



Purchasing Made Easy

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Introduction

This training manual provides an overview of [Policy 2106 – Purchase of Goods and Services](#) and instructions for purchasing goods and services. Detailed instructions on using eVA, Virginia’s electronic ordering system, to initiate a purchase may be found in the [Basic eVA Manual](#).

Manual Topics:

- State policy regarding all purchases, including non-allowable items.
- When to utilize eVA.
- When to use the Purchasing Charge Card (P-Card).
- How to make a specialized purchase.
- How to use mandatory and other commonly used contracts.
- When to use the *Payment Request Workflow*
- When to use the *Honorarium Payment Request Workflow*.

State Rules and Limitations

The Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures (CAPP) Manual, Section 20310, dictates that all expenditures of state funds be considered essential to the operation of the university. Under the general rule set forth in Section 2.2-1822 of the Code of Virginia, the Department of Accounts may question any state-funded expenditure. This means that all state-funded expenditures (including grants and contracts) are subject to public scrutiny. Anyone authorizing a purchase should determine that the benefit to the university justifies the use of state funds and consider the appearance of unusual purchases. Individual circumstances vary widely and adequate documentation for unusual purchases should always be included.

The following list contains examples of expenditures determined by George Mason University to be an improper use of state funds. This list is intended to provide general guidance in judging the appropriate use of state funds. However, any state-funded expenditure may be questioned, including those that are not listed below.

Improper Expenditures (Examples)

- Gifts
- Flowers (exception for commencement ceremonies and specific Admissions events)
- Charitable contributions
- Alcoholic beverages
- Snacks for employees
- Coffee, machines, or supplies. Coffee makers, located in a communal area and typically costing less than \$100, may be purchased using state funds, provided the machine services community use. The coffee maker will be the property of the university. Water dispensers/ coolers, stands, or related items follow the same guidelines
- Retirement parties/employee going-away parties
- Group luncheons for employees
- Holiday cards or decorations
- Non-business-related newspapers or magazines
- Books for classes (unless they remain the property of George Mason University)
- Picture framing (unless the item remains the property of George Mason University)
- Framing of award certificates
- Replacement of stolen or lost employee personal articles
- Personal items, such as fans or heaters
- Clothing, unless required to perform the duties of a position
- Software licenses, applications, systems, digital books, or other digital materials downloaded to personal devices
- Personal purchases of any type linked to a Mason Business Account (Amazon.com or similar)

Personal Items for Communal Use

The following items may be purchased for communal use with advanced approval from the fund/org approver. Communal use Items are defined as items that are available for use by an entire department and visitors to that department.

Examples:

- Band aides
- First aid kits
- Hand sanitizer
- Tissues
- Paper plates, paper napkins, and plastic cutlery (only for student groups in support of a particular event, reimbursed with food and beverage items through the [food and beverage process](#).)

The following items are generally appropriate for shared use by a building floor or other centralized communal areas:

- Basic coffee makers (machine only - without supplies)
- Refrigerators
- Microwave ovens

George Mason University Purchasing Policy

University Policy 2106 details the policies and procedures related to the purchase of goods and services. This policy delegates purchasing authority for many small purchases to certain employees at the departmental level. The full text of the policy is included in the appendix and may also be obtained on the Fiscal Services website at <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/policies/>.

- Purchases of \$5,000 or less may be made by individuals with organizational financial responsibility and their designees.
- The Purchasing Department is responsible for purchasing and leasing all goods and services for the university that cost more than \$5,000.
- Only those individuals who have received an official letter of delegated authority from the University President, or their designee, are authorized to sign contracts and/or make obligations on behalf of the university for purchases over \$5,000.

The Purchasing Department supports the university community by purchasing desired goods and services. The goal is to satisfy each organization's requirements in a timely manner at the lowest available cost, while adhering to university policy, and state procurement guidelines and regulations. In addition, all Mason employees will assist in the standardization of purchases for commonly procured goods and services by utilizing institution-wide contracts, when applicable. A PDF version of the Purchasing Snapshot is available at <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PurchasingSnapshot-7-1-2020.pdf>.

Competitive Requirements

An explanation of the requirements for purchasing goods and non-professional services at various price points is listed below. The amount of time required to process an order varies, but routine purchases should be completed within the processing times shown.

Units must follow the specific procedures on contracts and delegated signature authority here: <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Contract-Quick-Guide-1.pdf>.

Individual Departments – \$5,000 or less

- Purchases may be made by individuals with organizational financial responsibility and their designees through eVA, Purchasing Charge Card (P-Card), or Payment Request (for specific items listed on the Payment Request Workflow only). For one time-purchases that are not already under contract, departments are to attempt to use SWaM (small,

women, and minority-owned businesses), or Micro SWaM vendors. Departments may locate Micro/SWaM vendors at the following link: <https://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/directory/>.

