



Wigan & Leigh College

Financial Regulations

for the year's 2024-25

Approved: 3-12-2024

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Terminology

Owing to the diverse nature of further education colleges, a wide range of terms is in use for committees, staff and other persons connected to this College. The following general terms have been used in these regulations.

Audit Committee

A Committee of the Corporation which is independent of executive responsibility, which advises the Corporation on issues related to internal audit, external audit, risk management and financial control, reviewing the external auditor's reports including the Audit Plan and reviewing internal audit's work plan and progress and consulting directly with internal and external auditors. It is required to issue an annual report to the Corporation which, inter alia, comments on the College's system of internal control.

Budget Holder

The member of staff who has been assigned their own budget, usually this will consist of Heads of Department, Executives and managers of contracted project work

Finance Director

The chief financial officer of the College, responsible to the Principal / Chief Executive Officer for advising on all financial aspects of the College's policy and on its financial administration and for ensuring that the College has satisfactory systems of financial control and management.

Resources Committee

The committee with delegated responsibility for financial matters.

Funding Body

Although the College has several funding bodies for different grant regimes, in this context the term refers to the Department for Education (DfE).

Governing Board

The governing body of the College, which is ultimately responsible for the affairs of the College and which approves the policy framework and budget within which the College operates. It is responsible for approving and monitoring compliance with the College's overall framework of accountability and control, and for monitoring compliance with agreed policy and related executive decisions College.

Heads of Department

The head of an academic or non-academic department/faculty of the College that is responsible for the budget of their whole department / area.

Principal / Chief Executive

The person with the ultimate executive responsibility for the management of the College and who discharges the role of Accounting Officer, with specific financial and management duties. Executive

Management Team

The strategic management team that assists the Principal / Chief Executive in running the College.

Financial Regulations

A. General Provisions

1. Background

- 1.1 The College is a further education corporation created under the provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Its structure of governance is laid down in the instrument and articles of government, which may only be amended by application to the Secretary of State for Education. The College is accountable through its Governing Board, 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 accountability agreement between the Department for Education and the College sets out the terms and conditions on which the grant is made. The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that conditions of grant are met. As part of this process, the College must adhere to the funding body's audit code of practice (ACOP), which requires it to have sound systems of financial and management control and the College Financial Handbook (first published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in March 2024 and effective from 1 August 2024). The financial regulations of the College form part of this overall system of accountability.

2. Status of Financial Regulations

- 2.1 This document sets out the College's financial regulations. It translates into practical guidance the College's broad policies relating to financial control. This document was approved by the Governing Board on 3 December 2024. It applies to the College and all its subsidiary undertakings.
- 2.2 These financial regulations are subordinate to the College's instruments and articles of government and to any restrictions contained within the College's accountability agreement with the funding body, the funding body's audit code of practice and the College Financial Handbook.
- 2.3 The purpose of these financial regulations is to provide control over the totality of the College's resources and provide management with assurances that the resources are being properly applied for the achievement of the College's strategic plan and 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 College complies with all relevant legislation
 - safeguarding the assets of the College.

- 2.4 Compliance with the financial regulations is compulsory for all staff connected with the College. A member of staff who fails to comply with the financial regulations may be subject to disciplinary action under the College's disciplinary policy. The Governing Board will be notified of any such breach through the Audit Committee. It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure that their staff are made aware of the existence and content of the College's financial regulations.
- 2.5 The Resources Committee is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the financial regulations, through the Finance Director, and for advising the Governing Board of any additions or changes necessary.
- 2.6 In exceptional circumstances, this committee may authorise a departure from the detailed provisions herein, such departure to be reported to the Governing Board at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.7 The College's detailed financial procedures set out precisely how these regulations will be implemented and are contained in a separate manual which is available from the Finance Department.

B. Corporate Governance

3. The Governing Board

- 3.1 The Governing Board is responsible for the strategic direction, oversight and scrutiny of the College. Its financial responsibilities are to:
- ensure the solvency of the College and the safeguarding of the College's assets
 - appoint, grade, suspend, dismiss and determine the pay and conditions of service of the Principal / Chief Executive and other senior post-holders
 - 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 and theft, applied by the College are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard public funds
 - approve the appointment of external auditors and an internal audit service
 - secure the efficient, economical and effective management of all the College's resources and expenditure, capital assets and equipment, and staff, so that the investment of public funds in the College is not put at risk
 - ensure that appropriate financial considerations are taken into account at all stages in reaching decisions and in their execution
 - plan and conduct 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 before the start of each financial year
 - determine the tuition fees policy

- ensure that the College complies with the funding body's audit code of practice
- approve the College's strategic plan
- approve the annual financial statements.

4. Accountable Officer

4.1 The Principal / Chief Executive is the College's accountable officer and is responsible for ensuring the financial administration of the College's affairs in accordance with the accountability agreement with the funding body. As the designated officer, the Principal / Chief Executive may be required to justify any of the College's financial matters to the Public Accounts Committee at the House of Commons.

In particular, the articles of government 3.(2).(c) charge the Principal / Chief Executive with responsibility:

"...for preparing annual estimates of income and expenditure, for consideration and approval by the Governing Board, and for the management of budget and resources, within the estimates approved by the Governing Board."

The Principal / Chief Executive shall demonstrate their oversight of financial matters by signing the balance sheet, the statement of corporate governance within the annual financial statements, and the three-year financial forecasts submitted to the funding body.

5. Committee Structure

The Governing Board has ultimate responsibility for the College's finances, but delegate's specific powers and processes to the committees detailed below. These committees are accountable to the Governing Board.

5.1 Resources Committee

Monitoring of the College's financial performance, solvency and budgetary control is undertaken by the Resources Committee. The committee will examine annual estimates and accounts (including the accounting policies upon which they are based) and recommend their approval to the Governing Board. It will ensure that short-term budgets are in line with agreed longer-term plans and that they are followed. It will consider any other matters relevant to the financial duties of the Governing Board and make recommendations accordingly. The committee will also ensure that the Governing Board has adequate information to enable it to discharge its financial responsibilities.

5.2 Audit Committee

Colleges are required by their accountability agreement with the funding body and by the funding body's audit code of practice to appoint an Audit Committee. The committee is independent, advisory and reports to the Governing Board. 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 committee is responsible for identifying and approving appropriate performance measures for internal and external audit and for monitoring their

performance. It must also satisfy itself that satisfactory arrangements are in place to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The audit requirements of the College are set out in the funding body's audit code of practice.

5.3 **Remuneration Committee**

Consideration of senior post holder's pay and conditions is the responsibility of the Remuneration Committee. It has the power to make recommendations to the Governing Board on their remuneration, including pay and other benefits, as well as contractual arrangements. **Director of Governance** The

5.4 Director of Governance is responsible for providing advisory, strategic and administrative support for the Governing Body's work, for advising on proper procedures and for intervening when the Director of Governance considers that the Board is acting inappropriately or beyond its powers, in which case they may need to seek external advice. The Governing Body Board are advised to agree procedures they would expect the Director of Governance to follow if there were difficulties in this area.

6. **Other Senior Managers with Financial Responsibility**

6.1 **The Finance Director**

Day-to-day financial administration is controlled by the Finance Director, who is responsible to the Principal / Chief Executive for:

- preparing annual capital & revenue budgets and financial plans
- preparing accounts, financial 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 College maintains satisfactory financial systems
- providing professional advice on all matters relating to financial policies and procedures
- on-going liaison with internal and external auditors in order to achieve efficient processes.

6.2 **Heads of department**

Heads of department are responsible to the Principal / Chief Executive for financial management for the areas or activities they control. They are advised by the Finance Director in executing their financial duties. The Finance Director will also supervise and approve the financial systems operating within their departments, including the form in which accounts and financial records are kept. Heads of Department are responsible for establishing and maintaining clear lines of responsibility within their departments for all financial matters. Where resources are devolved to budget holders, they are accountable to their Heads of Department for their own budget.

Heads of department shall provide the, Finance Director with such information as may be required to enable:

- compilation of the College's financial statements
- implementation of financial planning
- implementation of audit and financial reviews, projects and value for money studies.

6.3 **All members of staff**

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

They should ensure that they are aware of the College's financial authority limits and the values of purchases for which quotations and tenders are required.

They shall make available any relevant records or information to the Finance Director or any authorised representative in connection with the implementation of the College's financial policies, these financial regulations and the system of financial control.

They shall provide the Finance Director with such financial and other information as they may deem necessary, from time to time, to carry out the requirements of the Governing Board.

They shall immediately notify the Finance Director whenever any matter arises which involves, or is thought to involve, irregularities concerning, *inter alia*, cash or property of the College. The Finance Director shall take such steps considered necessary by way of investigation and report.

7. **Risk Management**

7.1 The College 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.

7.2 The Governing Board has overall responsibility for ensuring there is a risk management strategy 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.

7.3 In line with this policy, the Governing Board requires that the risk management policy and supporting procedures include:

- the adoption of common terminology in relation to the definition of risk and risk management
- the establishment of College-wide criteria for the measurement of risk, linking the threats to their potential impact and the likelihood of their occurrence together with a sensitivity analysis
- a decision on the level of risk to be accepted, together with tolerance levels expressed in terms of measurable outcomes
- a decision on the level of risk to be covered by insurance

- detailed regular review at department or support function level to identify significant risks associated with the achievement of key objectives and other relevant areas
- development of risk management and contingency plans for all significant risks, to include a designated 'risk owner' who will be responsible and accountable for managing the risk in question
- regular reporting to the Governing Board of all risks above established tolerance levels
- an annual review of the implementation of risk management arrangements

The strategy and procedures must be capable of independent verification.

7.4 Heads of department must ensure that any agreements negotiated within their departments with external bodies cover any legal liabilities to which the College may be exposed. All agreements must be approved by the Finance Director or the Vice Principal for Corporate Services. All such agreements should be entered on to the College contracts register

8. Whistleblowing

8.1 Whistleblowing in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is the disclosure by an employee (or other party) of malpractice in the workplace. A whistle-blower can blow the whistle about crime, civil offences (including negligence, breach of contract, etc.), 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.

8.2 Normally, any concern about a workplace matter at the College should be raised with the relevant member of staff's immediate line manager or Head of Department. However, the College 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.

8.3 A member of staff may, therefore, make the disclosure to one of the staff designated for this purpose, the Finance Director. If the member of staff does not wish to raise the matter with this person, or with the Principal / Chief Executive or the Chair of the Governing Board, it may be raised with the Chair of the Audit Committee.

8.4 The full procedure for whistleblowing is set out in the College's Whistleblowing Policy, which is available through the Human Resources department.

9. Code of Conduct

9.1 The College 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 (formerly known as the Nolan Committee), which members of staff at all levels are expected to observe.

9.2 Additionally, members of the Governing Board, Executive Management Team or those involved in procurement are required to disclose interests in the College's register of interests maintained by the Clerk to the Governing Board. They will also be responsible for ensuring that entries in the register relating to them are kept up to date regularly and promptly.

9.3 In particular, no person shall be a signatory to any College contract where they also have an interest in the activities of the other party.

9.4 **Receiving gifts or hospitality**

It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 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 guiding principles to be followed by all members of staff must be:

- the conduct of individuals should not create suspicion of any conflict between their official duty and their private interest
- the action of individuals acting in an official capacity should 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 should 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 should not be significantly greater than the College would be likely to provide in return and any gifts or hospitality accepted by any member of staff where the value is or may be over £30 must be declared to Finance Director by email at the earliest opportunity.

When it is not easy to decide between what is and what is not acceptable in terms of gifts or hospitality, the offer should be declined or advice sought from the the Finance Director.

C Financial Management and Control

10. Financial Planning

The Finance Director is responsible for preparing annually a rolling three-year financial plan for approval by the Governing Board, on the recommendation of the Resources Committee, and for preparing financial forecasts for submission to the funding body. Financial plans should be consistent with the strategic plans and estates strategy approved by the Governing Board.

10.1 **Budget objectives**

The Governing Board will, from time to time, set budget objectives for the College. These will help the, Finance Director, in preparing the more detailed financial plans for the College.

10.2 **Budget preparation**

The Finance Director is responsible for preparing each year an annual revenue budget and capital programme for consideration by the Resources Committee before submission to the Governing Board. The budget should also include monthly cash flow forecasts for the year and a projected year-end balance sheet. The Finance Director must ensure that detailed budgets are prepared in order to support the resource allocation process and that these are communicated to Heads of Department / budget holders as soon as possible following their approval by the Governing Board.

10.3 **Capital programmes**

The capital programme includes all expenditure on land, buildings and equipment except regular maintenance whether or not they are funded from capital grants. Expenditure of this type can only be considered as part of the capital programme approved by the Governing Board.

The College's capital policy required individual purchases of equipment over £10,000 to be capitalised.

