity, and accessibility are included and aligned with the University's values.



3. To have an overview of all contractual arrangements and be responsible for compliance with all relevant statutes, regulations and sector standards for University procurement and associated commercial activities, including those related to Higher Education and Charities, and in keeping with current requirements and sector innovations for procurement and supply chain practices, recommending and updating internal processes, policies and regulations as required whilst ensuring full adherence to the University financial regulations and procurement policy.
4. Develop and execute short, medium, and long-term sourcing strategies in line with the Corporate and Procurement Strategy and in collaboration with stakeholders, ensuring a high-level awareness of potential “points of pain” in terms of renewal and end-dates, e.g. high-value/risk procurements requiring new contracts in a similar period and the impact on other University resources to achieve this. Highlighting any risks associated with the renewal well in advance to ensure mitigation is in place to manage these risks. To work with stakeholders to advise them on possible options in the future for changes or adaptations to services or suppliers and ensure they are aware of up-to-date guidance in their area of what high-performing service delivery should look like.
5. Ensure that diversity, inclusion and accessibility are at the forefront of conversations with internal stakeholders when considering options for future supplier relationships. To actively seek feedback from internal stakeholders and ensure this is included in any conversations with current or future suppliers to ensure ongoing satisfaction and buy-in across the University.
6. Oversee the sourcing of contracts for goods and services, investigating innovative procurement and supply chain practices to manage and monitor high-value contracts, highlighting key contractual obligations and risks and intervening in instances of underperformance and contractual breaches.
7. Support stakeholders in developing and managing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for contracts, ensuring suppliers fulfil their obligations and consistently deliver value to the University. To assist stakeholders in negotiating continuous improvement plans to foster supplier competitiveness throughout the contract lifecycle.
8. Participate in meetings to contribute to policy, process, and procedure reviews and provide stakeholders with strategic updates. Organise user groups that promote procurement best practices and chair these groups as necessary.
9. Define spend and category strategies and manage major procurements, including tender activities, in line with University's procedures and UK Government Procurement Regulations, keeping up with training related to UK industry standard policy and the latest regulation pertaining to purchasing. To advise stakeholders on best



practices and current and future trends to ensure contract agreements align with current and future legislation and best practices in the sector. To share knowledge with the University's central Procurement team as appropriate to ensure a consistent approach to contract negotiations and best practices so that all contracts agreed upon across the University are aligned with the wider procurement and University strategy.

10. Conduct risk profiling for procurement activities, establish risk mitigation strategies, and manage supplier relationships to minimise potential risks. Reviewing the potential for key strategic approved suppliers across a number of activity areas to drive savings by coordinating and consolidating activity.
11. To undertake such tasks as appropriate within the post holder's competence as required from time to time by the line manager.

CONTEXT

The procurement team plays a crucial role in supporting the University's vision. To stay abreast of sector advancements, the team continuously assesses all procurement activities, considering opportunities for reinvention and process improvement.

This role empowers the University to make more informed decisions about purchasing goods and services for the nominated category. The post holder will be alert to changes and opportunities within the external environment and will ensure that the University keeps pace with developments within the sector and elsewhere with a view to making cost savings.

DIMENSIONS

Staffing:

The post holder will have line management responsibility of at least one colleague.

Budget:

The post holder will be responsible (in conjunction with the designated Leadership Team member) for managing supplier contracts totalling to a spend of £15mn-£20mn per annum and will have specific responsibilities in ensuring value for money.

Hours:

The post holder will work 35 hours per week and may be required to work evenings and weekends from time to time where project/operational needs demand; this will be agreed in advance with the line manager.

Location:

All university appointments are made with the understanding that colleagues may be asked to serve at any of the university's sites should the need arise. The post holder must also work in accordance with any agreed service levels.



Health and Safety:

The post holder is required to have an understanding of individual health and safety responsibilities and an awareness of the risks in the work environment, together with their potential impact on both individual work and that of others.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential

- First degree, or equivalent relevant professional knowledge and experience.
- Hold an MCIPS or have significant equivalent industry experience.
- In depth understanding of procurement best practice and legislation.

Desirable

- Suitable leadership or management training or qualifications

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Full life cycle experience of a multi-million-pound capital project and revenue contracts management, including preparing tender, contractual and procurement documentation.
- Experience in developing, implementing and working under category management-based approaches.
- Experience in successfully negotiating contractual terms and costs including demonstrating savings.
- Demonstrable experience in procurement, specifically within Professional Services, Estates and Facilities Management, and public sector procurement legislation. This includes managing diverse suppliers (both large corporations and SMEs).
- Proven ability to challenge and influence business requirements to drive leading practice and optimise results, coupled with experience in providing advice, reports, and spend analysis, particularly in the area of outsourced services.
- Proven experience in reviewing and implementing changes to procurement processes and procedures to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
- Significant working knowledge of procurement legislation and financial regulations and proven ability to apply this in practice, including working knowledge of risk strategies and mitigation.
- Proven experience working with and ideally developing sourcing strategies for a large organisation.