- The \$5,000 departmental threshold must not be circumvented by “splitting orders”. “Splitting orders” is defined as awarding multiple orders within a short time period to the same vendor that would exceed the delegated signature authority and prevent appropriate competition. Purchases that are \$5,000 or less, but are expected to regularly recur, should be bundled and sent to the Purchasing Department for completion.
- For contracts of \$5,000 or less, there may be terms and conditions that Mason, as a state agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, cannot agree to. The [Contract Addendum](#) form should be attached to these contracts to “cancel out” or invalidate the prohibitive terms and conditions. Refer to the [Contract Addendum Instructions](#) for additional assistance. Follow the [Non-Catalog Quick Guide](#) to generate a Purchase Order. Contracts \$5,000 or less may be signed by individuals with organizational financial responsibility or their designees.

Purchasing Department – Over \$5,000 and up to \$200,000

- For purchases where the one time or cumulative estimated cost of the materials, supplies or services is greater than \$5,000 but less than \$200,000, at least three written quotations should be obtained. Where practicable, two quotes should be from Micro/SWaM vendors. In cases where two certified Micro/SWaM vendors are solicited, and the price is determined to be fair and reasonable the third competitive quote is not required. *Administrative lead-time is approximately 5 to 10 days, once assigned to a Purchasing Department buyer.* For specific instruction on how to conduct an informal request for quote (Unsealed Bids) or informal request for proposal (Unsealed Proposals), refer to the [Contract Quick Guide](#).

Over \$200,000, Invitation for Bids (IFB):

- For purchases where the one time or cumulative estimated cost is expected to be \$200,000 or greater, competitive sealed bidding is required. Bids should be solicited from at least six sources with four of them Micro/SWaM certified, where practicable. IFB’s are advertised in eVA for a minimum of 10 days. Sealed bids are opened and read aloud at a public bid opening. A Notice of Award or Notice of Intent to Award is publicly posted after the applicable decision has been made. *Administrative lead-time is approximately 21 days but may be if 60 days depending on the complexity of the order.*

Over \$200,000, Request for Proposals (RFP)

- For purchases expected to exceed \$200,000, competitive sealed proposals, resulting in competitive negotiations is required. Proposals should be solicited from at least six sources with four of them Micro/SWaM certified, where practicable. RFPs are advertised in eVA for a minimum of 10 days. Sealed proposals are not opened in public. A Notice of Award or Notice of Intent to Award is publicly posted after the applicable decision has been made. *Administrative lead-time is typically 60-180 days depending on complexity. There is no mechanism for an expedited RFP.*

How To Initiate an IFB or RFP

To initiate an IFB or RFP, departments should fill out a [Solicitation Prep Form](#) found on the Fiscal Services Forms & Instructions page. The form is linked to Mason’s Procurement Tool, Bonfire, for completion. Instructions for new users to access the form can be found here: [Solicitation Prep Form Instructions](#).

Contract Administration

Contract administration is an important part of the procurement and contracting process. The contract administrator is responsible for ensuring that the vendor fulfills its obligations in accordance with the contract terms and/or statement of work. As a result, multi-year purchase orders and/or contracts must designate a contract administrator and list their assigned duties. A formal memo is sent by the Purchasing Department to the contract administrator, enumerating their duties and responsibilities once a contract is awarded. For term contracts, the Purchasing Department Buyer will contact

the contract administrator about 90 days prior to the contract's expiration to determine future contracting needs for that commodity area.

NOTE: The Purchasing Department is responsible for ensuring that the contract administrator is fulfilling their obligations. Prior to award, the buyer may establish a procedure whereby the purchasing department buyer and the contract administrator will have regularly scheduled meetings, correspondences, evaluations, etc. For all term contracts, the contract administrator will be sent a contract evaluation survey via email every six months. The contract administrator must complete the evaluation, which will become a part of the contract file. The contract file must be constantly updated to document actions taken, if any, as a result of the individual contract administration compliance plan.

Units should review the [Contract Quick Guide](#) for assistance with creating orders to contracted vendors.

State Contracts

Term contracts are established by the Purchasing Department to obtain more favorable prices through volume purchasing and to reduce procurement lead-time and administrative effort. Departments may obtain copies of state contracts from the Purchasing Department or from the Department of General Services, Division of Purchases and Supply website at https://procure.cgieva.com/page.aspx/en/ctr/contract_browse_public.

VASCUPP Contracts

A list of Virginia Association of State Colleges and University Purchasing Professionals (VASCUPP) contracts is available at <https://vascupp.org/contracts>. Under the category dropdown, select the type of contract desired, and then select Search. The list of VASCUPP contracts for that category will be displayed. The search box may also be used for keywords.

Mason Contracts

Purchasing provides support to departments through the establishment of agency contracts. A summary of Mason's contracts can be found on the [Search for an Existing Contract](#) page of the Fiscal Services website. These often carry favorable prices, terms, and conditions that can be used by all departments. For additional information, contact the [Purchasing Department](#).

SWaM Procurement Initiative

SWaM is an acronym to define businesses as Small, Women-owned, and Minority- owned. The SWaM Procurement Initiative is a statewide effort established to enhance business opportunities for SWaM businesses operating in Virginia. George Mason University encourages the use of Micro SWaM and/or SWaM vendors when practicable. For more information regarding the SWaM Procurement Initiative, contact the [Purchasing Department](#).

