



# Delegated Authority & Contracts Policy

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## 1. Introduction

The financial procedures enable the transfer of delegated authority from the Principal to members of the University Executive Group (UEG), Deans, Directors/Heads of Professional Support Departments, and other staff within the University. This enables the University to increase effectiveness through:

- Streamlining decision-making
- Allowing greater flexibility on the use of funds
- Motivating and incentivising staff to maximise the return from their funds whilst maintaining sound financial controls.

Delegated Authority is the financial limits that are assigned to individuals within the University regarding their ability to commit to expenditure via procurement processes, to approve expenditure via accounts payable processes, to approve new projects and ventures and to sign contracts on behalf of the University.

Delegated Authority provides control over the commitment of specific University expenditure and contract/project commitment of investment by individual staff. The University Budget and in year Management Reporting on Finances, provides the framework for agreeing overall expenditure and investment through a process that includes approval by the Executive, Finance and General Purposes Committee and Court.

By signing the [Delegated Authority Specimen Signature Form](#), members of staff are acknowledging that they have read and understood the [Financial Procedures](#) and [Financial Regulations](#), and that they will use their delegated authority both appropriately and responsibly.

The financial limits for committing to, and approving expenditure and creating new projects and ventures are contained within this policy.

An overview of the transfer of Delegated Authority from the University Court to University staff is contained in Appendix 1.

### 1.1 Responsibilities

The University Court oversees the University's financial affairs, provides governance and promotes the University's objectives. It has powers and duties conferred on it by statute that are discharged through delegation to the Principal who has responsibility for the management and administration of the whole of the revenue and property of the University.

It is the University's policy to devolve financial accountability by transferring budgetary control responsibilities to members of the University Executive Group and then to Deans, Directors, and other Budget Holders.

For Academic Departments within Schools, the respective Dean, supported by the School's Senior Management Group, is accountable to the University Executive Group for University funds expended.

For Professional Support Departments, the respective Director/Head of Department is accountable to the University Executive Group for University funds expended.

It is the responsibility of School Deans and Director /Head of Department to ensure that their staff members are granted appropriate levels of delegated authority.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the authority delegated to them is used responsibly, appropriately, and in line with this policy.

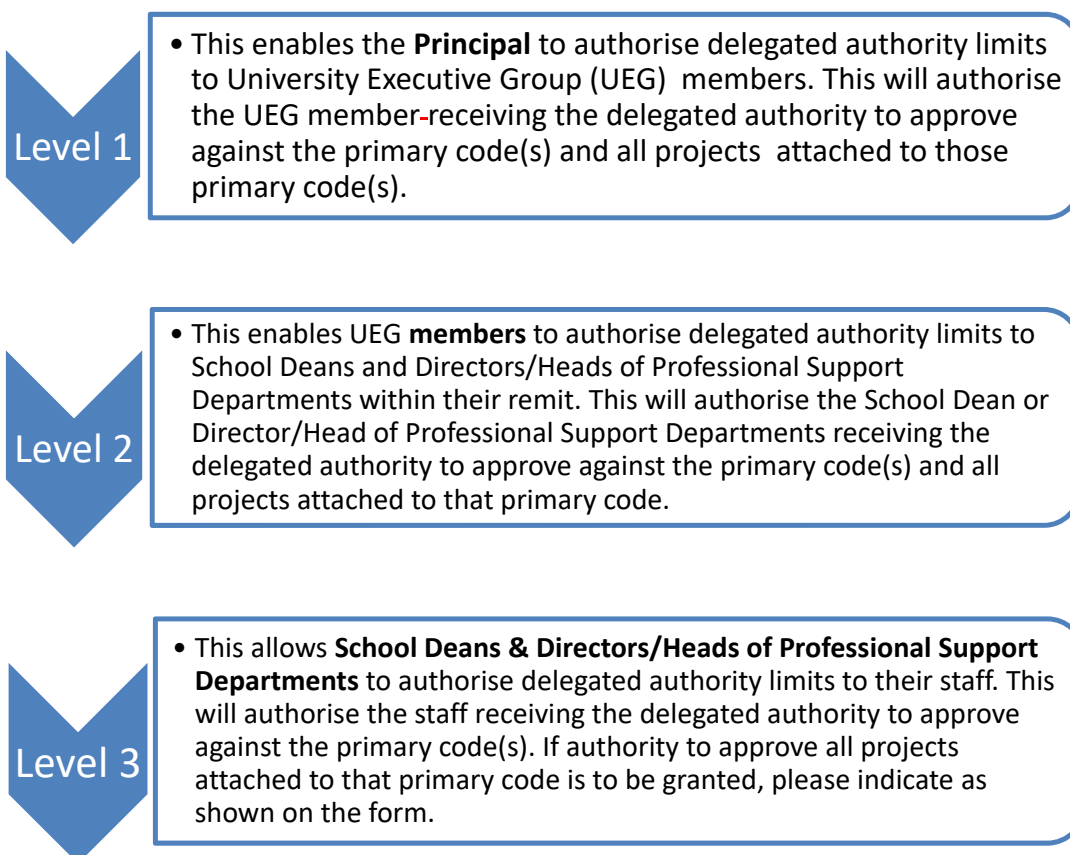
Embedded within budget responsibility is assuring that account activity is relevant to the intended purpose of accounts and that spend is within budget limits, unless authorised in writing by an appropriate individual/funding body.

