

Member case study

Trinity College London: Cumulative savings in first two years.

“On joining Trinity College London to start up their procurement function in November 2012, my first step was to sign the charity up to the London Universities Purchasing Consortium. Having moved from a large university, I quickly realised in my new home that I had been taking the contribution of the consortia somewhat for granted.

“I quickly ensured the College were using standard consumable contracts such as stationery and couriers, shaving a few thousand off the costs. Because we are small, however, the real value was running competitions off existing frameworks. We let a three million pound contract for business travel (mercifully the College is not covered by OJEU but, if we were, the consortia drawing that risk is of high value in itself) tapping into the sector route deals and benefitting from the investment travel firms have made in systems such as booking tools and invoicing. It was no small point that we were able to use the pre-negotiated terms to quickly sign off the contract too.

“We also ran a competition for photocopying; at first the IT guys in my new home did not believe the deal on offer, it really is that good and access to it through the consortia eased the path to a quick and easy arrangement.

“On departure from Trinity I estimated we were spending £200k less as a direct consequence of consortia membership than we would have been if we continued as we were, a small amount in absolute terms but a reasonable (and scalable) percentage of our spend. The big difference I noted was the difference in attitude of suppliers when they realised they were dealing with a consortia member, it was a bit like the difference between floating with and without a buoy - and I know what I preferred.”

Tom McAra, July 2014

Tom McAra is Head of Procurement at Trinity College London, a non-HEI member of LUPC that provides music, drama and arts assessments and qualifications worldwide. He leaves to take up a new post at the University of West London in August 2014.

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