Exceptions to Competitive Requirements

The university may enter into contracts without competition for the following goods and/or services at the specified dollar amount(s). (§37 of the Governing Rules)

The purchase of good or services at ANY dollar amount that are produced/performed by or related to:

- Persons, in schools or workshops, under the supervision of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.
- Non-profit sheltered workshops or other non-profit organizations that offer transitional or supported employment services serving the handicapped.
- Private educational institutions.
- Other public educational institutions.
- Speakers and performing artists.
- Membership and association dues.

- Sponsored research grant sub-awards and contract sub-awards, not to include the purchase of goods or services by George Mason.
- Group travel in foreign countries (including residencies).
- Conference facilities and services.
- Participation in intercollegiate athletic tournaments and events, including team travel and lodging, registration, and tournament fees.
- Royalties.
- The purchase of legal services, provided that the Office of the Attorney General has been consulted, or expert witnesses or other services associated with litigation or regulatory proceedings.
- Postage.

Normally, competition is either not practicable or available for purchase of the following goods or services at a value not to exceed \$200,000:

- Accreditation fees and academic testing services.
- Advertisements/Advertising directly with source (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.). *THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE BRANDING, MARKETING, OR CAMPAIGN CREATION SERVICES FROM 3RD PARTIES* (competition is required for these).
- Athletic officials appointed by the NCAA.
- Books, printed materials, publications, reprints, and subscriptions (ex., print or electronic).
- Booth space at conferences, exhibits, fairs, and product shows.
- Conference fees, course fees, seminars, training sessions, tuition, and other registration fees when attended by university employee(s).
- Court reporters.
- Currency exchange services.
- Facility rentals.
- Federal mentor-protégé projects.
- Film rentals when only available from the producer or protected distributors.
- Library books and other items for the library's collection, as per applicable library acquisition procedures
- Lodging services.
- Maintenance contracts for high-cost, sophisticated, scientific equipment where there is no known competitor and the service must be purchased from the manufacturer of the equipment.
- Maintenance contracts for service of mainframe and super computers, for which there is no competitive source available to service the equipment.
- Pass through procurements (ex: contracting for alumni functions for which the institution is reimbursed by the alumni, and materials purchased for students by a faculty member using state funds, for which the students fully reimburse the institution).
- Purchases from the federal government, other states and their agencies or institutions, and public bodies, as long as the price is judged to be fair and reasonable
- Other purchases, less than \$200,000, when determined in writing by the Purchasing Department.
- Referees, officials and umpires for intercollegiate athletic events
- Specialized software that is not available through ITS (when approved by ASRB)
- Software maintenance contracts for software already purchased and in use at the university
- Software site licenses
- Software upgrades
- Student workshops (i.e., SOM-MBA programs, OCPE, etc.)
- Surplus property from the State or Federal government
- Testing or evaluation services
- Translation Services
- Used equipment (including vehicles)
- Utilities – Electricity, Natural Gas, Water, etc. at any dollar level. *Note: If purchasing from a governmental source (i.e. Fairfax County), sole source is not required. However, a reference should be made to COV §2.2-4301*
- Writers

Other purchases that are greater than \$100,000 but do not exceed \$200,000, shall utilize informal competition. This includes either obtaining 3 quotes (with 2 from SWaM vendors, where practicable) or just 2 SWaMs.

- Catering services
- Consulting services
- Education services, training courses, classes for students
- Facilitators/Mediators
- Training sessions/workshops for employees

Sales and Use Tax Exemption

The university is exempt from paying state sales tax in Virginia (except for the tax on lodging), but is typically not tax exempt from vendors in other states. Order initiators should not authorize tax to be paid through eVA, on invoice approvals, or with their P-cards from vendors located in Virginia. Inadvertent payment of sales tax or when a vendor will not accept Mason's Sales and Use Tax Certificate of Exemption, up to \$50, may be paid/reimbursed at the discretion of the submitting department.

Certificate of Exemption for Vendors

1. Access the Mason version of the [Commonwealth of Virginia Sales and Use Tax](#) Exemption Form on the Fiscal Services website.
2. Enter the vendor's name in the *Name of Dealer* section and current date.
3. Submit the filled out form to the vendor when purchasing goods.

Separate Business and Personal Accounts for All Purchases

When placing orders through vendor websites, all faculty and staff should establish dedicated Mason-only accounts. Mason personnel should take the following actions for any account where they will be ordering goods for George Mason business purposes:

1. Establish a dedicated Mason business only account, including your Mason email and location for shipping.
2. Use the Mason address below for the billing address: Accounts Payable 4400 University Drive, MS: 3C1 Fairfax, VA 22030.

Mason Amazon Business Account

The Purchasing Department maintains a centralized Amazon Business account to simplify the purchasing process and allow users to take advantage of the Amazon marketplace. **All Amazon.com purchases must be placed through the central account.** Through this account, users will have immediate access to:

- Free two-day shipping for all prime shipments.
- Clear separation between personal and business accounts.
- Business only pricing and quantity discounts for certain items.
- Tax-exempt purchases from Amazon and participating third party sellers without having to upload a tax-exempt certificate.
- Access to a specialized customer service team – Phone: (866)-486-2360 or go to www.amazon.com/gp/help/contact-us.

