

1. Introduction

The Value For Money (VFM) Policy of the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (the organisation) outlines the organization's commitment to maximizing the impact of its activities while ensuring prudent and responsible use of resources. This policy establishes guidelines and procedures to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and economy in all aspects of the charity's operations.

2. Objectives

- a. To deliver high-quality services and achieve desired outcomes for our student members.
- b. To optimize the allocation and utilization of resources.
- c. To demonstrate transparency and accountability to stakeholders.
- d. To continuously improve performance and value for money across the organization.

3. Key Principles

- a. **Efficiency:** We strive to achieve desired outcomes with the least possible resources, eliminating waste and unnecessary costs while maintaining quality standards.
- b. **Effectiveness:** We focus on delivering meaningful and measurable results aligned with our charitable objectives, regularly monitoring and evaluating the impact of our activities.
- c. **Economy:** We seek to obtain the best value for every pound spent, considering cost-effective alternatives without compromising quality or ethics.
- d. **Transparency:** We are committed to open and honest communication with stakeholders, providing clear information on our financial management, decision-making processes, and performance.
- e. **Continuous Improvement:** We foster a culture of learning and innovation, regularly reviewing and enhancing our practices to enhance value for money and overall effectiveness.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. **Board of Trustees:** The Board is responsible for setting VFM objectives, overseeing policy implementation, and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements.
- b. **Senior Management:** The management team is accountable for embedding VFM principles into strategic planning, resource allocation, and day-to-day operations.
- c. **Staff and Volunteers:** All employees and volunteers are expected to contribute to VFM by identifying opportunities for improvement, promoting efficiency, and adhering to policy guidelines.

5. Financial Management

- a. Budgeting: We develop realistic budgets that align with our strategic goals, considering potential risks and opportunities for cost savings.
- b. Procurement: We conduct competitive procurement processes to obtain the best value for goods, services, and works, adhering to ethical and sustainable practices.
- c. Financial Controls: We implement robust financial controls, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and accountability in financial reporting, expenditure authorization, and expense reimbursement.
- d. Risk Management: We identify and manage financial and operational risks to safeguard resources and enhance the organization's resilience.

6. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): We establish KPIs to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of our programs, regularly monitoring progress towards objectives.
- b. Impact Assessment: We conduct rigorous impact assessments to evaluate the outcomes and social value generated by our activities, informing future decision-making and resource allocation.
- c. Reporting: We provide regular reports to the Board, regulators, and other stakeholders, detailing our performance against VFM objectives and highlighting areas for improvement.

7. Stakeholder Engagement

- a. Stakeholder Relations: We maintain transparent and accountable relationships with funders and other stakeholders, ensuring clear communication regarding the use and impact of their contributions.
- b. Beneficiary Engagement: We actively involve student members in decision-making processes, seeking their feedback to improve the relevance and effectiveness of our services. This is done through the voice of our student officers as well as surveys and polls promoted to the wider student body.
- c. Collaboration: We explore partnerships and collaborations with other organizations, such as UHI and other SA's/SU's, to leverage resources, share best practices, and enhance collective impact.

8. Training and Awareness

- a. We provide training and support to staff and volunteers to enhance their understanding of VFM principles and encourage their active involvement in promoting efficiency and effectiveness.
- b. We raise awareness of the VFM Policy among stakeholders, encouraging their participation, feedback, and suggestions for improvement.

9. Review and Improvement

- a. The VFM Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
- b. Lessons learned, best practices, and feedback from stakeholders will be used to enhance the policy and associated procedures, specifically related to purchasing and travel.
- c. The organization will regularly review its purchasing processes to identify opportunities for cost savings, improved supplier relationships, and increased efficiency. This may include negotiating favourable terms, exploring bulk purchasing options, or adopting sustainable procurement practices.

d. Travel management will be regularly evaluated to optimize costs while ensuring the safety and well-being of employees and volunteers. This may involve setting guidelines for travel booking, promoting the use of cost-effective transportation options, and encouraging the use of virtual meetings as alternatives to physical travel whenever possible. The organisation's Travel & Subsistence Policy provides more detail on this.

10. Ethical Considerations

a. The organization is committed to conducting all purchasing activities in an ethical and responsible manner. This includes considering the environmental impact of products and services, avoiding suppliers engaged in unethical practices, and promoting fair trade and sustainable sourcing whenever feasible.

b. Travel arrangements should also align with ethical considerations, such as minimizing carbon emissions, supporting local economies, and prioritizing safety and security.

11. Compliance

a. The organization will adhere to all relevant legal and regulatory requirements related to purchasing and travel, including taxation, data protection, and health and safety regulations.

b. Compliance with the organization's internal policies and procedures will also be ensured.

12. Communication and Training

a. The VFM Policy, including the specific guidelines and procedures related to purchasing and travel, will be communicated to all staff and volunteers. Training and support will be provided to ensure their understanding and adherence to these policies.

b. Clear channels of communication will be established to allow employees and volunteers to raise concerns, suggest improvements, or report any potential breaches of the VFM Policy.

13. Monitoring and Reporting

a. The organization will implement mechanisms to monitor compliance with the purchasing and travel guidelines outlined in the VFM Policy.

b. Requirements for tender and approval limits are set in the organisation's Financial Regulations which are reviewed and approved annually by the Finance and Commercial Development Committee.