The Finance Director and Vice Principal for Corporate Services will establish protocols for the inclusion of capital projects in the capital programme for approval by the Governing Board. These will set out the information that is required for each proposed project as well as the financial criteria that they are required to meet.

The Finance Director will also establish procedures for the approval of variations, including the notification of large variations to the funding body, as laid down in funding body guidelines.

The Finance Director is responsible for providing regular statements concerning all capital expenditure to the Resources Committee for monitoring purposes.

Following completion of a capital project, a post-project evaluation or final report should be submitted to the Resources Committee 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 funding body, as laid down in funding body guidelines.

10.4 **Overseas activity**

In planning and undertaking overseas activity, the College must have due regard to the relevant guidelines issued by the funding body.

10.5 **Other major developments**

Any new aspect of business, or proposed establishment of a company or joint venture, which will require an investment in buildings, resources or staff time of more than £500,000 (or might otherwise be considered "novel, contentious or repercussive" in accordance with the provisions of the College Financial Handbook)

which is not reflected within the financial forecasts should be presented for approval to the Resources Committee.

The Finance Director will establish protocols for these major developments to enable them to be considered for approval by the Governing Board. These will set out the information that is required for each proposed development as well as the financial criteria that they are required to meet.

11. Financial Control

11.1 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 Head of Department for the income and expenditure appropriate to their budget.

Significant departures from agreed budgetary targets must be reported immediately to the Finance Director by the Head of Department concerned and, if necessary, corrective action taken.

11.2 Financial information

The budget holders are assisted in their duties by management information provided by the Finance Department. 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 Finance Director is responsible for supplying management accounts on all aspects of the College's finances to the Resources Committee on a basis determined by this committee but subject to any specific requirements of the funding body. These reports are presented to the Governing Board, which has overall responsibility for the College's finances.

All members of the Governing Board are provided with copies of the management accounts on a monthly basis with the exception of August annually where no management accounts are produced for the first month of the financial year

Overspends in individual cost centres require the approval of the Finance Director.

11.3 Treatment of year-end balances

At the year-end, budget holders will not have the authority to carry forward a balance on their budget to the following year.

12. Accounting Arrangements

12.1 Financial year

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

12.2 Basis of accounting

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

The College is required to follow the 'Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education' (SORP), or any successor to the SORP in the preparation of their financial statements.

12.3 **Format of the financial statements**

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice *Accounting for Further and Higher Education*, subject to any specific requirements of the funding body.

Accounts are prepared for the financial year ending 31 July in the format required by the Education & Skills Funding Agency and the Office for Students as documented in the Accounts Direction Handbook.

12.4 **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 repairs and maintenance of existing buildings will be capitalised if it can be demonstrated that the resultant value of the building, on the basis of depreciated replacement value, is greater than the current book value, or that their economic benefit or expected lifetime is improved.

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 £10,000 or more. Grouped items (e.g. a suite of computers) where individual value have a value of less than £10,000 may also be capitalised. Capitalised assets other than land and buildings will be depreciated in accordance with the College's depreciation accounting policies.

Depreciation will be charged from the date of acquisition or when the asset is commissioned whichever is later.

12.5 **Accounting records**

The Finance Director is responsible for the retention of financial documents. These should be kept in a form that is acceptable to the relevant authorities.

The College is required by law to retain prime documents for six years plus the current year.

Members of staff should ensure that retention arrangements comply with any specific requirements of funding organisations such as regional development agencies.

Additionally, for auditing and other purposes, other financial documents should be retained for three years or as determined by the funder. The Finance Department shall prepare a manual of financial and accounting procedures to be operated within the College.

The Finance Department shall be responsible for, or involved in, the submission of all grant claims to Government Departments, the DfE and all other funding bodies. The Finance Director shall review all grant

submissions with financial implications. The Principal / Chief Executive shall sign all final grant submissions with financial implications.

The Finance Department shall ensure that accounting records are kept up to date. Any amendments to standing data within the general ledger (e.g. chart of accounts, budget data, opening balances) requires the prior approval of an authorised officer within the Finance Department.

At the end of the financial year the Departments shall supply information to the Finance Director in such form and by such a date as to enable to the prompt close down of the accounts to enable the production of the reports to support the College's financial performance.

The following principles shall be observed in the allocation of accounting duties:-

- a) the duties of providing information regarding sums due to or from the College and of calculating, checking and recording these sums, shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or disbursing them
- b) officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions shall not themselves be engaged in any of these transactions.
- c) Monthly Management Accounts will be produced in a format approved by the Resources Committee of the Governing Board. These will normally be available within three weeks from the end of the month. Accounts will not be prepared for August as these would be based purely upon estimates.

12.6 **Public access**

Under the terms of the Charities Act 2011, the Governing Board is required to supply any person with a copy of the College's most recent financial statements within two months of a request. The Act enables the Governing Board to levy a reasonable fee and this will be charged at the discretion of the Finance Director. The College will also allow members of the public to inspect the statement of accounts during normal working hours, and will make them available on the College's website. Furthermore, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, a copy can be supplied to individuals upon request. A reasonable charge may be made for this, to be determined by the Finance Director to cover costs. The financial reports are also available on the College website at the following web address

<https://www.wigan-leigh.ac.uk/governing-board/corporate-documents>

12.7 **Taxation**

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

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

13. Audit Requirements

13.1 General

External auditors and internal auditors shall have authority to:

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

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

Following consideration by the Audit Committee and then consideration by the Resources Committee, the financial statements should be reviewed by the Audit Committee. On the recommendation of the Audit Committee they will be submitted to the Governing Board for approval.

13.2 External audit

The appointment of external auditors for the main financial statements of the College will take place annually and is the responsibility of the Governing Board. The Governing Board will be advised by the Audit Committee.

The primary role of this external audit is to report on the College's financial statements and to carry out such examination of the statements and underlying records and control systems as are necessary to reach their opinion on the statements and to report on the appropriate use of funds. Their duties will be in accordance with advice set out in the funding body's audit code of practice and the Auditing Practices Board's statements of auditing standards.

13.3 Internal audit

The internal auditor is appointed by the Governing Board on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

The College's financial memorandum with the funding body requires that it has an effective internal audit function and their duties and responsibilities must be in accordance with advice set out in the funding body's audit code of practice. The main responsibility of internal audit is to provide the Governing Board, the Principal / Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team with assurances on the adequacy of the internal control system.

The internal audit service remains independent in its planning and operation but has direct access to the Governing Board, Principal / Chief Executive and Chair of the Audit Committee. The internal auditor will also comply with the Auditing Practices Board's auditing guideline *Guidance for Internal Auditors*.

13.4 **Fraud and corruption**

It is the duty of all members of staff, management and the Governing Board to notify the Finance Director immediately whenever any matter arises which involves, or is thought to involve, irregularity, including fraud, corruption or any other impropriety.

The Finance Director shall immediately invoke the fraud response plan, which incorporates the following key elements: they will notify the Principal / Chief Executive and the Audit Committee (through its Chair) of the suspected irregularity and shall take such steps as they consider necessary by way of investigation and report

- the Principal / Chief Executive shall inform the police if a criminal offence is suspected of having been committed
- any significant cases of fraud or irregularity shall be reported to the funding body in accordance with their requirements as set out in the audit code of practice
- the Audit Committee shall commission such investigation as may be necessary of the suspected irregularity, by the internal audit service or others, as appropriate
- the internal audit service, or others commissioned to carry out an investigation, shall prepare a report for the Audit Committee on the suspected irregularity. Such report shall include advice on preventative measures.

If the suspected fraud is thought to involve the Finance Director and/or the Principal / Chief Executive, the member of staff shall notify the Chair of the Audit Committee direct of their concerns regarding irregularities.

13.5 **Value for money**

It is a requirement of the accountability agreement that the Governing Board of the College is responsible for delivering value for money from public funds. It should 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 funding body, the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee, the ONS or other relevant bodies.

Following reclassification, colleges (and their subsidiaries) are now part of central government. They continue to be self-governing charities regulated by the Secretary of State for Education but are now subject to the framework for financial management set out in Managing Public Money (MPM).

MPM sets out requirements for everyone working in central government to manage and deploy public resources responsibly in the public interest, although much of what it requires can be recognised as common sense and therefore in line with how we already run our college.

Reclassification to the government sector now means that there will be new requirements for colleges relating to financial management oversight, principally associated with approvals from the DfE (see appendix G)

Internal audit is to 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.

13.6 **Other auditors**

The College may, from time to time, be subject to audit or investigation by external bodies such as the funding body, National Audit Office, HM Revenue & Customs, etc. They have the same rights of access as external and internal auditors.

14. **Treasury Management**

14.1 **Treasury management policy**

The Resources Committee 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 require compliance with funding body rules regarding approval for any secured or unsecured loans that go beyond the general consent levels set out in the financial memorandum. The committee has a responsibility to ensure implementation, monitoring and review of such policies.

All executive decisions concerning borrowing, investment or financing (within policy parameters) shall be delegated to the Finance Director and an appropriate reporting system set up. All borrowing shall be undertaken in the name of the College and shall conform to any relevant funding body requirements.

The Finance Director will report annually to the Resources Committee on the activities of the treasury management operation.

14.2 **Appointment of bankers and other professional advisers**

The Governing Board is responsible for the appointment of the College's bankers and other professional financial advisers (such as investment managers) on the recommendation of the Resources Committee. The appointment shall be for a specified period after which consideration shall be given by the Resources Committee to competitively tendering the service.

14.3 **Banking arrangements**

The Finance Director is responsible, on behalf of the Resources Committee, for liaising with the College's bankers in relation to the College's bank accounts and the issue of cheques. All cheques shall be ordered on the authority of the Finance Director who shall make proper arrangements for their safe custody.

Only the Finance Director or a Senior Postholder may open or close a bank account for dealing with the College's funds. All bank accounts shall be in the name of the College or one of its subsidiary companies.

All cheques drawn on behalf of the College must be signed in the form approved by the Resources Committee.

Those employees authorised to sign cheques shall be as follows:-

- The Principal
- The Finance Director
- The Vice Principal Corporate Services

This may be varied from time to time with the approval of the Resources Committee of the Governing Board. The approval limits of each of the individuals shall be approved by the Resources Committee of the Governing Board.

Cheques below £50,000 are signed by any two of the above. Cheques over £50,000 must be countersigned by the Principal.

Staff members shall ensure that all monies collected are handed over for safe keeping in College safes or approved bank accounts. Staff shall under no circumstances open separate bank accounts. Staff shall under no circumstances receive cheques made payable to themselves as settlement of a service provided by the College.

All automated transfers on behalf of the College, such as BACS or CHAPS, must be authorised by either the Finance Director, Vice Principal for Corporate Services, or the Principal / Chief Executive.

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

15. **Income**

15.1 **General**

The Finance Director is responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures are in operation to enable the College 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 Finance Director.

Each Head of Department shall be responsible for the prompt notification to the Finance Department of the requirement for raising sales invoices in connection with work done, goods supplied or services rendered

and of all other amounts due. This will be done using the College's standard electronic procedure. The Finance Department shall be responsible for raising the invoice and pursuing the recovery of monies due.

The Finance Director shall be notified promptly of all monies due to the College and of contracts, leases and other agreements entered into which involve the receipt of monies by the College. The Finance Director shall be provided with copies of any such documents.

All receipt forms, books, tickets and other such items shall either be ordered by or approved by the Finance Department, who shall satisfy themselves as to the arrangements for their control.

Only members of staff authorised by the Finance Director shall collect or accept monies due to the College and official receipts shall be issued for all such amounts at the time of the collection. No member of staff shall accept cheques made out to themselves as payment for a service provided by the College.

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

The Finance Director is responsible for ensuring that all grants notified by the funding body and other bodies are received and appropriately recorded in the College's accounts.

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

15.2 **Maximisation of income**

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that revenue to the College 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 Finance Director of sums due so that collection can be initiated.

15.3 **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 cash, cheques and other negotiable instruments.

All monies received must be paid to the finance department promptly, and in accordance with a timetable prescribed by the Finance Director and set out in financial procedures. The custody and transit of all monies received must comply with the requirements of the College'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 the departmental petty cash float. Personal or other cheques must not be cashed out of money received on behalf of the College.

Receipts by credit or debit card: the College may only receive payments by debit or credit card using procedures approved by the Finance Department.

No exchanges for change must be made from any payments made to the College without prior approval from the Finance Director.

No deductions must be made from any payments made to the College prior to paying monies over to the finance department. All monies are banked with the exception of:

- Change for the petty cash tin.

The petty cash control accounts are reconciled monthly.

15.4 **Collection of debts**

The Head of Finance shall ensure that:

- debtors' invoices are raised promptly on official invoices, in respect of all income due to the College
- 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
- outstanding debts are monitored and reports prepared for management.

