



Revaluation 2026 Public Buildings Committee

Practice Note 12 Valuation of Universities, Colleges and other Institutes of Higher & Further Education

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Practice Note deals with the valuation of Universities, Colleges and other Institutes of Higher and Further Education.

1.2 Educational Accommodation

Properties which are occupied for University, Higher or Further Education purposes should be considered for valuation under the following two principal categories:

- A. Property that has been purpose built or substantially adapted for occupation by a University, College or Higher Education Institution and for which they are the only hypothetical tenants. This will include buildings forming part of the main complex or campus and may include those that are separate from it.
- B. Property separate from a complex or campus, which is comparable physically with property in the locality and/or which has been taken over with little or no adaptation for educational purposes. For example, former houses, shops, offices or stores acquired perhaps with a view to future development but in the meantime used for education or administration purposes.

1.3 Residential Accommodation

All halls of residences, hostels and other living accommodation used as residences by students and/or, as the sole or main residence of staff should be treated as separate dwellings and entered on the Valuation List, in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Council Tax (Dwellings and Part Residential) (Scotland) Regulations 1992. Student halls are defined in Schedule 1 paragraph 2 as:

“Any lands and heritages-

- (a) which are used for (or, if not in use, were last used) predominantly as residential accommodation by students: and
- (b) in which there are facilities which are available for sharing by some or all of the students”.

Accordingly, should the student accommodation meet the foregoing requirements then an entry should appear in the Council Tax List and be excluded from the educational establishment valuation. Any individual residential property being the sole or main residence of an employee of the establishment should also be shown as a separate entry in the Council Tax List.

Entries should not generally be made in the Valuation Roll for residential property which is used out with term-time for commercial letting in connection with summer schools, short courses and conferences, provided the predominant use is as student accommodation.

1.4 Let-Outs

Non-domestic premises forming part of a campus or complex which are let by the University or College in such a way as to require separate assessment should be assessed by the most appropriate method of valuation; this will normally be by reference to rental evidence.

2.0 Basis of Valuation

- 2.1 Category **A** properties: Purpose built and adapted buildings should be valued on the Contractors Basis.
- 2.2 Category **B** properties: Property of this type should be valued by comparison with similar properties in the immediate locality.
- 2.3 The following recommendations apply to Category **A** properties only.

3.0 Survey and Measurement

- 3.1 Building areas should be calculated on a Gross External Basis (GEA) for each main floor.
- 3.2 Where a subject is of older construction e.g., stone, and has thicker than normal walls, the area should be adjusted on a floor by floor basis in accordance with SAA Valuation of Contractor's Basis Subjects, Areas Adjustment and External Works' Costs Practice Notes to adjust the floor area to the modern equivalent.

- 3.3 Site area should be calculated together with the areas of any car parks, roadways and other paved or landscaped surfaces. Measurements and details of boundary walls, fences and any other items in the nature of external works, civil works or plant and machinery should also be noted.

4.0 Building and External Works Costs

The available cost evidence was analysed in terms of SAA Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note

5.0 Valuation

- 5.1 Valuations should be carried out in accordance with SAA Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note.
- 5.2 Recommended unit cost rates excluding professional fees for buildings are noted below
- 5.3 For external works reference should be made to section 6.6 below.

6.0 Estimated Replacement Cost (ERC)

6.1 Unit Cost Rates (Buildings)

The following unit cost rates per square metre should be applied to the adjusted GEA in accordance with the different categories described. Costs were analysed on the basis of total building areas and, accordingly, the recommended rates should be applied with all main and ancillary areas taken at 100%.

Rates should be selected based on the style and construction of the building concerned, and not based upon whether the property is occupied by a body operating it as a University or a College.

All rates are exclusive of renewable technologies and sprinkler systems, which should be accounted for separately in valuations, using Unit Cost Rates obtained from the Rating Cost Guide Scotland.

6.2 Universities

The following rates should in general be applied to university buildings or further educational establishments of a similar nature. There may be some instances, such as for example collegiate universities, to which consideration should be given to applying the rate specified in 6.3.