To establish a Mason Amazon Business account, email Purch1@gmu.edu. In your email request, include your department name and/or college/school, and email address. Amazon Business uses Single Sign On (SSO). Accounts can only be set up to employee NetID emails; generic or department email accounts will not be allowed. Users will receive an email invitation with a link to begin the registration process. Users may also save their individual Mason P-Card information as

a payment method for quick check out. However, to avoid fraud, never share login information with other users. The Mason Business Account is to be used strictly for Mason Business only and **not** for personal or GMUF use.

Student Clubs and Organizations

Student clubs and organizations are defined as those student activities funded by student fees, self-generated revenue, or both. In addition to this manual, [University Policy 6000](#) applies.

The following additional payments, which enhance student life, *are permitted* for student clubs and organizations.

To support events:

- Balloons for events
- Sound equipment
- Food for events that directly support the club's mission
- Decorations
- Bands
- DJs
- Flowers for events
- Refreshments (non-alcoholic) for club meetings

Student Prizes and Awards

The university may provide prizes and awards to university students for achievement, performance, or for competition programs and activities that support the mission of the university. Prizes or other items of limited value (generally thought of as less than \$150 per recipient per calendar year) may be purchased on the P-Card. Gift cards are not allowable for student prizes. A list of recipients and business purpose of the event must be attached to the transaction in the Mason Finance Gateway. The department is responsible for collecting and retaining tax documentation when a prize recipient is:

- A U.S. tax resident and will be paid \$600 or more in any one calendar year OR
- A non-U.S. tax resident and will be paid \$50 or more in any one calendar year.

For U.S. tax residents, a completed COV-W9 and the list of paid transactions must be sent to Accounts Payable at acctpay@gmu.edu. For Non-U.S. residents, please contact the International Tax Office at inttax@gmu.edu for required forms and reporting. Additional information is available on the [Pay Students](#) webpage.

Sole Source Procurement

Sole source procurements are necessary when only one source is practicably available for the goods or services required. This means that competition is not available. In some instances, it may be necessary to conduct a market analysis to determine if a similar product or service exists. In cases where the eVA purchaser believes the item to be sole source, a [Sole Source Procurement Approval Request](#) found on the Fiscal Services website must be completed in advance and attached to the eVA requisition.

Emergency Procurements

In the case of an imminent threat to personal safety or property, a contract may be awarded without competition. However, such procurement will be made with as much competition as is feasible under the circumstances. A written justification will be required from the department or end user outlining the details of the emergency for the PO or contracting record.

Third Party Processors (Such as PayPal)

The use of third-party processors, such as PayPal, is the least preferred method of payment and should be used only when a merchant will not accept a Mason P-Card directly. Cardholders should not be creating a PayPal account and embedding the Mason P-Card in the account. When using one of these services, the following documents must be retained in your P-Card allocation in the Mason Finance Gateway:

- Itemized receipt issued by the vendor
- E-mail from PayPal confirming the purchase

A third-party processor may not be used for payments to an individual for services. All payments for services to individuals must be processed through eVA with the appropriate documentation.

Apple Pay (or similar)

When an employee seeks reimbursement for an allowable reimbursement expense, paid with their personal Apple Pay (or similar) app, the request must include a copy of their bank/credit card statement (or a screen shot of the statement) showing the amount paid. The proof of payment must be attached to the reimbursement request. In addition, the P-Card shall not be used in Apple Pay or any other mobile apps in personal devices.

Purchase Approvals

In addition to the approvals by the appropriate college dean, department chairperson and other responsible persons, the following approvals must be obtained prior to requisition submission:

Type of Purchase	Required Approval
Accounting Services	Fiscal Services
Capital Outlay/Construction Architectural/Engineering Svc.	Facilities Planning
Cell Phones, iPads & related technology devices	See University Policy #1124
Computers, related equipment	Information Technology (ITS)
Computer Software/Site Licenses	Architecture Standards Review Board (ASRB)
Copying/Copiers/Multi-Print	See University Policy 1144 and Canon Solutions
Flowers	Only authorized for Commencement Ceremonies, Annual Holiday Party, bereavement (must be approved by H/R), Admissions Open House Events and Student Clubs/Orgs
Foreign Vendors	Any purchase from a foreign vendor, except for the purchase of tangible goods, must be reviewed by the International Tax Office before the purchase order is issued.
Food/Beverage	See Food and Beverage Overview page
Grant Expenditures	Office of Sponsored Programs
Insurance	Office of Risk Management
Immigration/H1B Visas ITAR/Export Controlled Goods	Research Development, Integrity and Assurance (RDIA)
Legal Services	University Counsel
Logo Use & Creative Services	See University Policy #1111
Remodeling/Renovation	Facilities Construction
Sponsorships	https://fiscal.gmu.edu/incoming-and-outgoing-sponsorships/

Temporary Personnel/Services & Recruiting Services	Human Resources
Travel & Related Services	See University Policy #2101
Website Design	See University Policy #1111

Purchasing from Foreign Vendors and/or Payments to Foreign National

The International Tax Office must review all purchases from foreign vendors before the purchase order is issued. The International Tax Office must also review payments to foreign nationals (non-US citizens) including scholarships, fellowships, awards, prizes, travel reimbursements, honorarium payments, and other payments for independent personal services. IRS form W-8BEN must be submitted for first time vendors. Additional information is available on the [International Tax Office](#) webpage.