Only the Finance Director can implement credit arrangements and indicate the periods in which different types of invoice must be paid. All invoices are requested to be settled within 30 days from the date of the invoice, with the exception of contracts, which are in line with the terms agreed by the Principal / Chief Executive and stage payments for course fees which are administered by the Finance Department.

Requests to write off debts must be referred in writing to the Finance Director.

15.5 **Student fees**

The procedures for collecting tuition fees must be approved by of the Finance Director who is responsible for ensuring that all student fees due to the College are received.

Any student who has not paid an account for fees or any other item owing to the College may be prevented from re-enrolling at the College and from using any of the College's facilities unless appropriate arrangements have been made to pay the amount outstanding.

Only the Executive Management Team is authorised to waive fees. Such waiver is only to be given after due consideration of the individual's financial circumstances. Other fees will only be waived if the individual meets the fee waiver requirements as set out in the Fees Policy approved annually.

15.6 **Student loans**

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

16. **Project Funding and Contracts**

16.1 **General**

The individual project manager is responsible for examining every formal application for grant / project funding and shall ensure that there is adequate provision of resources to meet all commitments.

The individual project manager shall maintain all financial records relating to research grants and contracts and shall initiate all claims for reimbursement from sponsoring bodies by the due date.

Each grant or contract will have a named supervisor or grant holder and will be assigned to a specific budget holder.

Control of pay and non-pay expenditure will be contained within the budget cost centre. The head of the budget cost centre may delegate day-to-day control of the account but any overspend or under-recovery of overheads is to be the clear responsibility of the budget cost centre, with any loss being a charge against departmental funds.

16.2 **Recovery of overheads**

Overheads will be charged where the funding arrangements permit full recovery.

16.3 **Grant and contract conditions**

Many grant-awarding bodies and contracting organisations stipulate conditions under which their funding is given. In addition, there are often procedures to be followed regarding the submission of interim or final reports or the provision of other relevant information. Failure to respond to these conditions often means that the College will suffer a significant financial penalty. It is the responsibility of the named supervisor or grant holder to ensure that conditions of funding are met.

Any loss to the College resulting from a failure to meet conditions of funding is the responsibility of the budget holder, and may be charged against departmental funds.

17. **Other Income-Generating Activity**

17.1 **Private consultancies and other paid work**

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

- outside consultancies or other paid work may not be accepted without the consent of the Principal / Chief Executive
- applications for permission to undertake work as a purely private activity must be submitted to the Principal / Chief Executive, as appropriate, and include the following information:
 - 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 Collegial duties of the member(s) of staff concerned.

17.2 **Short courses and services rendered**

In this context a short course is any course which does not form part of the award-bearing teaching load of the faculty.

Any staff wishing to run a short course must have the permission of their Assistant Principal. The course organiser will be responsible to the Head of Department for day-to-day management of the course. The course will be costed in accordance with the faculty's direct cost and will include an element of College overheads. Lower rates can only be used with the agreement of the Finance Director.

17.3 **Off-site collaborative provision (subcontracting)**

Any contract or arrangement whereby the College provides education with the assistance of persons other than the College's own staff must be subject to the following procedure.

The contractor arrangement shall be in line with the level of subcontracting agreed by the Governing Board.

The form of the contract shall be scrutinised in advance of its operation by the Finance Director and the Vice Principal for Data & Funding, the contract shall be signed on behalf of the College by them or the Principal / Chief Executive.

The impact of the contract(s) shall be subject to scrutiny by the Resources Committee. The format for regular reports shall be as stated in funding body guidance. The committee shall consider the risk factors associated with the proposed partnership and agree an appropriate entry in the College's financial forecast.

Where the partnership would represent a significant departure from the College's strategic plan, the Governing Board shall approve the departure, and the Principal / Chief Executive shall seek the views of and inform the funding body.

17.4 **Matched funding**

Any such project requires the approval of the appropriate officer prior to any commitment being entered into. Such approval shall be dependent upon the relevant Head of Department 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 policy.

Individual applications for funds in excess of £500,000 shall be the subject of a report by the Principal / Chief Executive to the Resources Committee which will set out, amongst other things, the potential risks generated by the project.

If the College sub-contracts such work to external providers, the Finance Director shall 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.

17.5 **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 by the Head of Department and agreed by the Executive Management Team.

Other income-generating activities organised by members of staff must be costed and agreed with the Finance Director before any commitments are made. Provision must be made for charging both direct and indirect costs in accordance with the College's costing and pricing policy, in particular for the recovery of overheads.

17.6 **Additional contributions to departments**

Distribution of profits on other income-generating activity between central funds of the College and individual departments will be agreed by the Finance Director.

17.7 **Additional payments to staff**

Any proposal that involves additional payments to members of staff should be supported by a schedule of names and values and must be approved by the Executive Management Team, and in the case of an Executive Manager, the Principal / Chief Executive.

If new staff are to be funded by a project then this request for new staff will need to be authorised in the normal manner.

18. **Intellectual Property Rights and Patents**

18.1 **General**

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

18.2 **Patents**

The Resources Committee is responsible for establishing procedures to deal with any patents accruing to the College from inventions and discoveries made by staff in the course of their daily work.

18.3 **Intellectual property rights**

In the event of the College deciding to become involved in the commercial exploitation of inventions and

research, the matter should then proceed in accordance with the intellectual property procedures contained in the College's procedures.

19. Expenditure

19.1 General

The Finance Director is responsible for making payments to suppliers of goods and services to the College.

19.2 Scheme of delegation / financial authorities

The Head of Department is responsible for purchases within their department. Purchasing authority may be delegated to named individuals within the department who must be on the authorised signatories list.

Individual purchases below £500 should, where possible, be made using a College Procurement Card in accordance with the procedures issued by the Finance Director.

The PA to the Executive Management Team shall maintain a register of authorised signatories and managers must supply specimen signatures of those authorised to certify financial documents.

Requisitions shall be sent to the Finance Department in accordance with Financial Procedures. Each Head of Department shall be responsible for purchase requisitions issued from their department and for ensuring that the cost is within approved limits.

Where, as a matter of emergency (i.e. at weekends or statutory holidays) goods or services are ordered verbally, a confirmation purchase requisition shall be issued as soon as possible.

Official orders shall be issued electronically by the College following receipt of a properly authorised requisition for all work, goods or services to be supplied to the College. All orders shall be raised prior to the delivery of goods or commencement of work for the supply of certain goods it may be appropriate to issue a blanket order to cover a specified period

Orders over £20,000 require the authorisation of the Finance Director. Orders over the value of £50,000 require the authorisation of the Principal / Chief Executive. Orders over the value of £100,000 require the approval of the Chair of the Governing Board or the Chair of the Resources Committee.

On no account may official orders be used to obtain goods for private use by members of staff of the College. Educational equipment and materials may be purchased by the College for resale to students.

The College will comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (**PCR 2015**), which took effect from 26 February 2015, and with the new Procurement Act 2023 (**PA 2023**) which comes into force on 24 February 2025. Whilst the new PA 2023 comes into effect and replaces the current public procurement regime, the existing PCR 2015 will continue to apply to any resulting or already awarded contracts under frameworks, dynamic purchasing agreements and procurements launched prior to 24 February 2025. This means that there will be a period of transition where both procurement regimes will continue to apply in parallel.

19.3 Procurement

The College 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.

Goods and services purchased by the College should be obtained in the most cost-effective manner whilst ensuring Value for Money and ethical procurement. Various tools and resources are available to staff to help with the sourcing of goods and services in the correct manner such as certain purchasing consortiums having framework agreements in place that are compliant with the PCR 2015 or the PA 2023 (as applicable).

19.4 Tenders and quotations

19.5 Managers and delegated budget holders must comply with the Colleges tendering procedures, detailed below. Staff should note that values shown below relate to the contract values, not annual spend.

Up to £4,999

The budget holder shall use good sense and have the discretion to decide whether or not to obtain quotations, but value for money must always be paramount.

From £5,000 to £59,999 including VAT (services and goods only)

The budget holder shall be required to draw up a specification for the goods / services; to seek at least three written quotations (to be retained by the Budget Holder). There will be circumstances where it is not possible to obtain three quotes due to the nature of the goods / services. In these situations it may be possible to approach a single source supplier to provide the goods or services. All instances of single source supplier usage must be requested using the Colleges procurement waiver form and should be approved in advance by the Finance Director. Quick quote tools are available on certain frameworks or where a framework is not a suitable route to market this can be achieved by approaching three suitable suppliers, including the incumbent if you are happy with their current performance.

For contracts for services and goods falling under the PCR 2015 (i.e. before 24 February 2025), the College is required to follow specific “below threshold rules”:

- if the College decides to conduct a competitive tender process, it must not use a separate pre-qualification stage;
- if the College decides to advertise the contract opportunity e.g. on its website or through trade press, then it will have to publish a contract opportunity notice on the Government’s Contracts Finder website (note that this is a different platform to the Government’s Find a Tender Service

system). This notice is not required if the College advertises to a pre-selected group or particular suppliers (for example, a framework, dynamic purchasing market or approved panel);

- after it has entered into a contract with the supplier, the College is required within 90 calendar days after the contract award date to publish a contract award notice on Contracts Finder.

For contracts for services and goods falling under the new PA 2023 (i.e. after 24 February 2025), the College is required to follow specific “below threshold rules” as follows:

- before conducting a tendering process, the College must consider any barriers that SMEs may face, and how they might be reduced or removed (this does not apply to awards under frameworks);
- if the College decides to conduct a competitive tender process, it must not use a separate suitability stage to reduce the number of bidders invited to tender (this does not apply to awards under frameworks);
- if the College decides to advertise the contract opportunity e.g. on its website or through trade press, then it will have to publish a below-threshold tender notice on the Central Digital Platform (this is currently being developed and will be made available to all contracting authorities and suppliers for registration). This notice is not required if the College advertises to a pre-selected group or particular suppliers (for example, a framework, dynamic market or approved panel) or if the value of the contract is below £30,000 (including VAT);
- as soon as reasonably possible after it has entered into a contract with the supplier, the College is required to publish a contracts details notice on the Central Digital Platform.

In addition, for contracts subject to the PCR 2015 and PA 2023 procurement regimes, the following prompt payment terms are implied into the contract and related subcontracts:

- the College must pay valid and undisputed invoices within 30 days (beginning with the day the invoice is received or becomes due, if later); and
- the College must notify the payees without undue delay if it disputes the invoice or considers it invalid.

From £60,000 to £214,904 including VAT (services and goods only)

The Budget Holder shall be required to draw up a specification for the goods / service for inclusion in a competitive tender process. There will be circumstances where it is not possible to obtain three quotes due to the nature of the goods / services. In these situations it may be possible to approach a single source supplier to provide the goods or services. All instances of single source supplier usage must be requested using the Colleges procurement waiver form and should be approved in advance by the Finance Director. Frameworks offer an opportunity to run a mini competition or direct award across a wide range of their

categories. Frameworks consist of a list of pre-approved suppliers who have been evaluated and selected to provide a predefined set of products and services. This allows them to bid on specific contracts without having to go through the usual full procurement process.

Purchases outside of a framework will require a tendering process to be managed. The process should always take into account Quality as well as Cost. Staff are encouraged to seek support where required to ensure a suitable process is undertaken to protect the College from unfair contract terms being accepted and a transparent process being undertaken.

The “below threshold rules” under the PCR 2015 and PA 2023 in the previous section also apply here.

From £214,904 and over including VAT (PCR 2015 or PA 2023, as applicable, threshold for goods and services only)

The Budget Holder is legally required to ensure all purchases for goods and services (excluding contracts for works) with a contract value over the threshold are competitively tendered in line with PCR 2015 or PA 2023 rules (as applicable). Planning will ensure that adequate time can be allowed to follow a compliant process which meets the requirements of PCR 2015 or PA 2023 as applicable. Typically 3-4 months are required to complete this process, so forward planning is paramount. Frameworks offer an opportunity to run a mini competition or direct award across a wide range of their categories. Frameworks consist of a list of pre-approved suppliers who have been evaluated and selected to provide a predefined set of products and services. This allows them to bid on specific contracts without having to go through the usual full procurement process.

The procurement threshold is currently £214,904 (including VAT) as at 1 January 2024.

Staff should note the threshold of £214,904 relates to the contract and / or aggregated value of purchases, so the following instances should be noted:

Estimated purchase cost for goods and services over the value of £214,904 require a PCR 2015 or a PA 2023 (as applicable) compliant procurement process;

Repeat purchases of goods and services over a 4 year period, not covered by a contract, require a PCR 2015 or a PA 2023 (as applicable) compliant procurement process;

The aggregated value of purchases of goods and services over a 4 year period, requires a PCR 2015 or a PA 2023 (as applicable) compliant procurement process i.e. the total cost of bus services, not the cost per route, would be considered.