The Disclosures of Interest and Principles of Conduct sections within the [Financial Procedures](#) must be adhered to when authorising delegated authority limits, approving new projects, approving contracts, and committing to, and approving expenditure.

## 1.2 Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Delegation sets out the levels for authorisation of Delegated Authority Limits.

There are 4 levels within the Scheme of Delegation: Levels 1 to 3 apply to Cost Centres and Projects and Level 4 applies only to Projects.



## Level 4

- This allows **staff with delegated authority** to authorise delegated authority limits to their staff working on **projects**. This will authorise the staff receiving the delegated authority to approve against the project(s) specified.

There are two occasions when changes to delegated authority levels are required –

- Permanent Changes (i.e. new appointments, structural changes, Executive Portfolio changes, etc.)
- Temporary Changes (i.e. to cover annual leave, sick leave, etc.)

The procedure for updating delegated authority levels (see Section 4) explains the process for notifying Finance of any changes.

### 1.3 Risk

Implicit in establishing delegated authorities and responsibilities is the requirement **to recognise and limit the potential risks and exposures** of contractual arrangements and the various financial transactions and proposals across the University. Therefore, it is vital that consideration is given to the University's **risk appetite** relevant to the activity being undertaken. Should any individual be uncertain as to the University's risk appetite in any particular area or activity, this should be discussed with their line manager whom failing, a member of the University Executive Group. Even if the financial limits are within an individual's delegated authority, where the activity will result in a level of risk exposure greater than the University's risk appetite in that area, then delegated authority must be escalated to University Executive Group.

### 1.4 Contract Approval

Contracts should be signed in line with the limits set out in the Delegated Authority and, prior to signature, approval of either the Procurement team in Finance, the Research and Innovation Office or the Governance & Legal Services Department must be obtained as indicated in the following sections. Where the contract is multiyear in nature the total value of the procurement should guide the level of approval required.

Contracts that can be approved, per the Delegated Authority Policy, and have been identified by Procurement as having additional risks, not fully considered by the Approver, will be referred to the Director of Governance & Legal Services for further consideration. The Award Recommendation Report detailing the Tender evaluation and successful supplier details will highlight any risks identified and accepted by the Budget Holder / Approver.

This policy covers the approval of all contracts on behalf of the University. If a particular circumstance is not covered please seek the advice of either the Governance & Legal Services Department or from Procurement.

## 1.5 Specimen Signatures

The Operational Services team in Finance, maintain a list of specimen signatures of all staff permitted to approve new projects, and to commit and approve expenditure. Schools, and Professional Support Departments must provide a scanned or hard copy [Delegated Level of Authority Specimen Signature Form](#) to Finance when they require a new member of staff to be given delegated authority.

## 2. Standard Delegated Authority

This applies to all levels of delegated authority, with the only exceptions described within section 3 of this policy.

The Management Accounting team in Finance maintains the official versions for all [Scheme of Delegation Forms](#) and must be informed of any amendments. Changes to the Scheme of Delegation are only effective once Management Accounting has been informed and has acknowledged the request. Until such time, the delegated authority levels will remain the same as those previously in place.