Returns or Incorrect Receipts

Departments are responsible for inspecting purchased goods immediately upon receipt. In the event of a damaged, incorrect, or incomplete shipment, immediately notify the Purchasing Department Buyer who purchased the item. The Buyer will make arrangements for correction/resolution of the problem. For goods purchased by a department, the department should contact the vendor directly.

Lost or Stolen Goods

As soon as the loss is discovered, departments should report the stolen, missing, damaged, or destroyed property to:

1. The University Police Department for investigation.
2. The Office of Risk Management for insurance claims and processing.
3. The General Accounting Office for inventory records updating.

This reporting requirement applies regardless of the dollar amount of the loss. Procedures for reporting a claim may be found at <http://fiscal.gmu.edu/equipment/report-lost-or-stolen-equipment/>.

Surplus

Reusable equipment and furniture are stored at the surplus warehouse and is available to be redistributed to any George Mason department. Departments are prohibited from abandoning (e.g., throwing in the trash, leaving in the hallway) or donating (e.g., taking to Goodwill, giving to a local school) equipment. If equipment is no longer needed, the department must declare the item for surplus. Instructions are available here <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/equipment/dispose-equipment/>.

Mandatory Vendors

Mason has established mandatory contracts for certain procurement categories. A mandatory vendor must be used when purchasing the goods described below. Additional information is available on the [Mandatory and Specialized Purchases](#) webpage.

Business Cards

The Purchasing Department has established contracts with Worth Higgins and Canon Solution for business card printing. Procedures and pricing are available at <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/business-cards-and-printing-contracts/>.

Embroidery Services

The Purchasing Department has established several contracts with vendors to provide embroidery services. For embroidery printing, users should contact the vendor(s), referencing the corresponding contract number, to determine job pricing, and then complete the steps to purchase. Procedures are available at <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/embroidery-contracts/>.

Furniture

For purchases with dollar amounts of \$0 to \$2,000, Furniture items shall be procured from either

- 1) VCE; or
- 2) A DSBSD micro-vendor; or
- 3) A DSBSD SWaM vendor; or
- 4) A furniture vendor and their approved distributors already under contract; or
- 5) A one-time furniture purchase from a non-contract vendor if options #1-4 are not available.

Before purchasing any furniture greater than \$2,000, the department must contact Campus Planning to review and approve the purchase. Campus Planning must assess furniture purchases to ensure adherence to University Design Standards. (Campus Planning/Debbie Brady must be included on all communications with VCE at any dollar value). Please email Debbie Brady at dbrady3@gmu.edu for review and approval of your furniture order before submitting an eVA requisition. The approval should be attached to the requisition.

Office Supplies

Units may order most essential office supplies and pay with a Mason P-Card through their Amazon Business Account or through The Supply Room (eVA). Do not purchase items with personal funds and seek reimbursement.

Examples include:

- Batteries (used in office and classroom equipment)
- Binders and dividers
- Calendars
- Desk organizers and baskets
- Envelopes and stationery
- Erasers, correction fluid, and correction tape
- Folders such as file, pocket, hanging, and portfolio
- Index cards
- Labels and label makers
- Paper fasteners such as paper clips, binder clips, staples, and staplers
- Paper products such as Post-It notes, pads of paper, legal pads, and steno pads
- Pencil sharpeners
- Printer cartridges and toner
- Tape and tape dispensers
- Writing instruments such as chalk, markers, highlighters, pens, and pencils

To purchase office supplies from a vendor other than The Supply Room or Amazon Business, except in an emergency situation, email purch1@gmu.edu for review and approval.

Printing Services

The Purchasing Department has established several contracts with vendors to provide printing services. For printing services, users should contact the vendor(s), referencing the corresponding contract number, to determine job pricing and then complete the steps to purchase. Procedures are available at <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/business-cards-and-printing-contracts/>.

Promotional Items

The Purchasing Department has established several contracts with vendors to provide promotional items. These vendors have been approved to use the George Mason logo and provide competitive contract pricing for many items. For promotional items, users should contact the vendor(s), referencing the corresponding contract number, to determine job pricing and then complete the steps to purchase. Procedures are available at <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/purchasing-promotional-items/>.

T-Shirt Screen Printing

The Purchasing Department has established several contracts with vendors to provide t-shirts/screen printing. These vendors have been approved to use the George Mason logo and provide competitive contract pricing. For T-Shirt screen printing, users should contact the vendor(s), referencing the corresponding contract number, to determine job pricing and then complete the steps to purchase. Procedures are available at <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/t-shirt-screen-printing-contracts/>.

Specialized Purchases

In addition to the procedures for mandatory vendors, there are several types of specialized purchases that require additional action by the department. A description of these services and corresponding procedures are listed below. Additional information is available on the [Mandatory and Specialized Purchases](#) webpage.

Administrative Systems/Applications

Administrative systems/applications are defined as software, hardware, or hosted services provided by a vendor or developed internally that are used to store regulated data. The procurement of administrative systems/applications (including software, systems, applications, and some online/electronic databases) must be reviewed and approved by the **Architecture Standards Review Board (ASRB) in advance of purchase**. The Purchasing Department will not approve any purchase of administrative systems/applications without evidence of ASRB approval attached to the purchase request in eVA. This also includes purchases to be made on the P-Card. Forms and instructions are available at <https://its.gmu.edu/service/architectural-standards-review-board-asrb/>.