Over £250,000 (contracts for works, services and goods)

Contract values over £250,000 for works, services and goods require the approval of the Principal / Chief Executive or their representative.

From £5,372,609 and over including VAT (PCR 2015 or PA 2023, as applicable, threshold for works only)

The Budget Holder is legally required to ensure all purchases of works with a contract value equal to or over the threshold are competitively tendered in line with PCR 2015 or PA 2023 rules, as applicable. Planning will ensure that adequate time can be allowed to follow a compliant process which meets the requirements of PCR 2015 or PA 2023 as applicable. Typically 3-4 months are required to complete this process, however various stages could be required such as Planning and Design followed by Build and Construction, so forward planning is paramount. In the interest of segregation of duties there should be at least two individuals involved in evaluating the tender responses.

For any contracts for works below £5,372,609 including VAT, the College is not required to follow all of the procurement rules under the PCR 2015 or the PA 2023, as applicable. However, the “below threshold rules” under the PCR 2015 and PA 2023 set out in the previous section “From £5,000 to £59,999 including VAT (services and goods only)” also apply to works contracts with the exception that in a competitive tender process, the College is not prohibited from using a separate pre-qualification stage under the PCR 2015 or a separate suitability stage under the PA 2023 to reduce the number of bidders invited to tender if the value of the contract is equal to or greater than: (i) £214,904 (including VAT) under the PCR 2015; and (ii) £213,477 (including VAT) under the PA 2023. Frameworks also offer an opportunity to run a mini competition or direct award across a wide range of their categories. Frameworks consist of a list of pre-approved suppliers who have been evaluated and selected to provide a predefined set of products and services. This allows them to bid on specific contracts without having to go through the usual full procurement process.

Electronic tendering

All tenders should be issued and received via an E-procurement system. This is a mandatory requirement for e-communication on all Public Sector contracts from October 2018. This is an efficient and secure way to view, upload and share documents in a timely manner amongst bidders. Any communication between suppliers should be raised via the E-procurement system which ensures all bidders have access to the same information and the process is transparent for audit purposes. The college will only be able to access the submitted tenders once the closing day and time is met. No amendments can be made to the tendered submissions therefore it is a highly secure process which elevates the need for witnesses when receiving and opening tenders. College procurement advice is available from Tenet Education Services who have access to electronic tendering systems.

Awarded tenders should ensure they have relevant contracts in place and only be accepted in the case of;

- Tenders between the values of £60k - £214,904 should be approved and signed off by the Finance Director or their representative and the Manager responsible for the contract management of this service.
- Tenders over £214,904 should be approved and signed off by the Principal / Chief Executive or their representative and the Manager responsible for the contract management of this service.
- Tenders over £750,000 should be approved and signed off by the Board of Governors.

Procurement planning

The Contracts Register is to be maintained and updated with full details of any contract that has been awarded by the College. This should clearly highlight the start and end date, with any extensions and the contract value. The Finance Director is responsible for updating this information and ensuring adequate time is built into the process for any upcoming procurement activity. This will allow procurement activity to be planned and any collaborative opportunities to be recognised.

Regulations

The Finance Director is responsible for ensuring the College complies with its legal obligations under the PCR 2015 or the PA 2023 as applicable. Failure to adhere to such practises puts the College at risk of challenge which could lead to financial and reputational damage as well as operational risk. PCR 2015 or PA 2023 procurement regulations apply to all contracts with aggregated spend over the above identified thresholds. Within each area the Head of Departments is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the College's procurement Policy in respect of all purchases, however funded, within their department and for ensuring that all staff with delegated authority are fully aware of the policy and procedures.

In some circumstances, procurement may be subject to the "lighter touch regime rules" under PCR 2015 or PA 2023, as applicable. These circumstances would generally apply to contracts aimed at directly providing public or social benefits, such as sub-contracting aimed at delivering specialised learning to local residents. Where the college's strategy is specifically to target funding at local learners, flexibility in terms of normal procurement rules may be required as it may not be appropriate to offer use of the associated funding to providers with learners outside of the local area. In these circumstances, the college would only be required to consider providers in the local area.

It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure that their members of staff comply with regulations by notifying the Finance Director of any purchase that is likely to exceed the thresholds.

The Finance Director is also required to submit to the funding body when requested details on expenditure which exceeds the threshold.

19.6 Payment of invoices

The procedures for making all payments shall be in a form specified by the Finance Director.

Apart from petty cash payments from imprest accounts the normal method of payment of money due from the College shall be by electronic transfer from the College's bank account. Staff shall not, unless they have received prior consent from the Finance Director negotiate payment terms with a supplier that are less favourable than the College's normal 30 day payment terms.

Invoices must be authorised for payment against approved purchase orders in accordance with the Financial Procedures.

19.7 **Staff reimbursement**

The College's purchasing and payments procedures are in place to enable the majority of non-pay supplies 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 are entitled to reimbursement.

Where such purchases by staff are planned, the Finance Director and the relevant Head of Department may jointly approve advances to staff who are going to incur expenditure on the College's behalf. Upon completion of the travel or 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 an individual is still outstanding.

19.8 **Petty cash**

The use of College Procurement Cards or official purchase orders is preferred to petty cash. However, petty cash amounts will be made available as appropriate and must be used in accordance with Financial Procedures.

19.9 **Foreign Currency**

Any department requiring foreign currency for College trips must complete a Currency Request Form giving at least one weeks notice – <https://finintranet.wigan-leigh.ac.uk/docs.aspx>

Upon receipt of the completed form the relevant budget will be checked to ensure sufficient funds are available

- All orders will be placed by Finance
- An authorisation letter will be provided by Finance to confirm this information – this must be taken to the bank by the person collecting the currency together with one form of photographic ID
- All collections will be from Barclays Bank – Wigan Market Place branch
- Depending upon the amount of currency required it may be necessary for more than one person to accompany the nominated person. This can either be another colleague or a site supervisor

Please ensure that the currency request form is completed at each stage;

- Section One – to be completed by the department organising the trip, with details of trip date, country/currency, amount required, date required, cost centre and authorising manager
- Section Two – to be completed by the department. They must nominate who will collect the currency from the finance department and if numerous people are collecting how much each one is to receive
- Section Three – to be completed by finance, detailing bank reference number, nominated person to collection from local branch, currency amount and the GBP equivalent.

19.10 **Hospitality**

Staff entertaining guests from outside bodies at lunch time should normally use the College's catering facilities. Where this is not the case, permission must be obtained in advance from the Finance Director and reasons must be stated when submitting a claim for reimbursement. Levels of hospitality should be modest and appropriate for the occasion. The names of the staff members, together with the guests, must be written on the reverse of the receipt.

20. **Salaries, Wages & Pensions**

20.1 **Remuneration policy**

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

The Governing Board will determine what other benefits are to be available, the basis of their provision (contributory or not) and the staff to whom they are to be available.

Salaries and other benefits for designated senior postholders and the Executive Management Team will be determined by the Remuneration Committee set up by the Governing Board.

20.2 **Appointment of staff**

All contracts of service shall be concluded in accordance with the College's approved Human Resource practices and procedures and all offers of employment with the College shall be made in writing by the Vice Principal Corporate Services. Budget holders shall ensure that the Vice Principal Corporate Services is provided promptly with all information they may require in connection with the appointment, resignation, dismissal, secondments and transfers of employees.

20.3 **Salaries and wages**

The College has outsourced the management of the payroll service to an external payroll bureau who are responsible for the calculation of all costs relating to the monthly salary. The Finance Director and Vice Principal Corporate Service are responsible for the reconciliation and approval of all payments of salaries and wages to staff including payments for overtime or services rendered. This includes all timesheets and

other pay documents, including those relating to fees payable to external examiners and part-time lecturers.

All records or other pay documents shall be in a form prescribed or approved by the Finance Director and the Vice Principal Corporate Services and shall be signed by or on behalf of the Senior Managers. The names of officers authorised to sign such records shall be sent to the payroll department by each Senior Manager together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. The certification of records shall be in the personal signature or identifiable initials of the officer authorised to certify and not in the name of the Head of Department or any other officer other than the signatory.

The HR department will be responsible for keeping the payroll bureau informed of all matters relating to human resources for payroll purposes. In particular these include:

- appointments, resignations, dismissals, secondments and transfers
- absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from approved leave
- changes in remuneration other than normal increments and pay awards
- information necessary to maintain records of service for superannuation, income tax and national insurance.

The Head of HR shall be responsible for keeping all records relating to payroll including those of a statutory nature.

All payments must be made in accordance with the College's detailed payroll financial procedures and comply with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) regulations.

Individuals who wish to be treated as self-employed must complete the College questionnaire and the HMRC assessment on the subject and this must be approved by the Vice Principal Corporate Services or the Finance Director.

All statutory returns shall be reviewed and signed as approved by the Vice Principal Corporate Services or the Finance Director prior to being despatched.

20.4 **Superannuation schemes**

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

The Finance Director and Vice Principal Corporate Services are responsible for superannuation matters, including:

- paying contributions to various authorised superannuation schemes
- managing the process for any annual returns to various superannuation schemes
- administering the College's pension fund.

The Head of HR is responsible for administering eligibility to pension arrangements and for informing the payroll bureau when deductions should begin or cease for staff.

20.5 **Travel, subsistence and other allowances**

All claims for payment of car allowances, subsistence allowances, travelling and incidental expenses shall be submitted, duly certified in a form approved by the College. The names of individuals authorised to sign such records shall be sent to the finance department by each Head of Department together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. The certification of claims shall be in the personal signature or identifiable initials of the individuals authorised to certify and not in the name of the Head of Department or other officer other than the signatory. All claims will be in line with the Colleges “scheme for reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses”.

Individuals who travel on College business shall be responsible for accounting for monies advanced to them. All expenditure that is not covered by the agreed HMRC per diem allowance shall be supported by receipts where possible. All claims shall be authorised by the Head of Department who requested the trip. On completion, these claims shall be forwarded to the Finance Department and/or Human Resources, for settlement, who shall maintain records for possible inspection by the HMRC. For overseas trips the claim shall be supported by a diary of business activities. If expenditure is incurred on entertaining then the reverse of the receipt should include all the names of the individuals who attended the meal/function.

20.6 **Overseas travel**

All arrangements for overseas travel must be in accordance with the appropriate scheme developed by the Principal / Chief Executive. Any approvals required must be obtained in advance of committing the College to those arrangements or confirmation of any travel bookings.

Air Travel will be at economy class unless agreed in advance in writing by the Principal / Chief Executive. Daily living allowances will be paid in accordance with the College's per diem agreement with HMRC. Expenses for visits to countries where the College does not have such agreements will be reimbursed against valid receipts.

Arrangements for travel by the Chair (or any other governor) shall be approved by the full Governing Board.

The Chair will approve in advance all overseas travel by the Principal / Chief Executive.

20.7 **Severance and other non-recurring payments**

Severance payments shall only be made in accordance with relevant legislation and under a scheme approved by the Governing Board through the Resources Committee. Professional advice should be obtained where necessary. All such payments must be authorised by the Principal / Chief Executive and

calculations checked by the Vice Principal Corporate Services or the Finance Director. Amounts paid should be declared in the financial statements.

All matters referred to an industrial tribunal shall be notified to the Resources Committee at the earliest opportunity. All determinations of tribunals must be similarly notified.

20.8 **Payment of Expenses to Governors**

Governors shall not receive payment for services as Governors. Reimbursements of reasonable travel, subsistence or support expenses for attending training courses or other events incurred in the execution of their duties as Governors will be permitted in line with College Policy. Support expenses are defined as expenses relating to circumstances where additional costs are incurred by a Governor in relation to the provision of childcare or to assist a Governor with a disability.

Should an overseas trip involve both the Chair and the Principal / Chief Executive the trip will be approved by the Governing Body in advance.

21. **Assets**

21.1 **Land, buildings, fixed plant and machinery**

The purchase, lease or rent of land or buildings can only be undertaken with authority from the Governing Board and with reference to funding body requirements where appropriate.

21.2 **Fixed asset register**

The Head of Finance is responsible for maintaining the College's register of land, buildings, and equipment. Heads of department will provide the Head of Finance with any information they may need to maintain the register.

21.3 **Inventories**

Heads of department are responsible for maintaining inventories, in a form prescribed by the Finance Director, for all plant, equipment, furniture and stores in their departments.

Vice Principal Data & Funding is responsible for maintaining a register of all computer and electronic equipment with a net current value of £500 or greater. The register must include all items donated or held in trust, and should be reviewed annually.

Inventories must be checked at least once annually by the Head of Department and retained in the format prescribed by the Finance Director. Any anomalies must be reported in writing to the Finance Director

When transferring equipment, etc. between departments, a transfer record must be kept and the inventories amended accordingly.