Please note that any individual enquiring as to their level of delegated authority must contact their School or Professional Support Departments in the first instance. The School or Professional Support Department should contact Management Accounting if there is any uncertainty or queries regarding the current approved Scheme of Delegation for their area.

### 2.1 Limits

The policy contains two standard limits of delegated authority which are presented in the table below. Below these levels there are a number of standardised levels which can be chosen by the individual sub-delegating their responsibility.

Authorised Signatories	Authoriser Limits
Principal	No Limit*
University Executive Group Member	Up to £250,000

*\*No Limit is within the context of budgetary control and the specific provisions of the Delegated Authority Policy.*

The Executive Member may then sub-delegate authority to Deans of School and Directors/Heads of Professional Support Departments by assigning one of the following limits;

- £250,000
  - £50,000
  - £25,000
  - £10,000
  - £5,000
- } No individual is to be allocated delegated authority out with these limits.

The appropriate delegated authority level must be applied for the full value of the contract/ transaction being approved. All limits are inclusive of VAT (and all other applicable taxes). As an illustrative example, goods at £9k +20% VAT gives a total value for approval of £10,800 and so requires approval level of at least £25k.

### 3. Exceptions & Special Rules Governing Delegated Authority Levels

#### 3.1 Personal Expense Claims

For staff below Executive level, the standard delegated authority limits (see section 2) should be referred to.

For Executive level staff and above, expense claims must be approved as follows:

Claimant	Authoriser of Personal Expense Claim	Authoriser Limits
Executive	Any other member of the Executive	Up to £1,000
	Principal	Up to £10,000
Principal	If <£1,000, University Executive Group Member	Up to £1,000
	If >£1,000, Chair of Court or Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee	Up to £10,000
Members of Court	University Secretary	Up to £1,000
	University Secretary countersigned by the Principal	Up to £10,000

Where the anticipated costs for a single overseas visit is significant, advance approval from the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee must be obtained. In this context significant is:

- in excess of £30,000 for a group visit overseas,
- in excess of £10,000 for an individual's expenses.

Student visits, and group staff travel for the purposes of meeting our contracted teaching requirements under transnational partnerships, are exempt from this requirement and are subject to normal authorisation controls.



### 3.2 Externally Funded Commercial Contract/Consultancy Agreements (excluding Research)

Project proposals can be authorised as follows:

Limits (based on contract value)	Authoriser
Up to £250,000	University Executive Group Member through RIO
Up to £750,000	Principal through RIO
£750,000 +	Finance & General Purposes Committee through RIO

The approval process for commercial and consultancy is owned by [RIO](#).

### 3.3 Concessionary Contracts

The University would usually use a concessionary contract to deliver a service. Concessions involve a contractual arrangement between the University and an economic operator (the concession holder). The latter provides services and is remunerated by being permitted to exploit the service. The main example of a concession contract at GCU is the catering contract, through which the contractor has access to University buildings to provide services to staff and students.

All concessionary contracts may be approved by the individual with Delegated Authority in line with normal limits with all contracts with a value of >£750k being considered and approved by UEG. However, all concessionary contracts must, also, be approved by Procurement with input from the Director of Governance & Legal Services as appropriate.

Where the contract is multiyear in nature the total value of the procurement should guide the level of approval required. For concessionary contracts this value should refer to the turnover of the contract for the full term of the contract.

### 3.4 Contracts for the Purchase of Goods and/or Services

Any procurement of goods and/or services by GCU must be made in accordance with the [Financial Procedures](#).

### 3.5 All Other Contracts (including those with no financial implications)

All contracts, not covered by any of the other paragraphs within this section 3, which include but shall not be limited to confidentiality agreements, license agreements and property leases must follow the standard limits set out in section 2 and the Governance & Legal Services Department must be consulted prior to signature.

### 3.6 Tender Applications in relation to GCU providing services to other parties

The value of tenders should be measured on a multi-year basis in line with the period being tendered for and on a turnover basis.

Limits (based on total income)	Authoriser
Up to £500,000	Dean/Director
Over £500,000	University Executive Group

As part of the tender process advice should be sought from appropriate Professional Services Departments normally, and in addition, but not limited to, Finance and Governance & Legal Services.

