NC STATE

College of Sciences

Standard Operating Procedures

IT.01.00 IT Purchasing Requirements - Vendors and Models

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Related Policies:

North Carolina SB 202 Appropriations Act of 2009, budget provision 6.11 (PDF)

UNC-GA Response to Legislature: Information Resources Efforts for Compliance with State of NC Budget Provision 6.11 (PDF)

UNC-GA Combined Pricing Initiative – Purchasing of Personal Computers (PDF)

New Requirements for Purchasing University Computers (PDF)

Requirements for Purchasing University Computers (PDF)

Clarification On Computer Ownership And Applicability Of University Policies

RUL 08.00.18 Endpoint Protection Standard

REG 08.00.03 Data Management Regulation

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1. INTRODUCTION

This SOP defines the vendors and models for all desktop, laptop and workstation class computers, tablets, and smartphones that may be purchased in whole or in part from **any** university funding source in the College of Sciences. This SOP does not address servers, cloud services, or network storage devices.

Because computers are available from a plethora of vendors, it is not immediately clear to many purchasers that there are specific requirements about the vendors and models of computers that can be purchased in compliance with university and UNC system requirements. This SOP is intended to add clarity .

1.1 UNC System Combined Purchasing Initiative (CPI) requirements

In order to comply with statutory requirements, the UNC System established the Combined Pricing Initiative (CPI) program in 2010. The UNC System negotiates contracts with vendors and specifies approved models and vendors for PC computers. The university is required to use these vendors and models unless there is a bona fide technical reason that these models and configurations cannot be used. Any exceptions must be justified in writing and approved by the IT Director or designee and Purchasing.

1.2 Endpoint Protection Standard compliance

NC State established [RUL 08.00.18, Endpoint Protection Standard](#) (EPS). This rule defines security and compliance requirements for the management of university owned computers.

The EPS requires that all university-owned computers, tablets, and other devices be managed in an approved configuration management system. This impacts computer sourcing requirements for both CPI and non-CPI computers and tablets because some vendors are able to integrate with the university's configuration management systems and some are not.

Note that any exceptions to the EPS must be approved by OIT Security & Compliance and the IT Director for the College of Sciences, must include compensating controls, and must be renewed annually.

2. DEFINITIONS

2-in-1: Laptop computer that can also be used as a tablet. They are usually identified in vendor's catalogs by this term.

Computer: General term that includes common computing devices, including desktop and laptop computers, tablets, servers, workstations, 2-in-1s.

Configuration management system: A technology system that enables secure, remote management of computers, tablets, and some other devices.

Compensating controls: When an exception to a security standard is requested, alternative methods for ensuring the same or better level of security are required and are called "compensating controls".

CPI: Combined Pricing Initiative. Legislatively mandated UNC System program that requires the university to make PC purchases from contracted vendors among approved models and configurations.

Desktop computers: Computers that are typically used for general-purpose computing and are not designed to be mobile. They are usually identified in vendor's catalogs by this term.

Endpoint: Any computer or device that can access university data.

EPS: Endpoint Protection Standard, a university rule that sets security requirements for devices that access university data, including both university-owned and personally-owned devices.

Laptop computer: Computers that are designed to be mobile which have an integrated physical keyboard and display. They are usually identified in vendor's catalogs by this term or as "notebook" computers.

Notebook computer: Same as a laptop computer.

PC: Any computer that is designed to use Windows or Linux operating systems, other than server class computers. Apple Mac computers are excluded from this term's definition.

Servers or server class computers: Computers that are designed to provide reliable multi user access or advanced computing capabilities. They are usually identified in vendor's catalogs by this term.

Smartphone: (per Google/Oxford Languages) "a mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded applications."

Tablet: Computers that are designed to be mobile which do not have an integrated physical keyboard. They are usually identified in vendor's catalogs by this term.

University-owned: Any item that is purchased in whole or in part from **any** university funding source, including (but not limited to) state appropriations, ETF, unrestricted funds, direct grant funds and F&A.

University data: See REG 08.00.03 for a more explicit definition. It is safe to assume that all data created or modified that is for business, academic and/or research purposes during the course of employment at NC State is considered university data.