The College's property shall only be used for the College's business, unless specific directions are issued by the Head of Department concerned.

Individual departments will be responsible for the maintenance of equipment irrespective of source of finance.

21.4 **Stocks and stores**

Heads of department are responsible for establishing adequate arrangements for the custody and control of stocks and stores within their departments.

Stocks shall not be in excess of normal requirements except in special circumstances with the approval of the Head of Department concerned.

The Finance Director shall receive from each Head of Department such information, as they requires in relation to stores for the accounting, costing and financial records.

Any obsolete items which are to be written off and disposed of shall be done so on receipt of approval from the appropriate Head of Department and approval by the Finance Director.

21.5 **Security and safeguarding assets**

Each Head of Department is responsible for maintaining security at all times for all buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, cash, etc. under their control. They shall consult the Head of Estates in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.

Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be agreed with the Finance Director and shall not be exceeded without their express permission.

21.6 **Personal use**

Assets owned or leased by the College shall not be subject to personal use without proper authorisation.

21.7 **Asset disposal / Write Off**

No equipment or furniture may be disposed of or written off except on the authority of the Finance Director or the Vice Principal Corporate Services, on the recommendation of the appropriate Head of Department.

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

21.8 **Major Capital Building Projects**

Capital building projects, which require funding body notification or approval, will be reported separately to the Resources Committee. Details of projects requiring notification or approval are included in the Financial Memorandum.

A specific budget will be agreed beforehand and the Principal / Chief Executive will ensure that the Resources Committee receives, before commencements of the project, a paper which includes;

- An investment appraisal and assessment of compliance with criteria.
- A statement showing how the project links with the College's Strategic Plan.

During the project, there will be regular reports and at the end of the project, the Principal / Chief Executive will ensure that a paper is presents to the Resources Committee which will include:

- Actual outcome against budget
- Demonstrating compliance of the College tendering procedures.

22. Funds Held on Trust

22.1 Gifts, benefactions and donations

The Finance Director is responsible for maintaining financial records in respect of gifts, benefactions and donations made to the College and initiating claims for recovery of tax where appropriate.

22.2 Student welfare and access funds

The Finance Director will prescribe the format for recording the use of student welfare funds.

Records of student support funds will be maintained according to funding body requirements.

23. Other

23.1 Insurance

The Finance Director, together with the Vice Principal Corporate Services, 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 will have been considered and those most effectively dealt with by insurance cover will have been identified. This is likely to include important potential liabilities and provide sufficient cover to meet any potential risk to all assets. The Finance Director is responsible for effecting insurance cover as determined by the Governing Board. They are responsible for obtaining quotes, negotiating claims and maintaining the necessary records. The Finance Director will keep a register of all insurances affected by the College and the property and risks covered. They will also deal with the College's insurers and advisers about specific insurance problems.

Heads of Department must ensure that any agreements negotiated within their faculties with external bodies cover any legal liabilities to which the College may be exposed. The Vice Principal Corporate Services' or the Finance Directors advice should be sought to ensure that this is the case. Heads of department must give prompt notification to the Vice Principal Corporate Services or the Finance Director of any potential new risks and additional property and equipment that may require insurance and of any alterations affecting existing risks. Heads of Department must advise the Vice Principal Corporate Services and the Finance Director immediately of any event that may give rise to an insurance claim. The Finance Director will notify the College's insurers and, if appropriate, prepare a claim in conjunction with the Head of Department 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 for ensuring that inspection is carried out in the periods prescribed.

The College needs to ensure that all vehicles (irrespective of who owns them) used for work conform to road traffic law, are safe and properly maintained, and are fit for purpose.

This is relatively simple for company owned or leased vehicles, but can be more complicated when staff use their own vehicles for work because the College needs to be able to check:

- The vehicle is properly taxed, MOT'd and maintained
- The driver has a valid driving licence and business use insurance cover
- Documentary proof of the above, on request (and at specified intervals)
- The driver conducts regular vehicle safety checks

The College expects all drivers to drive safely, responsibly and legally, irrespective of who owns the vehicle.

The College shall not be responsible for staff members' property lost on College premises unless the staff member concerned was asked by their line manager to bring the item to work to assist in the performance of their duty.

23.2 **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 should first seek the advice of the Finance Director, who should have due regard to guidance issued by the funding body.

Following the enactment of the Education Act 2011, colleges no longer require the prior approval of the funding body before a company or a joint venture can be established. The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that the required procedures are followed. The process involved in forming a company or a joint venture and arrangements for monitoring and reporting on the activities of these undertakings are documented in the College's financial procedures.

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

The directors of companies where the College is the majority shareholder must submit an annual report to the Governing Board. They will also submit business plans or budgets as requested to enable the Resources Committee to assess the risk to the College. The College's internal and external auditors shall also be appointed to such companies.

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

Any miscellaneous trading activities within the College or College company shall be bound by these Financial Regulations.

No College employee shall place work into the College Company without the prior approval of the Finance Director.

The Finance Director shall be responsible for ensuring that all trading between the College and the College Company is acceptable to the tax and charity authorities.

23.3 **Use of the College's seal**

Where a deed or document requires the College's seal, it must be sealed by the Director of Governance or, in their absence, the Finance Director, in the presence of a member of the Governing Board. The use of the seal shall be authenticated by the signature of two members of the Governing Board. Use of the seal must be approved by the Governing Board and this approval should include details of which governors are authorised to authenticate the application of the seal. All uses of the seal will be reported to the Governing Board.

23.4 **Provision of indemnities**

Any member of staff asked to give an indemnity, for whatever purpose, should consult the Finance Director before any such indemnity is given.

Appendix A: Main Features Of The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Summary

The Act came into force on 2 July 1999. It encourages people to blow the whistle about malpractice in the workplace and is designed to ensure that organisations respond by acting on the message rather than against the messenger. The Act applies to employees blowing the whistle about crime, civil offences (including negligence, breach of contract, etc.), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment and the cover-up of any of these. It applies whether or not the information is confidential and extends to malpractice occurring in the UK and any other country or territory. In addition to employees, it covers trainees, agency staff, contractors, home workers, trainees and every professional in the NHS. Employment law restrictions on minimum length of service and age do not apply.

Internal disclosures

A disclosure in good faith to a manager or the employer will be protected if the whistle-blower has a reasonable suspicion that the malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.

Regulatory disclosures

The Act protects disclosures made in good faith to prescribed bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Financial Services Authority and HMRC, where the whistle-blower has a reasonable belief that the information and their allegation(s) are substantially true.

Wider disclosures

Wider disclosures (e.g. to the police, the media, MPs, and non-prescribed regulators) are protected if, in addition to the tests for regulatory disclosures, they are reasonable in all the circumstances and they meet one of the three preconditions. Provided they are not made for personal gain, these preconditions are that the whistle-blower:

- reasonably believed they would be victimised if they raised the matter internally or with a designated regulator
- reasonably believed a cover-up was likely and there was no regulator
- had already raised the matter internally or with a prescribed regulator.

An employee who makes a wide, public disclosure is more likely to be protected if there was no internal procedure set up.

Full protection

Where the whistle-blower is victimised in breach of the Act they can bring a claim to an employment tribunal for compensation. Awards are uncapped and based on the losses suffered. Additionally, where an employee is sacked, they may apply for an interim order to keep their job. Not all disclosures made by an employee are protected under the Act. Those that are include criminal acts, health and safety violations, breaches of legislation

and miscarriages of justice. However, such acts are only protected as long as the disclosure is made in good faith to the employer, or any other person authorised under a procedure set up by the employer for this purpose. (Disclosures can also be made to appropriate regulatory bodies, such as the Health and Safety Executive.) Where an employee reasonably suspects malpractice (and this includes any crime), they will be protected from victimisation where they raise the matter in good faith with a person who is legally responsible for whistleblowing.

Qualifying areas

The qualifying areas consist of information that the employee reasonably believes tends to show one or more of the following matters is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future:

- a criminal offence
- the breach of a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health or safety of any individual
- damage to the environment
- deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above five matters.

Appendix B: Fraud Response Plan

Introduction

Purpose of the Fraud Response Plan

One of the basic principles of public sector organisations is the proper use of public funds. It is therefore important that all those who work within the College are aware of the risk of fraud and corruption involving dishonesty or damage to property.

The purpose of this plan is to define authority levels, responsibilities for action, and reporting lines in the event of a suspected fraud or irregularity. The use of this plan should allow the College to:

- Prevent further loss;
- Establish and secure evidence necessary for criminal and disciplinary action;
- Recover losses;
- Punish the culprits;
- Deal with requests for references for employees disciplined or prosecuted for fraud;
- Review the reasons for the incident, the measures taken to prevent a recurrence, and any action needed to strengthen future responses to fraud;
- Keep all personnel with a need to know suitably informed about the incident and the College's response;
- Inform the police;
- Assign responsibility for investigating the incident;
- Establish circumstances in which external specialists should be involved;
- Establish lines of communication with the police.

This Response Plan should be read in conjunction with the section in the Wigan & Leigh College Financial Regulations which relate to fraud and irregularities.

Definition of Fraud and Corruption

Fraud and Corruption may largely be divided into one of three classifications that are criminal, as well as disciplinary offences:

Theft – the dishonest taking of property belonging to another with the intention of depriving that other permanently of its possession.

Fraud – the use of deception with the intention of obtaining an advantage, avoiding an obligation or causing loss to another party.

Corruption – the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person.

In addition there are other acts such as deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, conspiracy, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion that would all fall under this general heading.

There are undoubtedly other instances where College regulations, policies and procedures are circumvented or ignored. These may be described as other irregularities.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Public Interest Disclosure Procedure

The College has an approved Public Interest Disclosure Procedure (*Whistleblowing Policy*) that is designed to allow employees or other members of the College, including students and governors, to raise concerns at a high level or disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice.

A copy of the Public Interest Disclosures Procedure is available in College.

Disclosures can be made in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure, or alternatively, the procedures below may be followed.

Staff are assured that there will be no recriminations against any member of staff who reports reasonably held suspicions. Victimising or deterring staff from reporting concerns is a serious disciplinary matter. Equally however, abuse of the process by raising malicious allegations could be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

Alternative notification procedures

In the event of an employee discovering a suspected irregularity this should be reported in one of the following ways:

To the Head of Department

An employee may normally discuss any concerns with the Head of Department. The employee may also discuss concerns in confidentiality with the nominated officer. The employee and nominated officer will then agree on the next course of action. If the suspicion seems well founded the Finance Director will be informed.

If an employee suspects their Head of Department or other Senior Manager, the employee should discuss the concerns with someone more senior or the Finance Director

To Internal Audit

In some situations an employee may prefer to notify any suspicions to an officer independent of the College. It is Internal Audit's responsibility to investigate, on behalf of the Finance Director, cases of suspected irregularity.

To the Chair of the Audit Committee

In circumstances where a member of staff has suspicions surrounding a senior member of the College an employee may raise the suspicions directly with the Chair of the Audit Committee.

To the Finance Director

All suspicions (other than those relating to the Finance Director) should ultimately be reported to the Finance Director, whether by the person having the suspicions, or the person with whom they initially raise their suspicions.

The Finance Director will record details of all reported suspicions, whether reported directly or those reported to other sources. The Finance Director will record actions taken and conclusions reached.

The Audit Committee will review the log maintained by the Finance Director annually, and will report any significant matters to the Governing Board. The Finance Director will inform the Principal / Chief Executive at the first opportunity in all cases where the actual or suspected fraud requires reporting to the Education & Skills Funding Agency.

Investigation procedures

Responsibility for investigations

Investigations into suspected irregularities should be conducted in a timely and professional manner.

On becoming aware of a significant suspected irregularity, the Finance Director will normally call a meeting of a Project Group comprising the following representatives: Finance Director, Clerk to the Governing Board and internal auditors.

The Project Group will agree on the initial course of action. This will normally be an investigation led by the internal auditors. This ensures independence in any review and recommendations, whilst also utilizing the experience of internal audit in conducting such investigations.

The Project Group may in certain circumstances appoint an investigating officer from within the College.

In the case of suspected irregularities which are considered to be minor, or if circumstances do not allow the project group to be convened at short notice, the Finance Director will decide on the initial course of action to be taken.

Some special investigations may require the use of technical expertise which the College or internal auditors do not possess. In these circumstances the Finance Director may approve the appointment of external specialists to lead or contribute to the special investigation.

Conduct of investigations

Whoever is appointed to oversee the investigation should initiate a diary of events to record the progress of the investigation.

If it appears that a criminal offence is believed to have occurred, the Police, external audit and the Governing Board should now be informed, if this has not already been done.

If it appears a criminal act has not taken place, the internal investigation should then determine the facts, what if any disciplinary action is needed, what can be done to recover the loss and what may need to be done to improve internal control to prevent the event happening again.