- Experience of working in a complex multisite organisation
- Extensive knowledge of and successful experience in effective contract and supplier relationship management, ensure suppliers meet the University's demands and expectations, with proven ability to challenge poor performance.
- Evidence of working independently to high professional standards

Desirable

- Experience of managing colleagues.
- Experience of working within Higher Education.

APTITUDES, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Essential

- Proven ability to effectively manage contractors and external professional advisers.
- Proven ability to balance the needs of individuals against the needs of the organisation.
- Exceptional organisational and planning skills, with the ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously and adapt to changing priorities.
- Strong analytical skills, including data manipulation and market tracking, to provide meaningful management information.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, with a high level of self-management and project management skills.
- A keen interest in researching current marketplace trends and commercial developments, with a commitment to creating a supportive, fair, and respectful working environment.
- Fully committed to creating a stimulating learning and working environment which is supportive and fair, based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

Desirable

- Able to create and utilise complex financial models to determine financial commitments over a five-year period.
- Strong presentation skills, with the ability to effectively communicate information to diverse audiences and influence strategic conversations.



HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this vacancy, please visit our [vacancies page](#) where you will be able to register as a candidate and complete your online application.

You will be requested to upload a CV which will be used to populate relevant sections of your application. You will also be requested to complete a concise statement in support (ideally no longer than 1000 words), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification and your motivation for applying.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 11.59pm on 13 September 2026.

Interviews will take place on w/c 28 September 2026.

An appointment will be made subject to proof of eligibility to work in the UK and satisfactory references being obtained.

At the University of Westminster, diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity are at the core of how we engage with students, colleagues, applicants, visitors and all our stakeholders.

We are fully committed to enabling a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

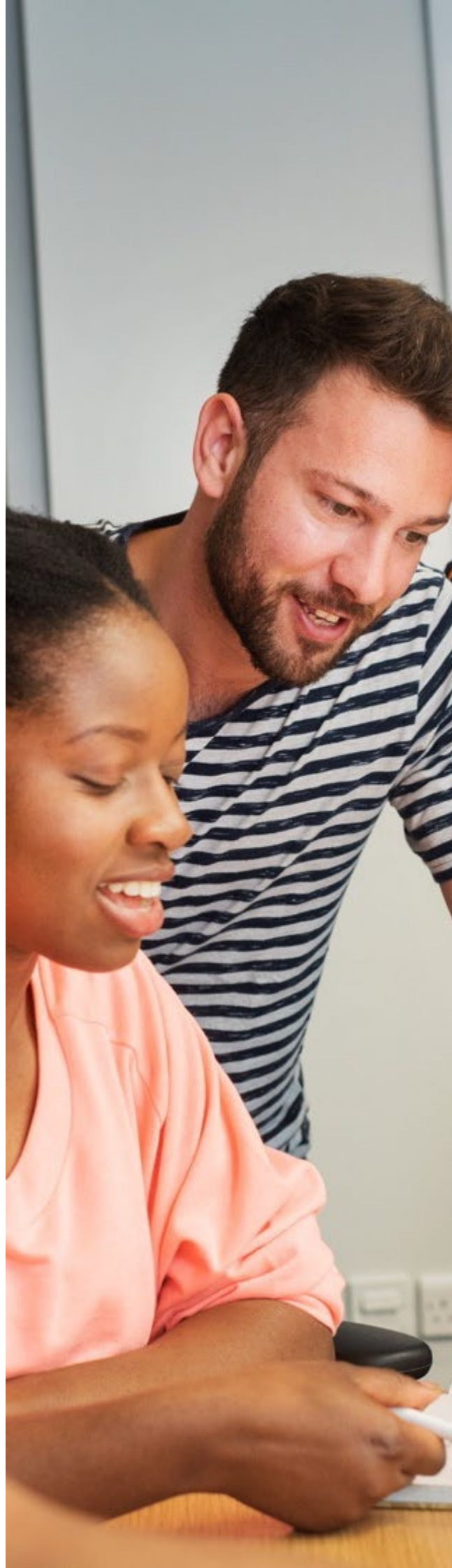
The University has adopted Smart Working principles to support and further our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aims of being an inclusive, collaborative and flexible employer. Further details of Smart Working can be discussed at interview stage.



OUR BENEFITS

The University offers a range of wellbeing and work-life balance benefits to recognise and reward the essential contribution our colleagues make to success and growth. Our benefits are inclusive for colleagues of all backgrounds including LGBTQ+ colleagues, disabled colleagues, pregnant colleagues, parents and carers, as well as colleagues of all genders, age, ethnicities, nationalities, religion and beliefs, and marriage and civil partnership status.

- 35 days annual leave per year, plus bank/national holidays and University of Westminster closure days (pro-rata for part-time staff).
- A generous occupational pension scheme.
- Annual incremental progression and/or cost of living reviews.
- Generous maternity, paternity and adoption leave.
- Flexible working and smart working.
- Learning and development opportunities.
- Free membership rates for a wide range of sporting facilities, including gyms at Regent Street and Harrow campuses, as well as the Chiswick Sports Ground.
- Employee assistance programme.
- The opportunity to participate in other attractive employee benefit schemes such as Cycle to Work, Eye Care Vouchers, Season Ticket Loans, and Give As You Earn.





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