Workstations or workstation class computers: Computers that provide high end capabilities (e.g., processors, video) needed for precise computation that are not designed to be mobile. They are usually identified in vendor's catalogs by this term.

3. VENDORS AND MODELS

3.1 Approved vendors and configurations

3.1.1 Apple computer and tablets

All Apple computers and tablets (iPads) <u>must be purchased from Apple</u> in MarketPlace. All product models and configurations are allowed.

3.1.2 PCs (laptops, desktops, workstations, 2-in-1s) - Dell and Lenovo only

All PCs <u>must be purchased from either Dell or Lenovo </u>in MarketPlace from the available CPI models. CPI models may be configured with the options available without additional approval.
- Dell PCs must be purchased from Dell.
- Lenovo PCs must be purchased from Lenovo.
- CDWG may **not** be used for Dell or Lenovo PCs.
- While HP PCs are available from CDWG under CPI, for other compliance and support requirements HP systems **cannot** be purchased without an exception.

3.1.3 Windows tablets and other Windows devices

Tablets and other devices running Microsoft Windows must be purchased in MarketPlace. There are no current requirements for vendors or models.

3.1.4 ChromeOS and Android devices

Computers, tablets and other devices running ChromeOS or Android must be purchased in Marketplace. There are no current requirements for vendors or models.

3.1.5 Amazon Kindle and FireOS devices

Kindles and Amazon FireOS devices should be purchased directly from Amazon. There are no current requirements for specific models.

3.1.6 Special purpose drawing, e-Reader and e-Paper devices

Special purpose tablets such as drawing tablets (e.g., Wacom) or e-paper tablets (e.g., Remarkable) or e-Readers other than Kindle (e.g., Nook) can be purchased without respect to vendor or model. These devices can be purchased with a PCard if they are not available in MarketPlace.

3.2 Non-approved vendors

Only the specified Marketplace vendors in section 3.1 are allowed. The following sections explicitly note some common situations for clarity.

3.2.1 NC State Bookstores and other physical stores

Computers purchased with university funds **may not** be purchased from the NC State Bookstores or other physical stores.

3.2.2 Amazon and other online vendors

Computers purchased with university funds **may not** be purchased from Amazon or other online vendors, even if the computers are CPI models.

3.2.3 Build Your Own

Building a PC from parts cannot be done to avoid compliance with CPI, any university PRR, or this SOP.

If there is a bona fide need to build a PC for a technical reason, this can be done but it requires an exception request (see 4.1 Making an exception request).

3.2.4 Used computers

Used computers cannot be purchased with university funds. Exception requests can be made if there is a technical requirement for a used system.

3.2.5 Other Marketplace vendors

Some MarketPlace vendors other than Dell, Lenovo and Apple resell computers and tablets. They may even mark them as "Contract" items. Unless they are approved vendors under section 3.1, computers, tablets and smartphones cannot be purchased from them with university funds.

3.2.6 Marketplace vendors' consumer, education or other business websites

Dell, Lenovo, and Apple as well as other computer vendors all sell directly from their own websites outside of Marketplace. Computers, tablets and smartphones must **not** be purchased from their direct websites. They must be purchased in Marketplace.

3.3 Approved purchasing methods

Computers **may only be purchased from MarketPlace**. The following sections explicitly note some common situations for clarity.

3.3.1 PCards not approved

PCards may not be used to purchase any computers. All purchases must be made in Marketplace from approved vendors.

3.3.2 Personal reimbursement not allowed

Computers that are purchased with personal funds **are not eligible for reimbursement** with university funds. All purchases must be made in Marketplace from approved vendors.

3.3.3 Departmental billing through the NC State Bookstores

PCs and Apple computers **cannot** be purchased at the NC State Bookstores.

4. EXCEPTIONS

4.1 Making an exception request

To make an exception request, the purchaser should complete the [IT Purchasing Exception Request](#) form.

This creates an incident ("ticket") with a tracking number in the university IT service management system, ServiceNow. All written communication about the exception request will be made through ServiceNow.

Requests that are sent directly to individuals or that are made in conversation are **not** considered official exception requests and may not be approved. Exception requests must be documented and tracked for compliance purposes.

