

OPEN: Supplier FAQs

I'm a supplier - how will I benefit from registering with OPEN?

OPEN is free and user-friendly, and a great way for schools to buy your goods and services. The system will save you time and money, reducing administration and removing the cost of printing and posting invoices / statements. You also have an option to invest in integrating your finance system with OPEN to reduce administration time further. Subject to nomination, OPEN suppliers could also have access to schools all over England, giving you the potential to trade with new customers as well as existing ones.

How does OPEN work?

OPEN is an online buying tool which displays your goods and services to school buyers. Schools can either search by supplier name or by product type. Once the school has selected the item they want to purchase, the online marketplace takes care of the rest. You receive the order, the school receives an invoice, and, upon receipt of the goods, the school authorises your payment.

As a supplier, you need to ensure that you upload your product catalogue onto the system (we'll tell you how to do this) and keep it updated. This will help schools to find your products and see up to date prices. If you can't supply a catalogue, don't worry - schools can still place orders or request quotes from you.

Of course, we will support you with this, and technological support is available either online or at the end of a dedicated supplier helpline.

Can all suppliers register to be on OPEN?

No. Suppliers must be nominated either by a school or a Local Authority using OPEN. If you are nominated, you will receive a letter or email telling you how to register.

How do I register my details?

Once you have been nominated by a school or Local Authority, we will contact you to begin the registration process. (This will be online and will take approximately five minutes.) Once you have successfully registered, we will then contact you to begin the process of uploading your product catalogue onto OPEN (this is done by completing an e-template).

How can I promote my company on OPEN?

Once you are on the system as a supplier, it is up to you how you choose to promote your presence on the site to schools. Your catalogues can be updated to promote offers, and OPEN will also allow you to link to your external website where you can highlight products and offers. We can

also provide you with a copy of the OPEN logo that you can display in your marketing materials.

How big will OPEN be?

We're still in the early days of the roll-out of OPEN, but it has the potential to be used by every school in England. More and more schools are registering every day with OPEN, so if you have been nominated by your school to be on OPEN, we would encourage you to register as soon as possible. The sooner you register, the sooner you can start trading.