### 3.7 Research Grants/Research Contracts

Project proposals can be authorised as follows:

Limits (based on total award if GCU Lead partner and award to GCU if partner on a collaboration agreement)	Authoriser
Up to £1,000,000	University Executive Group Member
Up to £3,000,000	Principal
£3,000,000 +	Finance & General Purposes Committee

The approval process for research grants and contracts is owned by [RIO](#)

### 3.8 Claims/Damages from Staff

The following authorisations are required:

Limits	Authoriser
Up to £10,000	University Secretary
Up to £50,000	Principal
£100,000 +	Finance & General Purposes Committee

**3.9 Collaborations between the University and Other Organisations, e.g. Joint ventures, new entities etc.**

<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Approval Limits</b>
If turnover exceeds £750,000 per annum <b>Or</b> If GCU investment exceeds £750,000 <b>Or</b> On the decision of the Principal, if there are clearly significant non-financial (e.g. reputational) risks to the University and the project is breaking new ground.	Court on recommendation of Finance & General Purposes Committee	Over £750,000 turnover p.a. and single investment

Collaborations under £750,000 must follow the standard limits set out in section 2.

The Governance & Legal Services Department must be consulted on any collaboration or joint venture agreements prior to signature.

Projects going to Court on the grounds of reputation should normally include Senate advice.

**3.10 In Year Budget Additions**

Normally, significant changes to budgeted commitments will be captured through the University Strategic Planning & Budgeting process. Exceptionally, it may be necessary to make investments separately from that process.

This section does not apply to the creation of new staff positions or to non-pay additions which are part of the regular active management of University resources.

<b>Additions to Budget</b>	<b>Approved By</b>
Up to £250,000 Net Contribution Impact	University Executive Group
> £250,000 Net Contribution Impact	Finance & General Purposes Committee

### 3.11 Writing off Bad Debts

This relates to income due to the University which cannot be recovered.

Individual Debt	Cumulative Debt p.a.	Write Off Approved By
Up to £25,000	Up to £500,000	Chief Operating Officer & DVC
Individual Debts up to £100,000	Up to £1,000,000	Principal
Individual debts in excess of £100,000	No limit	Finance & General Purposes Committee

Note: should F&GPC approval be required this is likely to be a Chair's Action due to the timing of the financial year end occurring when Committees are paused over the summer.

### 3.12 Financial Claims

This relates to the strategy to be followed for financial claims against the University.

Claim	Approved By
Up to £750,000	Principal
£750,000+	Finance & General Purposes Committee reserved power

### 3.13 Major Reorganisations

Definition – The creation or dissolution of more than 30 posts in any one action or cumulatively the creation or dissolution of more than 100 posts over a financial year.

This section does not apply to the creation or dissolution of staff positions which are part of the regular active management of University resources.

The Principal, with advice from the University Executive Board, is authorised to take executive action up to 30 posts.

Above this, the Finance & General Purposes Committee is authorised to consider recommendations from the Principal and, where appropriate, Senate, and to submit proposals to Court.

### 3.14 Major Capital Projects

These limits refer to the authorisation of expenditure on a Major Capital Project already approved by F&GPC and/or Court. A Major Capital Project is defined as a project with a value in excess of £1m.

Expenditure	Approved By
Up to £750,000	Chief Operating Officer & DVC
Over £750,000	Principal

### 3.15 CPD & Conferences

CPD and Conference projects proposals can be authorised as follows:

Limits (Based on cost investment by GCU)	Authoriser
Up to £100,000	School Dean
Up to £250,000	University Executive Group Member
Up to £750,000	Principal

### 3.16 Student Refunds

The [Fees & Refund Policy](#) governs the process for treating student fee overpayments. Given that the Delegated Authority policy specifically relates to the approval of expenditure, overpayment refunds are outwith scope. Refunds relating to overpayments may be approved by professional accountancy qualified members of the Finance Department Senior Team.

## Procedure for Updating Delegated Authority Levels

### 4.1 Temporary Changes to Delegated Authority

This applies to new appointments, new projects, staff moving from one School/Department to another, etc. It can also apply when, for example, a Dean or Director/Head of Professional Support Department would like to increase/decrease the level of delegated authority for an individual.

Every time there is a **permanent** change to a person's delegated authority,

[Scheme of Delegation Form](#) Must be completed.

#### Scheme of Delegation Form

How to complete the form –

1. Choose the delegated authority level. There are 4 levels as follows;

#### Level 1

- This enables the **Principal** to authorise delegated authority limits to University Executive Group members. This will authorise the Executive Group member receiving the delegated authority to approve against the primary code(s) and all projects attached to those primary code(s).