6.2.1 **Advanced Science Buildings** **Unit Cost Rate £5,407**

This unit cost rate is only intended to apply to particular buildings of the highly specialised nature and specification described below.

Highly specialised scientific laboratory used for post graduate research including a high proportion (typically in excess of 30% of the floor space) of one or more of the following attributes:

- Containment level 3 or above.
- Clean rooms.
- Substantial foundations with or without isolation from the main structure to ensure vibration free operation of scientific machinery.

It is anticipated that this category will not apply to buildings constructed (or substantially rebuilt) before 2003. Examples within university departments may include nanotechnology, epidemiology, medical research involving animals or pathogens etc.

6.2.2 **Other Science Buildings & Tiered Auditoria**

Buildings used for the following purposes.

Postgraduate/Research Science: **Unit Cost Rate £3,569**

Those buildings containing, but not exclusively, research facilities which do not reach the high specification of Advanced Science, used by both postgraduates and under graduates.

Teaching Science: **Unit Cost Rate £3,569**

Broadly those buildings may be employed for the following academic uses:

Pre-clinical and clinical medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, anatomy & physiology, pharmacology, pharmacy, other related medical studies, biochemistry, other biological studies, agriculture & forestry, chemistry, physics, other physical sciences, general engineering, chemical engineering, civil engineering, electrical & electronic engineering, mechanical, aero & production engineering, mineral engineering, metallurgy & materials, other technologies.

Tiered Auditoria: **Unit Cost Rate £3,569**

Tiered lecture theatres and conference halls, drama blocks comprising tiered auditorium.

6.2.3 Other Main Buildings **Unit Cost Rate £2,600**

All main buildings which do not fall into other categories, including link walkways and sports buildings (as opposed to sports barns).

6.2.4 Animal Research Facilities

Buildings which are used for animal research, normally found in conjunction with Higher Education institutions, offering medical and veterinary science, animal research and other related medical studies. Access to these buildings may be restricted due to their use and sensitive nature, although this should not impede a full survey being carried out on behalf of the Assessor.

Buildings will be constructed of steel portal frame, with metal clad walls and roofs, on a concrete foundation. Typically, these buildings will contain a small element of staff and research facilities within the buildings, however the majority of the floor area will be devoted to the housing of animals. This category does not cover the typical agricultural style buildings located on research facilities.

The buildings will contain varying standards and levels of services. Where actual costs are available, these may be useful in informing a suitable Unit Cost Rate to apply. In the absence of costs, the following may act as a guide for the valuer selecting an appropriate Unit Cost Rate to apply.

Highly serviced Animal Buildings: **Unit Cost Rate £2,100**

Basic, lightly serviced Animal Buildings: **Unit Cost Rate £1,450**

6.3 Main College Buildings **Unit Cost Rate £2,423**

Typical accommodation will comprise the following:

Class space and other teaching areas, assembly halls, dining halls, administrative offices, staff rooms, libraries, kitchens, music rooms, sports halls which are structurally an integral part of main college buildings, stores and workshops which are structurally integral to the main college buildings.

In cases where a college building is clearly superior to the above description but may not be in the nature of the main buildings at 6.2.3 above, it will be necessary to interpolate between the two rates.

6.4 Unit Cost Rates from other Practice Notes

6.4.1 Ceremonial Buildings

Buildings which are in the nature of halls found at older, traditional universities and built to a prestigious standard, having much decorative stone, plasterwork and timber detailing. Reference should be made to the SAA Valuation of Halls, Art Galleries and Museums etc. Practice Note to select an appropriate Unit Cost Rate for buildings of this nature.

6.4.2 University Buildings Co-located on NHS Campuses

Buildings co-located on NHS Campuses where the use of the building is shared between the institution and the NHS Board in that area, care should be taken to select an appropriate Unit Cost Rate that is reflective of the style, construction, quality and level of services provided. Guidance may be sought from the SAA Valuation of Clinics, Health Centres and Primary Care Centres Practice Note, or SAA Valuation of Hospitals Practice Note.

It should be rare that a building would have different Unit Cost Rates for different parts based solely on occupation, where there are no other discernible differences in the style, construction, quality and standard of services and finishes.