4.2 Summary of exception availability by reason

This diagram summarizes the availability of exceptions based on the reason for the exception request.

📄 IT.01 - Diagram - Exception Availability.pdf

4.3 Requirement to return non-compliant purchases

Purchases that do not follow the requirements in this SOP <u>must be returned to the vendor</u>. **They cannot be registered on the NC State network nor used for university business**. Exceptions should not be expected or requested after a purchase has been made.

Returns must be made by the purchaser following departmental business processes in coordination with the departmental business officer. Purchasers are responsible for any costs associated with returning purchases that are not compliant with the requirements laid out in this SOP.

4.4 CPI Exceptions

The IT director has limited authority to approve exceptions. This section explains the circumstances under which an exception may or may not be approved.

4.4.1 Cost - No exceptions

No exceptions for PC purchases can be made based on a <u>cost</u> justification; we do not have the authority to do so under the UNC System Combined Pricing Initiative.

4.4.2 Personal preferences - No exceptions

No exceptions for PC purchases can be made based on a <u>personal preference</u> justification; we do not have the authority to do so under the UNC System Combined Pricing Initiative.

Personal preferences are those that are based on cosmetic or minor functional differences that do not significantly impact the ability of the user to accomplish their work.

4.4.3 CPI Vendors - No exceptions

No exceptions can be made for using the specified CPI <u>vendors</u> to purchase PCs; we do not have the authority to do so under the UNC System Combined Pricing Initiative.

4.4.4 CPI Models and Configurations - Exceptions

If there is a <u>technical</u> requirement that impacts research, teaching or administrative needs that cannot be met with customized CPI <u>models</u>, a technical justification is required so that an exception can be made.

4.4.5 Hewlett-Packard (HP) PCs and tablets - Exceptions

If there is a <u>technical</u> requirement that impacts research, teaching or administrative needs that can only be met with an HP PC, a technical justification is required.

4.4.6 Computers bundled with instruments or required to control instruments - Exceptions

Some vendors supply computers as part of an instrument purchase that are specifically required for operating the instrument, or may have specific <u>technical</u> requirements for such a computer to control the instrument that cannot be met with CPI models. The vendor's documentation will suffice as a technical justification and an exception request should be made.

4.5 CDWG for Apple computers, tablets, and smartphones

Under some circumstances, it may be possible for Sciences IT to place an order with CDWG to make a purchase of Apple computers, tablets or smartphones.

Sciences IT staff must place this order and enter the requisition. This is necessary in order to ensure that devices are enrolled in Apple School Manager correctly, which is a compliance requirement.

- This can be considered for bulk orders of **5 or more systems** and **only** in cases where either:

    ○ Apple is unable to deliver devices in a reasonable timeframe based on a bona fide business need, or

    ○ There is a specific technical requirement for Apple systems that Apple no longer produces

    ○ There is a substantial cost savings relative to identical products from Apple (at least $500).

- There is no guarantee that Sciences IT staff will be able to work with a non-Apple Marketplace vendor to arrange a purchase and device enrollment in the desired timeframe as this is dependent on the vendor's capabilities and responsiveness.

- An exception request must be entered that includes the required justification, the project ID, department, and PI if applicable.

4.6 Cellular providers

If cell service is a requirement for a tablet or smartphone and the device must be purchased from a cell provider, an exception request is required, and the devices must be purchased from Verizon or AT&T.

Note that for Apple iPads, a cellular-enabled iPad should be purchased from Apple in Marketplace and a cellular contract purchased separately unless there is a significant financial benefit to purchasing from the cellular provider.

4.7 CPI bulk orders

In general, CPI vendors should be able to provide quotes for bulk purchases of CPI models within Marketplace. Requests for assistance with bulk orders or problems receiving quotes in Marketplace should be reported to help@sciences.ncsu.edu

4.8 Leasing

Computers or devices may be leased from an approved vendor. All of the requirements in this SOP apply except for the requirement to make the purchase through Marketplace. The company receiving payment will be the financial services provider.