Mason Bookstore

The Mason Bookstore (Barnes & Noble) is authorized to accept the P-Card for departmental purchases of allowable items costing \$5,000 or less. The university encourages the use of a P-Card whenever possible. Over the counter purchases made with a P-Card should be noted as “exempt” in the eVA category section in the Mason Finance Gateway. Please note that all mandatory contracts and policies apply. Gift cards may not be purchased through the Mason Bookstore.

Computer Equipment and Software

All computer equipment and software, except for site licensed software, will be procured in accordance with the purchasing guidelines described above. For site licensed software, departments should inquire with ITS by email to support@gmu.edu. A listing of IT Software downloads is available at <https://itservices.gmu.edu/downloads/index.cfm>. Additional information related to computer equipment purchases may be found in the [Computer Purchase Guide](#).

Prior to the purchase of any new software, system or application, that will reside on George Mason equipment (servers, computers, electronic devices, etc.) or interact with any other George Mason systems or software, regardless of dollar value, the department must alert the Mason Architectural Standards Review Board (ASRB). The ASRB will advise the department if the software/system/application will require an ASRB review or other Information Technology Service (ITS) review. Users may email asrb@gmu.edu to determine if the system/software requires this review prior to purchase. If a review is required, you must attach your ASRB approval to the purchase requisition in eVA or P-Card purchase prior to an order being placed. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations state that payments to foreign vendors for software and licensing fees are considered royalty income and are taxed at the 30% statutory rate, unless the reduced rate applies. Please contact the International Tax Office prior to purchasing software/licensing from foreign vendors.

Consulting Services

When purchasing consulting services, please follow the procedures listed here: <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/consulting-services/>.

Food and Beverage

As an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University has a public obligation to ensure that all expenditures are necessary and reasonable and that they support the mission of the university. As such, state rules prohibit expenditures for employee personal expenses, including meals, snacks, entertainment, and refreshments. There are limited circumstances in which it is considered appropriate to provide food and beverages to employees who are not in travel status. Food and/or beverages may not be provided at regularly scheduled or routine meetings (i.e., monthly staff meeting, quarterly unit meeting) or as a way to boost morale or promote goodwill among employees. Alcohol, ancillary costs related to alcohol, and flowers are prohibited. Participant funded events, where the food/beverage costs are paid solely from participant fees (i.e., registration fee) are not subject to these restrictions, with the exception of alcohol and alcohol related expenses. Please review the [Food & Beverage Overview webpage](#) for additional information and purchasing procedures.

Gift Cards for Research Subject Payments

Gift cards may only be purchased specifically for research subject payments in accordance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Academic Units may purchase gift cards for research subject payments using a Mason P-Card. The gift cards must be physically secured at all times by lock and key. All purchases must comply with Fiscal policies and procedures for eVA/P-Card use. The academic dean and/or department head is responsible for establishing and maintaining internal control procedures for their unit. Refer to the [Gift Cards for Research Subject Payments Guide](#).

Patriot Tech Purchases

Patriot Tech (eVA #VS0000038907, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Inc.) is a registered vendor but does not offer a punchout catalog in eVA. Orders to Patriot Tech may be processed in eVA as a non-catalog order with or without a P-Card. If entering an eVA order, you must obtain a quote from the Patriot Tech store (you can email, call, or visit in person to obtain a quote) and attach the quote, marked “visible to supplier”, to the requisition (REQ) in eVA. You must also include the Barnes and Noble contract ID (GMU-1115-14) in the “External Contract Number” field when creating your eVA requisition. Individuals may provide a printed eVA purchase order (PO) to Patriot Tech and pick up items in stock on-site.

Patriot Tech will accept the Mason P-Card on-site in the Johnson Center and is a supplier of Dell (Optiplex and Latitude) and Apple desktops/laptops. Over-the-counter purchases made on-site at Patriot Tech and paid with a Mason P-Card are exempt from eVA entry. See the [Computer Purchase Guide](#) for procedures.

Professional Services

These services are specifically defined in Virginia law as the practice of accounting, actuarial services, architecture, land surveying, landscape architecture, law, medicine, dentistry, optometry, pharmacy, and professional engineering. The procurement of professional services requires competitive negotiation. Concurrence and/or approval from other state agencies may be required. Please contact the [Purchasing Department](#) for assistance regarding the procurement of professional services.

Sponsorships (Outgoing)

The Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures (CAPP) Manual requires that the disbursement of state funds be paid to businesses or individuals who furnish goods and services that are considered essential to the operation of the university. As a result, Mason may provide an outgoing sponsorship to a non-Mason entity for an external event, only if the sponsorship will result in a tangible benefit to the university.

Outgoing Sponsorships must:

- Align with and support the university mission
- Align with the university brand communications (logo, trademark, etc.)
- Provide a tangible benefit to the university that can be quantified financially (return on investment)

In most situations, a sponsorship represents a donation and as such is not appropriate for George Mason funding. In limited circumstances, a sponsorship may provide clearly identifiable and quantifiable benefits to George Mason. Requests may be submitted using the [Outgoing Sponsorship](#) form.