Variations from agreed internal audit plan

Where Internal Audit are instructed to undertake special investigations by the Finance Director, this shall constitute authority to use contingency time or switch internal audit resources from planned audits. Alternatively the purchase of additional days will be discussed.

Establishing and securing evidence

A key objective in any fraud investigation will be the punishment of the perpetrator(s), to act as a deterrent to other personnel. The College will follow disciplinary procedures against any member of staff who has committed fraud.

The investigating officer will:

- Maintain familiarity with the College's disciplinary procedures, to ensure that evidence requirements will be met during any fraud investigation;
- Establish and maintain contact with the police (if relevant);
- Ensure that staff involved in fraud investigations are familiar with, and follow rules on the admissibility of documentary and other evidence in criminal proceedings;

In any investigations the following shall be maintained:

- Full details of any relevant telephone or face to face conversations;
- Details of records/documents/computer files reviewed;
- Detailed of tests undertaken and conclusions reached.

The requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) must be considered before any interview with a suspect is performed, since compliance with PACE determines whether evidence is admissible in criminal proceedings. If in doubt about the requirements of PACE it is important to take specialist advice. Internal investigations into suspected irregularities are not in themselves covered by the PACE regulations but, nevertheless, any interviews of employees must be carried out in accordance with guidelines for the recommended conduct of such interviews as set out below:

In circumstances where an employee of the College is interviewed they have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or other representative recognised by the College.

Two representatives of the College or internal audit should be present.

The interview should be arranged at a reasonable time of day.

Interviewers should avoid any conduct that may be perceived as threatening or oppressive. Inducements to answer questions should be avoided.

Interviewers should not enter into any negotiations to "do a deal".

Any offer by the employee to resign should be discussed with Human Resources. The employee should be informed that, with regards to a Police investigation, the decision as to whether or not to continue with the investigation in light of the employee's resignation will be a matter for the Police.

Police involvement in investigations

In line with Financial Regulations, where any investigations produce prima facie evidence that a criminal offence has taken place, the Principal / Chief Executive shall have discretion, taking into account the circumstances and seriousness of the case, to determine whether the Police shall be informed.

Prevention of further loss

Where initial investigation provides reasonable grounds for suspecting a member or members of staff of fraud, the Finance Director will decide how to prevent further loss. This may require the suspension, with or without pay, of the suspects. It may be necessary to plan the timing of suspension to prevent the suspects from destroying or removing evidence that may be needed to support disciplinary or criminal action.

In these circumstances, the suspect(s) should be approached unannounced. They should be supervised at all times before leaving the College's premises. They should be allowed to collect personal property under supervision but should not be able to remove any property belonging to the College. Any security passes and keys to premises, offices and furniture should be returned.

The Vice Principal Corporate Services will be required to advise on the best means of denying access to the College, while suspects remain suspended. Similarly the Vice Principal Date & Funding will be instructed to withdraw, without delay, access permission to the College's computer systems.

The investigating officer shall consider whether it is necessary to investigate systems other than that which has given rise to suspicion, through which the suspect may have had opportunities to misappropriate the College's assets.

Reporting

Notifying the DfE

The circumstances in which the College must inform the DfE about actual or suspected frauds are detailed in the Audit Code of Practice. The requirements are that the Principal / Chief Executive must be notified of any attempted, suspected or actual fraud or irregularity where:

- The sums involved are, or potentially are, in excess of £10,000;
- The particulars of the fraud are novel, unusual or complex;
- There is likely to be public interest because of the nature of the fraud or the people involved;
- The Principal / Chief Executive is responsible for informing the Chair of Governors of any such incidents.

Reporting to the College Board

Any incident matching the criteria in the Audit Code of Practice shall be reported without delay by the Principal / Chief Executive to the Chairs of both the Governing Board and the Audit Committee.

Any variation from this approved Response Plan, together with reasons for the variation, shall be reported promptly to the Chairs of both the Governing Board and the Audit Committee.

On completion of a special investigation, a written report shall be submitted to the Audit Committee containing:

- A description of the incident, including the value of any loss, the people involved, and the means of perpetrating the fraud;
 - The measures taken to prevent a recurrence;
 - Any action needed to strengthen future responses to fraud, with a follow-up report on whether the actions have been taken.

This report will be prepared by the investigating officer.

Reporting lines

The internal auditors will summarise action taken in the previous period relating to suspected irregularities in their summary report to each meeting of the Audit Committee.

The Finance Director shall provide a confidential report to the Chair of the Governing Board, Chair of the Audit Committee, Principal / Chief Executive and the external audit partner at least annually, unless the report recipients request a lesser frequency. The scope of the report shall include:

- Quantification of losses;
- Progress with recovery action;
- Progress with disciplinary action;
- Progress with criminal action;
- Estimate of resources required to conclude the investigation;
- Actions taken to prevent and detect similar incidents.

Recovery of losses

Recovery of losses is a major objective of any fraud investigation. The person investigating shall ensure that in all fraud investigations, the amount of any loss will be quantified. Repayment of losses should be sought in all cases.

Where the loss is substantial, legal advice should be obtained without delay about the need to freeze the suspect's assets through the court, pending conclusion of the investigation. Legal advice should also be obtained about prospects for recovering losses through the civil court, where the perpetrator refuses repayment. The College would normally expect to recover costs in addition to losses.

The Finance Director is responsible for obtaining this legal advice.

Other matters

References for employees disciplined or prosecuted for fraud

Any request for a reference for a member of staff who has been disciplined or prosecuted for fraud shall be referred to the Vice Principal Corporate Services. The Vice Principal Corporate Services shall prepare any answers to a request for a reference having regard to employment law.

Appendix C: Procurement Policy

Introduction

Policy Statement

Wigan & Leigh College aims to undertake its procurement activity in an open and transparent manner which is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023, as applicable. To ensure VFM for the College all goods, services and work purchases will consider not only cost and quality but the wider impact on social, economic and environmental factors.

Statement of Principles

- The College will ensure that it receives the right goods and services, in a timely manner, at the most economically advantageous cost.
- The College will promote the delivery of value for money through good procurement practice.
- The College will develop an effective and co-ordinated procurement function.
- The College will identify opportunities for working with others, in order to widen the scope for maximising procurement power and identifying innovation.
- The College will develop collaborative working relationships with contractors and suppliers
- The College will give due consideration to good governance, and ensure transparency of arrangements.
- The College will embed sound ethical, social and environmental policies within its procurement function and will comply with all legislation in all aspects of procurement.
- The College will develop appropriate management information in order to measure the performance, value for money and savings achieved in procurement.

Implementation

Implementation of this policy will be achieved through the development of, and compliance with, separately issued procedures (updated as appropriate). This policy forms part of the College's Financial Regulations, and adherence to it is therefore mandatory for all staff.

Responsibilities & Duties

The deployment of the College's resources is the responsibility of the Governing Board exercised through the Resources Committee.

The College operates a devolved procurement procedure whereby authority to commit funds is delegated to Vice Principals, Assistant Principals, the Finance Director and designated budget holders (authorised persons) supported by central monitoring and procurement advice. In exercising this delegated authority, authorised persons are required to observe the College's relevant policies. The names of all such authorised persons and expenditure limits must be lodged in advance with the Finance Department. Such persons may be given authority to authorise orders, commit departmental funds, and authorise payment for goods or services.

No member of staff is authorised to commit the College to any expenditure without first ensuring there are sufficient funds to meet the purchase cost and that a Purchase Order for the value of the goods/ service has been approved by the relevant signatory, in accordance with the Financial Regulations scheme of delegation/financial authorities . All procurement must conform to the financial regulations and procedures at all times. This practice applies to all procurement regardless of the source of funding.

In each area the Head of Department is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the College's procurement policy in respect of all purchases, however funded, within their department and ensuring that all staff having delegated authority are fully aware of the policy and procedures.

The Finance Director is required to sign / approve all contractual documents for the procurement of goods and services, which are over and above the College's standard purchase orders. No member of staff is authorised to commit the College to any contractual arrangements with any supplier without prior consent.

The Finance Director is ultimately responsible for making payment to suppliers for goods and services supplied to the College, provided appropriate authorisation of the expenditure is in place.

Supporting policies, procedures and documents

- Financial Regulations
- Procurement procedures
- Financial procedures

Monitoring arrangements

Implementation of this policy will be overseen by the Finance Director, assisted by the Executive Management Team. Reports will be made at least annually to both the Resources Committee and Audit Committee before submission to the Governing Board.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as part of the Financial Regulations review, or earlier if changes affect it in any way. The next scheduled review date is October 2024.

Scheme of delegation/financial authorities

The Head of Department is responsible for purchases within their department. Purchasing authority may be delegated to named individuals within the department who must be on the authorised signatories list.

Individual purchases below £500 should, where possible, be made using a College Procurement Card in accordance with the procedures issued by the Finance Director.

The Head of Finance shall maintain a register of authorised signatories and Heads of Department must supply specimen signatures of those authorised to certify financial documents.

Requisitions shall be sent to the Finance Department in accordance with Financial Procedures. Each Head of Department shall be responsible for purchase requisitions issued from their department and for ensuring that the cost is within approved limits.

Where, as a matter of emergency (i.e. at weekends or statutory holidays) goods or services are ordered verbally, a confirmation purchase requisition shall be issued as soon as possible.

Official orders shall be issued by the Finance Department following receipt of a properly authorised requisition for all work, goods or services to be supplied to the College. All orders shall be raised prior to the delivery of goods or commencement of work for the supply of certain goods it may be appropriate to issue a blanket order to cover a specified period (i.e. month). As part of the planning process, it should be noted that the following applies:

- Orders over £20,000 require the authorisation of the Finance Director .
- Orders over the value of £50,000 require the authorisation of the Principal / Chief Executive.
- Orders over the value of £100,000 require the approval of the Chair of the Governing Board or the Chair of the Resources Committee.

On no account may official orders be used to obtain goods for private use by members of staff of the College. Educational equipment and materials may be purchased by the College for resale to students.

The College will comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which took effect from 26 February 2015 and with the new Procurement Act 2023 which comes into effect on 24 February 2025.

Appendix D: Treasury Management Policy

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- Appendix 1 Extract from Fitch / IBCA Ratings Guide

1. Introduction

This policy is intended to cover the Treasury Management activities of the College.

2. Approved Activities of the Treasury Function

The College has adopted the CIPFA definition of treasury management activities :

‘The management of the Group’s Cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with these risks’.

The Governing Board approves the College’s borrowing and investment strategy, including all loan agreements.

The DfE “Managing Public Money” instructions are clear that from the date of reclassification colleges, as public sector organisations, may borrow from private sector sources only if the transaction delivers better value for money for the Exchequer. Because non-government lenders face higher financing costs, in practice it is very unlikely that colleges will be able to satisfy this condition for future private sector borrowing

The Finance Director is responsible for the investment of cash balances within the parameters set out by this Policy.

3. Formulation of Treasury Management Policy

In drafting this policy, the College is seeking to adhere to the four principal drivers of policy :

- ◆ compliance with statute, regulation and best practice;
- ◆ security of financial assets;
- ◆ provision of adequate liquidity to meet financial obligations;
- ◆ effectiveness and efficiency in the use of financial resources.

The combination of these principles is weighted towards minimising risk, preserving asset values and liquidity levels while minimising costs within these parameters.

4. Approved Methods of Raising Capital Finance

The primary means of raising finance are :

- ◆ Long term loan
- ◆ Short term loan
- ◆ Lease finance
- ◆ Bank overdraft

In general, the College will obtain its long term financing from the Exchequer . To ensure adherence by colleges post reclassification, a consent process by the DfE for college requests relating to future borrowing and amendments to existing borrowing has now been implemented and permissions are required to enter into any further agreements within the FE sector.

5. **Approved Financial Counterparties**

Building and other capital project requirements will generally mean that the level of surplus cash will fluctuate particularly during building construction periods and the summer period (when Accommodation remodelling and IT and other equipment procurement is usually undertaken).

The College will only invest surplus funds within the following constraints:

- With UK based institutions
- Deposits no longer than 6 months, except up to £500K may be invested up to one year and a maximum bank counterparty deposit limit of £1m, except if the investment is with the College bankers, currently Barclays
- Target minimum month end cash balance of £4 million excluding major capital spend.
- Any bank or building society with a long-term credit rating of not less than A3 as defined by Moody's or Standard and Poors

For day-to-day operational reasons, the Corporation's principal clearing bank is not subject to the above restrictions in terms of cash held in its main account. However, accounts should not be over-funded for an extended period of time and efforts should be made to spread funds across all suitable appropriate investment facilities.

In this regard, it is considered that the report by the Treasury and Civil Service Committee of the House of Commons on the BCCI closure is still pertinent, wherein it was stated that : 'In balancing risk against return, public sector organisations should be more concerned to avoid risks than to maximise returns'.