6.5 Sports Buildings

6.5.1 Sports Barns Unit Cost Rate £2,000

With changing and associated plant rooms.

6.5.2 Sports Barns Unit Cost Rate £1,650

Without changing rooms.

6.5.3 25m Swimming Pools Unit Cost Rate £3,000

Including surrounds, changing and plant rooms.

6.5.4 50m Swimming Pools Unit Cost Rate £3,100

Including surrounds, changing and plant rooms.

6.6 Ancillary Buildings

6.6.1 Greenhouses/Simple Timber Structures Unit Cost Rate £291

Those greenhouses used purely in connection with raising plants for ornamental purposes, without climate control, and used neither for research nor public admission. Timber structures within this category will be of the simplest type, used as stores and/or garages, and with no heating.

6.6.2 Workshops/Stores (non-teaching) Unit Cost Rate £1,000

These will be more substantial structures than at 6.5.1. Typically, with light steel frame, 100mm brickwork infill to 1.0m height, profiled corrugated sheet cladding above, translucent sheet glazing, electric power, water, toilets and central heating. Such buildings are likely to have been built after 1975. Older workshops may be constructed from different materials. Where a building in this category is unheated, an allowance of 12.5% should be made to the UCR.

6.6.3 Modular Buildings Unit Cost Rate £1,450

Buildings of prefabricated sectional design, internally insulated and plasterboard lined, with accommodation similar to permanent buildings, sited on permanent hardstanding and serviced.

6.6.4 Portable Cabins Unit Cost Rate £900

Transportable as complete units with basic connections to services, sited on rudimentary base and providing adequate temporary accommodation.

6.6.5 Inferior Prefabricated Buildings Unit Cost Rate £650

Inferior quality, poor or no insulation, lacks services, typically to HORSAs hut standard.

6.7 Unit Cost Rates (External Works)

External Works should be valued in accordance with SAA Valuation of Contractor's Basis Subjects, Areas Adjustment and External Works' Costs Practice Note.

6.8 Specialised Facilities

Specialised facilities such as athletics tracks and their ancillaries should be added in accordance with SAA Valuation of Sports Grounds and SAA

Valuation of Contractor's Basis Subjects, Areas Adjustment and External Works' Costs Practice Notes.

6.9 Adjustments to ERC

Adjustments in respect of contract size and additions for professional fees should be made in accordance with the recommendations contained in SAA Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note.

7.0 Adjusted Replacement Cost (ARC)

7.1 In applying age-related obsolescence allowances reference should be made to guidance in SAA Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note and SAA Valuation of Contractor's Basis Subjects, Areas Adjustment and External Works' Costs Practice Note. Table E at Appendix 1 of the Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note should be used for buildings.

7.2 Further allowances of a functional and technical nature should be considered with reference to the SAA Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note and SAA Valuation of Contractor's Basis Subjects, Areas Adjustment and External Works' Costs Practice Note.,.

7.3 Buildings with no Lifts Provision

Buildings or affected parts of buildings without lifts may be granted an allowance as indicated in the table below:

2 Storeys	-5%
3 Storeys	-10%
4 Storeys	-15%
5 Storeys and above	-20%

If, in the case of buildings of two storeys or above, a particular floor such as an attic is significantly smaller than the main floors or consists of a basement of poorer quality, then such a floor should be excluded from the determination of an appropriate lift allowance to be applied to the whole building in the table above.

7.4 In applying age and obsolescence allowances reference should be made to guidance in SAA Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note.

8.0 Plant and Machinery

Buildings' unit cost rates above are inclusive of service plant typically found in subjects covered by this Practice Note. Rateable items of plant and machinery not already reflected in these rates should be dealt with in terms of the Valuation for

Rating (Plant & Machinery) (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (as amended) and valued with reference to the Rating Cost Guide Scotland.

9.0 Land

Land value should be determined by reference to local evidence and SAA Contractor's Basis Valuations Practice Note.

10.0 Decapitalisation Rate

The appropriate statutory decapitalisation rate should be used.

11.0 End Allowance

Any factors or circumstances which might affect the value of the occupation of the lands and heritages as a whole should be reflected at this stage. An adjustment under this head should not duplicate adjustments made elsewhere.