

Foreword

As is the case for many organisations, the combined impact of the goods and services that we buy makes up around 80% of our total carbon footprint – four times as much as the energy we use on our campuses.

That is why procurement has a critical role to play in our fight against climate change. This policy is a call to action for all of us involved in significant purchasing decisions and contract management at Imperial to play our part in reducing the environmental impacts of our activities and bringing our suppliers on the sustainability journey with us.

The supporting guidance sets out how we will build sustainability routinely into procurement: from the very beginning considering where we can avoid, shift or improve our purchases; taking sustainability into account in purchasing decisions; and working with our suppliers to improve their products and practices. By doing this, we will embed good practice across our organisation and materially reduce our footprint.

We commend this policy and guidance to colleagues and look forward to seeing the progress that we can deliver on this together.

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March 2024

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Introduction

Imperial College London is committed to playing our part in realising a sustainable, zero pollution future. As one of the world's top universities, we have the power to help make that a reality, by building sustainability into all that we do.

Our goal is to be a sustainable and net zero-carbon institution by 2040. We want to shrink the environmental footprint of our activities and grow our handprint by increasing the positive contribution we make to sustainability through our research, teaching, operations, and partnerships. Minimising our scope 3 carbon emissions and maximising the positive impacts for the environment, community, and wider stakeholders from purchasing goods and services is an essential part of this.

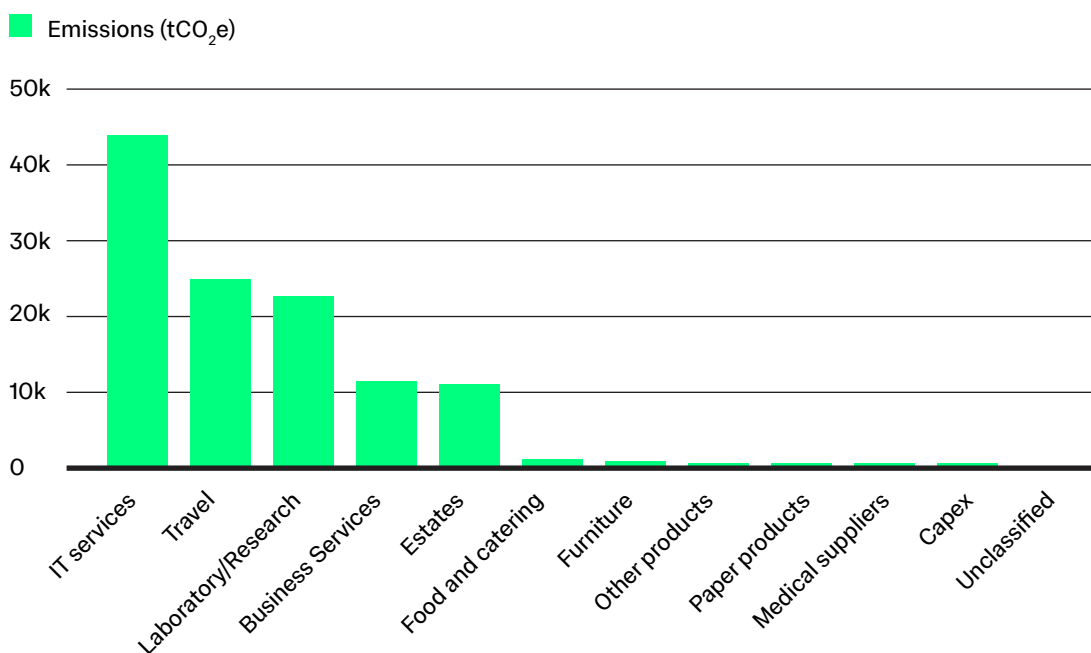
In delivering on our Sustainability Strategy 2021–2026, the procurement function will focus with our direct suppliers on these themes that are impacted by our spend:

1. Scopes 1, 2 and 3 carbon
2. Biodiversity and ecosystems
3. Waste management
4. Community engagement and investment
5. Modern Slavery

Our main spend areas that can support our Sustainability Strategy are:

- energy use
- information and communication technology (ICT)
- laboratory efficiency
- construction and refurbishment, including retrofit and the property portfolio
- business services
- travel
- catering

Figure 1: For the financial year 2022–2023, ICT, travel, laboratory/research purchases and business services were our largest emitters of carbon and greenhouse gases



Therefore, any member of staff involved in the procurement process (central and local procurement team, departmental end-users, specifiers, and all those that have an influence on spend) must consider how to maximise social value and ensure risks to environmental, social, and economic sustainability and ethical sourcing are minimised when purchasing on behalf of the university.

This document is an extension of our Sustainability Strategy 2021–2026 and our commitment to being a responsible university. It supports our vision to be a sustainable and net zero-carbon institution by 2040. Our overarching responsibility is to manage the impact of the decisions we make to ensure that they are not detrimental to the environment or to society and that they still enable the university to thrive in the future.

Purpose of the policy

Imperial commits to:

1. Reducing our supply chain impact:

- Using our influence with our suppliers and partners to procure environmentally friendly supplies and services.
- Reviewing the social impact of our products and services, in line with our community engagement policies and modern slavery statement.
- Promoting responsible consumption of purchased goods and services, consuming less where we can.
- Ensuring responsible disposal of purchased goods following the university's waste hierarchy.

2. Robust reporting:

- Developing metrics and a reporting timetable to review the success of our supplier engagement.
- Continually monitor our major suppliers on their social and environmental policies and practices.

3. Stakeholder engagement:

- Working with our suppliers to identify and improve unsustainable practices.
- Where appropriate, working with our major suppliers to develop and share policies relating to best social and environmental practices.
- Collaborating with suppliers to reduce the university's scope 3 carbon footprint.
- Working alongside our higher education and National Consortia partners to align and strengthen our sustainable procurement practices.

4. Alignment to establish standards:

- Assess all potential suppliers on their social and environmental policies and conformity to established standards.

To support the implementation of these commitments, the attached sustainability toolkit will be applied to assurance of all major suppliers and procurement of all major contracts (on which sustainability criteria will make up 20% of the scoring assessed by a suitably expert sustainability colleague). For Imperial, a major supplier or contract includes any that are handled by the central Imperial procurement team and large contracts handled by faculties or departments. For smaller suppliers and procurements and those outside the central team, this policy encourages the use of the toolkit in a proportionate way, with the scoring of at least 10% on sustainability criteria. This is to support us in favouring more sustainable suppliers, goods, and services wherever possible and encouraging our suppliers to become more sustainable in both their own operations and the goods and services they offer.

Training is being provided in spring 2024 for the central procurement team and major purchasers in operational teams and faculties. The central procurement team and sustainability hub will lead and support the implementation of this policy thereafter.