6. **Types of Financial Instruments**

A key risk is that fluctuations in the levels of interest rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the College's finances, against which the College has failed to protect itself adequately.

Apart from the approved types of finance outlined in paragraph 4 above, the College may, therefore, use interest rate swaps, interest rate collars, interest rate caps and interest rate floors to mitigate the impact of potential interest rate fluctuations (interest hedging).

It is intended that such instruments will be entered into using the current lenders and that such instruments will be embedded within existing loan agreements.

7. **Use of External Intermediaries**

The College will not use brokers or fund managers since the majority of its cash deposits are relatively small and short term. The College may use a financial advisor if the use of a Financial Instrument (see Section 7) is contemplated.

8. **Internal Delegation of Authority**

This will be in accordance with the Financial Memorandum and the College's Financial Regulations but will include :

Activity	Endorsement/Approval
New Loans	The Governing Board / DfE
Finance Leases	> £100k The Governing Board < £100k The Principal / Chief Executive
Charging of Properties	The Governing Board
College Treasury Policy	The Governing Board
Annual Treasury Strategy	The Governing Board
Interest Hedging	The Governing Board
Use of overdraft facility	The Governing Board

9. Liquidity Policy

The College will ensure it has adequate though not excessive cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its business/service objectives.

To that end, the Annual Treasury Management Strategy will include a target month end cash balance which shall be a minimum of £4 million, excluding major capital spend.

Surplus cash balances are invested in interest bearing bank accounts or on the money market to maximise income for the College.

The Finance Department will be responsible for the regular reporting of debtors and creditors.

A debt collection agency may be used for individual debtors in accordance with procedures agreed by the Finance Director.

Creditors will be settled in accordance with invoice terms, except where the amounts are in dispute. Where specific terms are not given settlement should be made within one month. Payment performance will be reported in the College Financial Statements (subject to the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for the Sector.

10. Risk Management

The Treasury Management Policy is to be consistent with the College Risk Management Policy and Strategy.

11. Policy Review and Reporting

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as part of the Financial Regulations review , or earlier if changes affect it in any way. The next scheduled review date is December 2024 .

In addition, Treasury activities will be reported in the monthly Management Accounts, including :

- ◆ Cash flow report
- ◆ Bank loan covenants assessment

This information will supplement the borrowing ratios included within the DfE Financial Performance Indicators.

12. Banking Services

The College currently makes use of the banking facilities provided by Barclays plc. The College may from time to time re-tender for the provision of day to day banking services. Any appointment will, in the first instance be for a period not exceeding five years.

APPENDIX 1

Moody's credit ratings guide

AA Obligations rated AAA are judged to be of the highest quality, with minimal credit risk.

AA Obligations rated AA are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

A Obligations rated A are considered upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

BAA Obligations rated BAA are subject to moderate credit risk. They are considered medium grade and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

BA Obligations rated BA are judged to have speculative elements and are subject to substantial credit risk.

B Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

CAA Obligations rated CAA are judged to be of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

CA Obligations rated CA are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

C Obligations rated C are the lowest rated class of bonds and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

Note: Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from AA through.

CAA. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier.

The modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category.

Standard and Poor's credit rating guide

Investment Grade

AAA: An obligor rated 'AAA' has extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. 'AAA' is the highest issuer credit rating assigned by Standard & Poor's.

AA: An obligor rated 'AA' has very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree. Includes: AA+: equivalent to Moody's Aa1 (high quality, with very low credit risk, but susceptibility to long-term risks appears somewhat greater)

AA: equivalent to Aa2

AA-: equivalent to Aa3

A: An obligor rated 'A' has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments but is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in higher-rated categories.

A+: equivalent to A1

A: equivalent to A2

BBB: An obligor rated 'BBB' has adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.

Appendix E: Anti-Bribery Policy Statement

Introduction

The College has a zero-tolerance for bribery and corruption. The College's reputation with the community it serves and other stakeholders is underpinned by ethical behaviour, financial probity and honesty. The College aims to limit its exposure to bribery by:

Setting out a clear anti-bribery policy, which is proportionate to the risks that the College is exposed to;

- Embedding awareness and understanding of the College's anti-bribery policy amongst all staff, "associated persons" (any person performing services for or on behalf of the College), and external persons/organisations with whom the College has commercial relations;
- Training staff as appropriate so that they can recognise and avoid the use of bribery by themselves and others;
- Encouraging staff to be vigilant and to report any suspicion of bribery, providing them with suitable channels of communication and ensuring sensitive information is treated appropriately;
- Rigorously investigating instances of alleged bribery in accordance with the College disciplinary procedure; and assisting the Police and other appropriate authorities in any resultant prosecution;
- Taking firm and vigorous action against any individual(s) involved in bribery.

The Policy

This policy applies to all employees and anyone acting for, or on behalf of, the College ("associated persons"), including governors, other volunteers, temporary workers, consultants and contractors.

All employees and associated persons are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of business conduct and are expected to behave honestly and with integrity. Any breach of this policy will constitute a serious disciplinary offence, which may lead to dismissal and may become a criminal matter for the individual.

The College prohibits employees and associated persons from offering, giving, soliciting or accepting any bribe. The bribe might include cash, a gift or other inducement, to or from any persons 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 College's behalf. The bribe might be made in order to:

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

This policy 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 the properly recorded/disclosed to the College in accordance with its procedures.

Employees and associated persons are requested to remain vigilant in preventing, detecting and reporting bribery. Employees and associated persons are expected to report any concerns regarding any suspected bribery in accordance with the College's procedures.

Appendix F: Criminal Facilitation of Tax Evasion Statement

The Criminal Finances Act 2017 (CFA 2017)

This statement has been published in accordance with the Criminal Finance Act 2017 (CFA2017) that introduces a Corporate Criminal Offence (CCO) of failure to prevent the facilitation of tax evasion. It sets out the commitment of Wigan & Leigh College to preventing persons associated with the College and its operations from engaging in the criminal facilitation of tax evasion.

The scope of 'associated persons' is widely drafted and, whilst it includes the College's officers, it also includes employees, workers, agents, sub-contractors and other people/organisations that provide services for, or on behalf of, the College and its operations. The CCO relates to situations where the College fails to prevent associated persons from assisting in the evasion of tax by another party.

Introduction

Tax evasion is when individuals or businesses deliberately omit, conceal or misrepresent information to reduce their tax liabilities. Organisations can be used by individuals or businesses to facilitate tax evasion in the UK or overseas.

Wigan & Leigh College is committed to preventing the facilitation of tax evasion by associated persons anywhere in the world. We do this through developing reasonable prevention procedures, carrying out regular due diligence and risk assessments of our activities and creating awareness and a culture of compliance throughout the College.

1. Risk Assessment and Implementation of Prevention Procedures

The College is committed to embedding processes which will help eliminate the opportunities for the criminal facilitation of tax evasion.

The College has carried out a risk assessment of operations to determine the nature and extent of exposure to the risk of any associated persons engaging in activity that could criminally facilitate tax evasion. The risk register is regularly reviewed and updated, as and when required in relation to the nature of the specific risks. Reasonable prevention procedures proportionate to the size, complexity and risk are, or are in the course of being implemented.

2. Due Diligence

Due diligence on both customers and suppliers is undertaken in order to ensure that the risk of potential interactions with the College or its operations being used by associated persons to engage in the criminal facilitation of tax evasion is clearly identified before any transactions take place. This due diligence is proportionate to the identified risk.

3. Responsibilities of College staff and other associated persons

The College operates to the highest legal and ethical standards and will not tolerate acts of criminal facilitation of tax evasion by its associates anywhere in the world. Staff and other associates should abide at all times by College policies. Failure to comply with the obligations may result in disciplinary action for staff and termination of contract for other associated persons.

4. Raising Awareness & Collaboration

The College is committed to staying aware of developments and legislation in regards to the prevention of the criminal facilitation of tax evasion. Eliminating the opportunities to facilitate tax evasion effectively requires improved traceability, increased transparency and collaboration between statutory agencies, organisations and both public and private sector business.

- The College has nominated a key officer responsible for information and queries on CFA2017 within our organisation – the Key Officer for CFA2017 is the Finance Director.
- Should staff or other associates become concerned that a fellow employee or associate is facilitating tax evasion by a third-party then they should immediately alert the Key Officer.
- The Finance Director is responsible for supply chain management transparency and initiatives.

Appendix G: Managing Public money

Following a review into the classification of the English college sector for the purposes of national accounts, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) announced that it has reclassified colleges into the central government sector. This decision was immediate and came into effect on 29-11-2022.

Following this reclassification, colleges (and their subsidiaries) are now part of central government. They continue to be self-governing charities regulated by the Secretary of State for Education but are now subject to the framework for financial management set out in Managing Public Money (MPM)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money>.

MPM sets out requirements for everyone working in central government to manage and deploy public resources responsibly in the public interest, although much of what it requires can be recognised as common sense and therefore in line with how we already run our college.

Reclassification to the government sector now means that there will be new requirements for colleges relating to financial management oversight, principally associated with approvals from DfE

1. New financing or amendments to existing borrowing

Private sector borrowing

Private sector borrowing refers to any borrowing from commercial lenders but also loans from local authorities and any other non-public sector organisations. Existing and future lending from DfE to colleges is excluded.

MPM is clear that from the date of reclassification colleges, as public sector organisations, may borrow from private sector sources only if the transaction delivers better value for money for the Exchequer. Because non-government lenders face higher financing costs, in practice it is very unlikely that colleges will be able to satisfy this condition for future private sector borrowing.

To ensure adherence to MPM by colleges post-reclassification, a consent process by DfE for college requests relating to future borrowing and amendments to existing agreements as detailed below will be implemented.

Existing borrowing

Existing borrowing is any debt taken out and utilised (drawn down for loans) by the college or a related-subsiary up to 29 November 2022 in the form of a facilities agreement, senior debt finance agreement, working capital facility, term-loan, overdrafts, revolving credit facility, PFI property finance agreement (whether recognised on the balance sheet or not) and any other financing agreement.

The consent process will not apply to existing debt balances at the point of reclassification. Colleges should continue to repay such debt under the agreement terms to maturity. The ONS expect that colleges will be able to ensure that any balances on variable type facilities (overdrafts and revolving credit facilities (RCFs)) are worked down to nil or repaid in full at maturity of the facilities.

Term loan balloon payments (at maturity)

Colleges may have existing term debt with outstanding balances remaining at maturity. If this residual

debt cannot be refinanced by a commercial lender compliant with MPM and a college does not have sufficient cash reserves to meet in full, then DfE will consider a request for financial assistance from a college at the relevant time.

A formal request for any financial assistance by affected colleges will need to be made at least 6 months before maturity.

Any funding, if approved following a review process, will be made available under a standard DfE repayable loan agreement which will be interest-bearing and potentially secured.

Amendments to existing facility agreements

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 MPM rules.

Amendments which may be within the scope of MPM include, but are not limited to, changes relating to the term of a loan, repayment profile change, interest rate change outside of the existing agreement terms (including any move between a variable and a fixed interest rate) and providing additional security. If in doubt as to whether within scope or not, please submit a consent request.

The college is required to:

- Submit a formal request for consent using the college requests procedure set out above.
- Receive written confirmation from DfE of consent.
- As a condition of any consent, supply a copy of the executed new agreement / modification by email within 2 weeks of completion.

Amendments and other colleges actions related to facilities which are not within the scope of MPM and therefore do not require the written consent of the DfE include:

- Providing periodic standard written representations to lenders.
- Changes to financial and non-financial covenants.
- Changes to standard clauses following underlying legislation changes or other reasons which are not within the scope of MPM as defined above.

Future borrowing

New borrowing refers to any new debt or refinancing of the above existing borrowing types of debt and any new drawdown of existing borrowing facilities from 29 November 2022 onwards.

New borrowing

New finance arrangements or drawdown of funds post-reclassification under existing finance arrangements will be subject to MPM rules and colleges will be required to obtain the written consent of DfE in advance of committing to any new financing arrangements or actioning any new drawdowns of overdrafts, RCFs or loans.

New finance arrangements

The college is required to:

- Submit a formal request for consent using the DfE requests procedure.
- Receive written confirmation from DfE of consent.
- As a condition of any consent, if given, supply a copy of the executed new agreement by email within 2 weeks of completion.

Unutilised borrowing facilities (including undrawn term loans)

Any additional usage of existing overdraft, RCFs or drawdowns of existing term loans, limited to essential operational needs, above levels at the point of reclassification, will be subject to a consent process. The consent will be time limited to the earlier of maturity or 20 months to 1 August 2024 for overdraft and RCFs.