Requests for sponsorships are subject to a review and evaluation on a case-by-case basis. Requestors must assign a dollar value to any goods or services received. For example, if a sponsorship at a conference provides a waiver of the conference registration fee, the dollar value of the conference registration fee waived should be listed. When a sponsorship provides advertising for a George Mason program, the dollar value of that advertising should be estimated based on comparable advertising pricing targeted to a similarly sized audience. The evaluation of this type of sponsorship may include a review of results of previous advertising to the targeted group.

Purchasing Procedures

All George Mason departments are required to utilize eVA, the Commonwealth of Virginia's procurement system. eVA allows units to create and route purchase requisitions to internal approvers and the Purchasing Department. The university is assessed a fee for orders that are not placed through the eVA system. Detailed information and guidelines related to processing orders in eVA are available in the [Basic eVA Purchasing Manual](#).

Purchases of \$5,000 or less

The department may complete a purchase by:

- **Using a P-Card** to make over-the-counter or online purchases for goods and services.
- **Submitting an eVA purchase order.** A P-Card may be used as payment in eVA when accepted by a vendor. In all other cases, the vendor/department will submit an invoice to Accounts Payable, noting the eVA purchase order (PO#). An eVA order is not required for the specific procurement types listed in the [Basic eVA Manual](#).
- **Submitting a Payment Request Form** to Accounts Payable. This form is only authorized for certain prepayments. This is the least desirable payment option. ([See Payment Request Workflow instructions](#)).

Purchases over \$5,000

- The department **must complete an eVA requisition**. Once approved at the department level, the eVA order is routed to a Purchasing Department buyer for review and issuance of a Purchase Order (PO) to the vendor. The Purchasing Department buyer will submit the PO to the vendor directly.

Open Commitments

When a purchase order is issued in eVA, an encumbrance is created in Banner Finance. University personnel responsible for departmental budgets must carefully track open commitments. Requests to close encumbrances in Banner should be made by emailing enclose@gmu.edu; please include 1) PO# 2) Remaining Balance and 3) Name of the Vendor. Please review the [Encumbrance Close Guide](#).

The Purchasing Charge Card (P-Card)

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a contract with Bank of America that allows state agencies to purchase items directly from vendors using the Purchasing Charge Card (P-Card). The P-Card is the preferred payment method for purchasing items in eVA. Please see instructions for [adding a P-Card to eVA](#). All departments should be aware of the policies, procedures and trainings requirements for utilizing a P-Card. The [P-Card Manual](#) and additional information may be found on the [Manuals and Training Materials](#) webpage. P-Card allocations are completed in the Mason Finance Gateway.

Reimbursements

There are limited circumstances in which a personal payment (cash, credit/debit card) is the appropriate method to conduct university business. Most purchases must be made through eVA and/or with a GMU P-Card.

Eligible reimbursements may be requested through the [Mason Finance Gateway](#). Additional information can be found in the Travel, Meals, and Entertainment Manual on the Fiscal Services website: <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/training/obtain-training-materials/>.

Payment Request Workflow

The Payment Request form may be used to facilitate and expedite requests for advanced payments when an eVA order or Mason P-Card is not accepted. Instructions to complete the Payment Request form is available under [Forms and Instructions](#) webpage.

Honorarium Payment

An honorarium is a one-time payment for a special, non-recurring activity or event for which a fee is not legally or traditionally required. There is no contract, the fee is not set or negotiated by the recipient, and the honorarium may not be paid to a third party (corporation, business or partnership). If payment is negotiated and agreed upon, it is considered a contractual agreement and should be processed as a payment for personal services, not an honorarium. Refer to [Process an Honorarium](#) webpage for additional information.

Participant Support Allowance Payment

A participant support allowance payment is provided to help defray personal expenses such as meals, incidentals and minimal transportation costs incurred by a participant. A participant is a non-Mason employee who is a recipient of a service or training session associated with a workshop, conference, seminar, symposium or other information sharing activity funded by a sponsored award. Participant support allowance payments are authorized only when a sponsor includes a specific budget category for participant support costs. The Participant Support form and instructions are available on the [Forms and Instructions](#) webpage.

Revenue Refunds

The Revenue Refund <https://fiscal.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/PaymentRequest.pdf> Workflow is designed to return money previously collected, *outside of the TouchNet Mason Marketplace*, from individuals or organizations. The form may also be used by internal units to return payments from lenders, sponsors, or vendors managed through clearing accounts. Revenue refunds can only be processed as offsets to revenue account codes. The Fund or Org and revenue Account code must be the same as those used in recording the initial deposit. *All revenue originally collected in TouchNet Mason Marketplace (within 1 year) must be refunded within the Marketplace uStore or uPay site.* The Revenue Refund form and instructions are available on the [Forms and Instructions](#) webpage.