#### Level 2

- This enables **University Executive Group members** to authorise delegated authority limits to School Deans and Directors/Heads of Professional Support Departments within their remit. This will authorise the School Dean or Director/Head of Professional Support Departments receiving the delegated authority to approve against the primary code(s) and all projects attached to that primary code.

#### Level 3

- This allows **School Deans & Directors/Heads of Professional Support Departments** to authorise delegated authority limits to their staff. This will authorise the staff receiving the delegated authority to approve against the primary code(s). If authority to approve all projects attached to that primary code is to be granted, please indicate as shown on the form.

## Level 4

- This allows **staff with delegated authority** to authorise delegated authority limits to their staff working on **projects**. This will authorise the staff receiving the delegated authority to approve against the project(s) specified.

Management Accounting maintains the Level 1 form on behalf of the Principal.

### **For Levels 1-3:**

2. Enter the individual's name(s) whose delegated authority is to be updated.
3. Enter the Primary code(s) to which the delegated authority applies.  
Multiple primary codes can be entered on the same form.
4. Enter the Delegated Authority limit that the individual is to be granted.  
Please refer to section 2 for the limits available.
5. For level 3 only, also state if delegated authority has to be given to all projects attached to the primary code(s) by indicating "Yes/No" or stating specific project codes.
6. The person authorising the change to the delegated authority must choose their position from the drop down list then print, sign and date the form.

### **For Level 4 delegation for Project Accounts:**

To prevent the continuous completion and update of Level 4 forms a Dean/Head of Support or Research Department may opt to automatically allocate all Project Account Holders delegated authority by doing the following:

2. Enter 'All Project Account Holders' for the individual's name.
3. Enter 'All' for the project code to which the delegated authority applies.
4. Enter a Delegated Authority limit to apply to all Project Account Holders. Please refer to section 2 for the limits available.
5. If the Dean/Director/Head of Professional Support Department wishes to grant authority to a project holder which is different to that being automatically given to all project holders, the name of the individual, their delegated limit and the project codes must be indicated on a separate line on the same form.

If an individual has been granted Delegated Authority to projects via the Level 3 form their name should not appear on a Level 4 form.

6. The person authorising the change to the delegated authority must choose their position from the drop down list then print, sign and date the form.

**For Level 4 delegation by Project Account Holder:**

2. Enter the individual's name(s) whose delegated authority is to be updated.
3. Enter the Project code to which the delegated authority applies.  
A separate form must be completed for each project code.
4. Enter the Delegated Authority limit that the individual is to be granted.  
Please refer to section 2 for the limits.
5. The person authorising the change to the delegated authority must choose their position from the drop down list then print, sign and date the form.

Once completed, an e-mail from the person authorising the [Scheme of Delegation Form](#), with a scanned signed copy of the form attached, must be sent to Management Accounting. Hard signed copies of the form are also acceptable. Where hard signed copies are received by Finance these will be scanned and the hard copy disposed.

#### **4.2 Temporary Changes to Delegated Authority**

Temporary changes will be required to cover holidays and leave (e.g. sick leave, maternity leave, etc.).

##### **Temporary Change less than 1 month**

If the temporary change is less than 1 month, an e-mail from the individual's line manager must be e-mailed to Management Accounting. It must state the individual's names who are involved in the change, and the duration the change covers.

##### **Temporary Change longer than 1 month**

If the temporary change is for longer than 1 month, a [Scheme of Delegation Form](#) must be completed.

The same guidance as permanent changes should be followed, see section 4.1. The only exception to this being that the duration of the temporary change to delegated authority should be detailed.

#### **4.3 Ownership of Delegated Authority Forms**

Management Accounting maintains the official versions for all [Scheme of Delegation Form](#) and must be informed of any amendments. If Management Accounting has not been informed of any amendments, the delegated authority levels will remain the same as previous.

#### **4.4 Ownership of the Delegated Authority Specimen Signature Forms**

Operational Services maintains the official versions for all Delegated Authority Specimen Signature Forms and must be informed of any amendments (i.e. name changes). If Operational Services has not been informed of any amendments, the specimen signature will remain the same as previous.



## Delegated Authority – Transfer Overview