At the end of the consent period for overdrafts and RCFs, the ONS expect that colleges will be able to ensure that such variable working capital facilities and other facilities are worked down to nil or repaid in full at the earlier of the end of the consent period or maturity of the facilities.

Any residual balances remaining on overdraft and RCFs, not able to be repaid by colleges, will need to be the subject of a request to DfE for financial assistance from a college. College's will be required to submit a formal request for financial assistance using the college requests procedure set out above. A formal request for any financial assistance by affected colleges will need to be made at least 6 months before maturity of the facilities

2. Management of surpluses

The default MPM position is that, for grant-funded government bodies, any unspent grant will be clawed back by the funding body at year-end. However, it is essential that longer term financial planning is the cornerstone of the sector's financial sustainability, and so colleges will be able to carry forward any surpluses at year end without limit, including for investment in capital assets. This agreement may require us to collect additional information from you and we will be in touch about this in due course.

Colleges' freedom to carry forward surpluses does not alter existing arrangements for recovering funding due to ineligibility or under-delivery.

3. Asset disposals

Colleges will continue to be able to manage their assets, including their estate, and to retain the proceeds of disposals. However, colleges will be required to ringfence the proceeds for reinvestment in capital assets.

The DfE will keep this approach in place until the end of the current Spending Review period (31 March 2025), when it will be reviewed.

4. Special severance payments

Special severance payments are payments that are discretionary and additional to those arising from statutory and contractual redundancy or severance terms. MPM's position is that making such payments on top of the normal entitlements does not usually provide good value for money or offer fairness to the taxpayers who fund them. Special severance payments should therefore only be considered in exceptional cases.

However, special severance payments can be an important mechanism to allow employers to reform and react to new circumstances in the workplace. Accordingly, 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.

Colleges will have delegated authority to make individual severance payments, provided any non-statutory/non-contractual element is under £50k or under 3 months' salary, whichever is the lower. Beyond this, DfE approval will be required. Furthermore, any proposed payments of whatever value that are linked to a non-disclosure agreement will also require DfE approval and, where supported, we will refer them to HMT for final consent.

Additionally, in accordance with current Guidance on Public Sector Exit Payments, colleges must

obtain prior DfE approval before making a special staff severance payment where:

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

Regardless of the above delegations, any special severance payment which is novel, contentious or repercussive, of whatever value, must be referred to DfE for approval and, where supported, we will refer to HMT for final consent.

It will be important that in those cases where approval is required that colleges refrain from entering into legally binding agreements until that approval has been obtained.

5. Compensation payments

Compensation payments provide redress for loss or injury, for example personal injuries, traffic accidents or damage to property. If a college is considering a compensation payment, it must base its decision on a careful appraisal, including legal advice where relevant, and ensure value for money.

If a college concludes that a compensation payment should be made, it has delegated authority to approve individual payments provided any non- statutory/non-contractual element is under £50k. Where the college is considering a non-statutory/non-contractual payment of £50k or more, DfE's prior approval must be obtained.

6. Ex gratia payments

Ex gratia payments are another type of transaction going beyond statutory or contractual cover, or administrative rules. This 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.

7. Write-offs

The DfE recognise that most sums written off by colleges are likely to be relatively small. Consequently, any consent to a write-off will only 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).

8. Indemnities, guarantees and letters of comfort

Central government bodies should not be entering into liabilities without explicit parliamentary authority, other than those arising in the normal course of business. We recognise that many commercial contracts will, in the normal course of business, include indemnity clauses; these will not be restricted and DfE consent will not be required.

Beyond this, DfE consent will be required in respect of indemnities beyond the normal course of business, 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).

9. Finance leases

There are two types of lease: operating leases and finance leases. Whilst finance leases constitute a form of borrowing, colleges will be able to continue with any existing finance leases until they come to the end of their term and will also be able to enter into new finance leases.

10. Senior pay controls

Colleges remain responsible for setting the pay of their workforce. However, reclassification means that they will fall within the scope of HMT's senior pay controls.

11. Insurance

Central government organisations should not generally take out commercial insurance because it is better value for money for the taxpayer to cover its own risks. However, there are some circumstances where commercial insurance is appropriate.

The DfE are exploring an alternative to commercial insurance for colleges with the Department's Risk Protection Arrangement scheme. For the moment, colleges can continue with their existing insurance arrangements, and can renew or take out new commercial insurance.

12. Commercial operations and subsidiaries

Colleges will remain free to conduct commercial operations, including through subsidiary companies. However, all subsidiary companies will be subject to the same MPM-based controls outlined in this letter as their parent college. If the purpose of any such subsidiary could be deemed to be novel, contentious or repercussive then the acquisition or establishment of such a subsidiary will also require prior DfE approval.

13. Novel, contentious and repercussive transactions

Novel transactions are those of which a college has no experience or are outside its range of normal business. Contentious transactions are those that might cause criticism of the corporation by Parliament, the public or the media. Repercussive transactions are those likely to cause pressure on other colleges or other parts of the public sector to take a similar approach and hence have wider financial implications.

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.

Financial Control & Reporting

The College's system of control contained in the financial regulations and financial procedures documents would allow all MPM to be identified, recorded, approved and reported to the DfE.

1. All financial transactions are reviewed by the Head of Finance and cross checked the Finance Director on a monthly basis as part of the management accounting process. Transactions are also reviewed by our external audit as part of the year-end process.
2. All executive decisions concerning borrowing, investment or financing is delegated to the Finance Director and an appropriate reporting system set up. All borrowing shall be undertaken in the name of the College and shall conform to any relevant funding body requirements. The Finance Director will report annually to the Resources Committee on the activities of the treasury management operation. Only the Finance Director and/or the Vice principal Corporate Services have the authorisation to enter into any banking arrangements of this nature.
3. All instances of disposal / write off must be agreed in writing with the Finance Director prior to any approvals. All instances will be recorded and reported, where required, to the relevant government department.
4. Severance payments shall only be made in accordance with relevant legislation and under a scheme approved by the Governing Board through the Resources Committee. Professional advice should be obtained where necessary. All such payments must be authorised by the Principal /

Chief Executive and calculations checked by the Vice Principal Corporate Services or the Finance Director.

5. All compensation payments must be authorised by the Principal / Chief Executive and calculations checked by the Vice Principal Corporate Services or the Finance Director.
6. Ex-Gratia payments must always be approved in advance by the DfE. All instances of ex-gratia payment would require approval by the College Executive Team and the Finance Director will be responsible for identifying, recording and seeking approval from the DfE in advance of any transaction.
7. As part of the DfE reporting requirements and in line with our external audit requirements all instances of transactions that form part of the MPM process will be identified, recorded, approved and reported, where required, to the relevant government department.

SCOPE & POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out the College's approach to reserves to support its financial resilience and comply with the requirements of the College Financial Handbook. The College will report on this policy in its annual financial statements to provide assurance that it is appropriate for the accounts to be prepared on a going concern basis. The limits in the policy would normally be based on the charitable nature of the College with a focus on cash reserves and the extent to which these are restricted or unrestricted in their use. This policy is broader than just the cash position to ensure that all elements and requirements are included.

I. Definitions

Cash Balances – amounts held in cash at the end of a period.

Reserves – the value of reserves stated on the balance sheet as total reserves which include unrestricted reserves from the income and expenditure account, revaluation reserves and any restricted reserves.

The reserves policy considers the following areas:

- The nature of funds held.
- The identification of functional assets.
- Understanding the financial impact of risk.
- Reviewing sources of income.
- Impact of future plans and commitments (including defined benefit schemes).

The nature of funds held

Much of the funding the College receives has a specific purpose and conditions attached. This may be for the general provision of education and training, for specific programmes or student groups, for specific project activities or commercial income. For some income streams, the release of income is related to specific outcomes or targets which must be met for the full value to be released. As the college accounts are prepared on an accruals basis, any cash received in advance of requirements being met will be held on the balance sheet.

The identification of functional assets

The asset base is significant with both owned and leased assets across the College estate. Specific grants are also received to support some of this asset base in terms of improvement, replacement or expansion. However, the College often contributes to the purchase of assets from its reserves as part of the ongoing process of improvement and development either as revenue or capital expenditure.

Understanding the financial impact of risk

The risk management process is fully embedded in the College and has a direct impact on going concern and this reserves policy. The risk register is regularly reviewed by the Executive Management Team to monitor the impact of mitigating actions and to ensure our assessment of risks remains up to date.

Reviewing sources of income

Sources of income are constantly under review, and we report through the management accounts and other data sources the potential risks to the larger elements of grant funding or fees received. Project related income remains higher risk due to the temporary nature of this source.

Impact of future plans and commitments (including defined benefit schemes)

The College has a significant defined benefit pension scheme in place which impacts on the values on the balance sheet and the revenue position in the Statement of Consolidated Income. The volatility of any valuations can change the balance sheet significantly with the potential to create a negative reserve position if the regular actuarial revaluations produce or increase pension liabilities. Equally, this can switch to a positive position when and if the pension liability becomes an asset. Due to the volatility of the actuarial revaluation process, it is necessary to consider this separately from the rest of the reserves.

The College also has borrowing in place with Barclays Bank Plc. The level of reserves plays a role in performance of the bank covenants with the bank, which include EBITDA (in relation to debt servicing).

The College has Estates and IT strategies which require significant investment during the three-year period of the plan. It is likely that the capital investment requirements may impact on the College's reserves and cash position. Affordability would be reviewed in advance of making the commitment to identify the impact on the reserves policy and understand the short- and long-term options.

Reserves Policy

When looking at the level of free reserves that it would be prudent for the College to hold, considerations include:

- the security of present funding,
- how long would it take to secure alternative sources of funding,
- what risks and opportunities may arise which could not be met out of income,
- compliance with bank covenants,
- the extent to which the College continues as a going concern.

In the event that the College cannot continue as a going concern, we will work with external agencies to ensure as far as possible, the continued education for our students regardless of funding source.

2. Principles

The principles of the reserves policy are:

- to maintain sufficient free reserves to enable the College to meet its charitable purpose and continue to provide a public benefit to students and other stakeholders.
- to balance expenditure on current students and stakeholders against ensuring that facilities and services have sufficient investment to improve and endure for future students and stakeholders,
- to maintain a level of reserves that are prudent for the College to be considered a going concern but may include restricted reserves such as funds applied to tangible fixed assets or reserves designated/restricted to a certain purpose,

3. Scope and Limitations

This policy is focussed on the reserves of the College to ensure financial resilience and that accounts can be prepared on a going concern basis. The reserves policy is not the only means of assessing going concern but contributes to this.

4. Responsibilities

The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that the reserves policy is approved to secure the future sustainability of the College and ensuring that it is reviewed and updated as part of the process of reviewing the financial statements on an annual basis. Any deviation from the policy must be approved by Board. This approval and review is delegated to the Resources Committee.

The Finance Director is responsible for providing information to the Board as to whether the College is meeting the policy or if there are any issues.

5. Implementation Arrangements

The performance against the reserves policy will be reported in the annual financial statements. A review will be undertaken on an annual basis with a report to Corporation which details how the college is meeting the reserves policy.

Where there are decisions that might result in a breach of the reserves policy, then these will be specifically highlighted and documented as part of a decision-making process. Examples of these would include major capital expenditure being undertaken which may impact on reserves, additional payments to the pension scheme to reduce the shortfall in scheme funds, specific revenue investment to achieve certain outcomes, acquisitions of businesses (these examples are not exhaustive).

6. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the Financial Regulations review periods

7. Reserves Policy Detail

To ensure that the College can meet its ongoing obligations the reserves policy will focus on the levels of cash balance available at the end of each financial year and the level of reserves. To enable the College to operate effectively, the impact on the reserves policy will be considered and any changes or amendments required for specific events will be notified to Board to approve an exception to the policy. This may occur where strategically important capital or strategic developments mean that the College must expend its reserves beyond the limits in the policy to achieve a greater public benefit and/or enable future obligations to be met such as the funding of a new building, capital redevelopment of an existing building or the procurement of additional business resource.

Annex A details the required levels of cash and reserves. Changes will be made to these as appropriate as part of the ongoing review which will be at least annually and more frequently where required.

ANNEX A

The following parameters are those by which the College measures the reserves policy in terms of meeting the requirements.

Cash Balances:

The college aims to have 40 cash days at any point in time to ensure that it can pay immediate bills and aims to build up cash balances to provide continuity even if there are unexpected costs or loss of income and also to provide funds for future investment.

General Reserves

The college would wish to maintain a general reserve value of approximately 50% of the expected annual income at the end of the year to protect operations in the following year against in-year changes to funding rules, the uncertainties of student recruitment and commercial income generation.

Consideration should also be given to the negative impact of the revaluation of defined benefit pension schemes to the levels of reserves. Where the level of reserves may be perceived to be below the 50% level, these should be added back in or taken off if there is a favourable balance to identify the underlying reserve position.