Purchasing Resources

Unit	Email	Extension	Mail Stop
Accounts Payable: Payment Requests, Food & Beverage Expenditures	acctpay@gmu.edu	3-2580	MS 3C1
International Tax Office	inttax@gmu.edu	3-2969 3-5223	MS 4B2
Office of Sponsored Programs	osp@gmu.edu	3-4806	MS 4C6
Purchasing Charge Card	pcardadm@gmu.edu	3-2580	MS 3C5
Purchasing Department	purch1@gmu.edu	3-2580	MS 3C5
Training Office	fscomm@gmu.edu	3-5966	MS 4B2

Purchasing-related Websites	
eVA	https://eva.virginia.gov/
Expenditure Account Code look-up	http://fiscal.gmu.edu/expenditure-account-codes/
Fiscal Services	http://fiscal.gmu.edu/

Information for Vendors to self-register in eVA	https://eva.virginia.gov/i-sell-to-virginia.html
NIGP Code look-up – eVA	https://logi.cgieva.com/External/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Public.Reports.Report9004_Data
Vendor Search – eVA	https://logi.cgieva.com/External/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Public.Reports.Report9001_Data

Appendix

University Policy Number 2106

Categorized: Financial

Responsible Office: Fiscal Services, Purchasing

Policy Procedure:

Detailed procedures are available in Purchasing Made Easy and Basic eVA Purchasing on the Fiscal Services web site at: <http://fiscal.gmu.edu>.

Related Law & Policy:

The Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act (Virginia Code § 23.1-1000 et seq.)

I. Scope

This policy applies to all George Mason University faculty, staff, and students.

II. Policy Statement

As an Agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University has a public obligation to perform its procurement in accordance with the intent of the laws of the Commonwealth. The intent of the Virginia General Assembly is set forth in the “Rules Governing Procurement of Goods, Services, Insurance and Construction by a Public Institution of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia,” §3.0 of the second enactment clause of Chapters 824 and 829 of the 2008 Acts of Assembly of Virginia. Elements of intent include: that Agencies obtain high quality goods and services at a reasonable cost; that competition be sought to the maximum extent possible; that all qualified vendors have access to public business; and that procurement procedures be conducted in a fair and impartial manner. It is further the intent of the Virginia General Assembly that the provisions of the Governing Rules apply in all cases where there is to be a contract between a governmental body and a nongovernmental body, regardless of the source of funds by which the contract is to be paid or in the absence of any monetary consideration flowing to either party.

The Board of Visitors of George Mason University has vested specific signature authority in the President. Further delegation of this authority to contractually obligate the University must be provided in writing.

It is the policy of the University to contribute to the establishment, preservation and strengthening of small businesses and businesses owned by women and minorities and to encourage their participation in procurement activities. The University encourages contractors to provide for the participation of small businesses and businesses owned by women and minorities through partnership, joint ventures, subcontracts, or other contractual opportunities.

III. Responsibilities

A. Purchasing Goods and Services

Goods and services that cost \$5,000 or less may be purchased by individuals with account responsibility and their designees. Mandatory contracts for purchasing all furniture, office supplies, and others, as designated by the Purchasing Department, must be honored at all dollar amounts. In addition, all staff will assist in the standardization of purchases for commonly procured goods and services by utilizing institution-wide contracts, where available. The Purchasing Department is responsible for purchasing and leasing all goods and services for the University that cost more than \$5,000, except: 1) those associated with the Capital Outlay process and 2) real estate rentals and leases. Capital Outlay procurement is the responsibility of Facilities Planning (construction/architectural). Business Services has the sole responsibility to negotiate real estate rentals and leases and any changes to existing rentals and leases.

B. Contract Administration

A Contract Administrator will be designated to monitor and support contracts for delivery of goods and services which occur over an extended time period. The contract administration process delegates authority, which allows for direct communications between the representative of the University receiving the goods/services and the vendor, with the aim of facilitating and verifying desired performance standards. Active contract administration and written, annual evaluation of vendor performance are the cornerstones of effective outsourcing. Contract Administrators are restricted from making any commitment or conducting any negotiations which change the scope of the contract or may result in modified financial expenditure. Members of the Purchasing Department are available to consult with Contract Administrators on any matter, and must become involved to issue written change orders and renewals, and to formally address performance shortcomings, non-renewals and contract terminations.

IV. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in revocation of delegated purchasing authority by the Chief Purchasing Officer.

All persons engaged in purchasing activity greater than \$5,000 will have a letter providing specific levels of authority. In the absence of such written authorization, University faculty, staff, and students are not permitted to sign contracts or make obligations on behalf of the University to a private vendor. Such actions taken without proper authority will be considered taken at personal financial risk.

V. Dates

A. Effective Date:

This policy is effective July 1, 1999. This Administrative Policy shall be reviewed and revised, if necessary, annually to become effective September 1, unless otherwise noted.

B. Date of Most Recent Review:

6/2/2020.

VI. Timetable for Review

This policy, and any related procedures, shall be reviewed every three years or more frequently as needed.

VII. Signatures

The policies herein are effective July 1, 1999. This Administrative Policy shall be reviewed and revised, if necessary, annually to become effective at the beginning of the University's fiscal year, unless otherwise noted.

Approved:

_____/S_____
Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance

_____/S_____
Provost and Executive Vice President

Date Approved: May 20, 2004

Revised: January 14, 2010

Revised: February 3, 2012

Revised: June 13, 2017

Revision Approved: June 6, 2019

Revised: July 29, 2019

Revised: June 2, 2020