4.8.1 End of term lease buyout

At the end of a lease term, there may be a buyout option to purchase the leased systems. This is an allowable exception to **3.2.4 Used Computers**. The NC State contract number and the original

PO number for the lease should be included in the notes when submitting a requisition to purchase systems at the end of a lease.

4.9 Supply chain disruption and excessive delivery times

If supply chain disruption results in unusual and excessive delivery times that impact the availability of computers that are compliant with the requirements of this SOP, it may be possible to make an exception and allow the purchase of non-CPI PC models, HP systems, or for Sciences IT to coordinate a purchase with an approved alternative Apple vendor. At a minimum, this requires:
- A purchasing consultation with Sciences IT staff to determine options and requirements
- A written technical justification that supports an argument that no other reasonably available compliant models/configurations can meet the technical requirements
- A written explanation of why expected delays will result in an insurmountable and critical problem for a planned research, instructional or administrative activity
- The date the computers are required
- The proposed model/configuration and expected delivery date stated by the vendor or vendor's site in Marketplace

4.9.1 Spend down exceptions are not available

The desire to spend down funds in a particular fiscal year or by another fiscal deadline is not an allowable reason for an exception. This would be in conflict with CPI and EPS requirements.

4.10 Exception request process

Exception requests should be initiated **before** an order is placed. Exception requests received after an order is placed may be denied, in which case the order would have to be canceled and/or products returned to the vendor by the purchaser.

4.10.1 Exception review timeline

Exception requests will be reviewed and responded to within 2 business days. The outcome will be one of the following:

- **Approval with no further questions**

  Sciences IT will respond confirming approval. No further documentation is required.

- **Request for more information**

  When more information is required to evaluate the request, Sciences IT staff will respond within 2 business days with a request for specific information.

  The purchaser must provide the requested information within 10 business days or the exception request will be denied and a new request will need to be made.

Sciences IT will review the request again within 2 business days of receiving the additional information and will update the incident to reflect approval or denial of the exception request.

- **Purchasing consultation required**

  When more in-depth conversation is required to assess the exception and appropriate options, Sciences IT will respond within 2 business days with a request for a face-to-face discussion via Zoom or in-person.

  The purchaser should respond with their availability. Appointments will be scheduled based on mutual availability. Sciences IT will ensure that qualified staff are available to meet within 2 business days.

  The discussion must be scheduled to occur within 10 business days or the exception request will be denied and a new request will need to be made.

  After the discussion, Sciences IT will review the request within 2 business days and will update the incident to reflect approval or denial of the exception request.

- **Approvals**

  When the exception request is approved, the purchaser may proceed with the purchase specified in the exception request.

- **Denials**
  If an exception is denied, the denial will include the reason(s) and a recommendation that the purchaser request a purchasing consultation with Sciences IT staff to identify viable alternatives.

  Denials may not be appealed, but if more information becomes available that would potentially change the outcome of the decision the purchaser can respond by **initiating a new exception request** following the "**Making an exception request**" procedure and including all pertinent information.

4.11 Purchasing consultations

Consulting with Sciences IT staff prior to requesting an exception will likely result in a faster resolution. A 15-minute or 30-minute purchasing consultation can be requested by sending an email to help@sciences.ncsu.edu with a request and any background information you can provide about your needs.

Appointments will be scheduled based on mutual availability. Sciences IT will ensure that qualified staff are available to meet within 2 business days.

5. RESOURCES

5.1 RACI Chart

RACI is an acronym used to identify the responsibilities of each role:

RACI: Who is responsible, accountable, consulted & informed?

- R= Responsible for performing the work or implementing the decision
- A = Accountable for the work or decision
- C= Consulted about the work or decision
- I= Informed about the work or decision

Decision or Task	Sciences IT Director	Sciences IT CPI Approvers	Sciences IT Staff	Departmental Business Officers	Purchaser
Identify desired model and configuration			C		A,R
Schedule a purchasing consultation			R		A,C
Place an order for equipment					A,R
Request an exception			C		A,R
Review and respond to purchaser's exception request		A,R	C		I
Respond to request for more information			I		A,R
Determine if an exception is warranted		A,R	C		
Approve or deny an exception	A,R	R	C		I
Return non-approved purchases to vendor				C,I	A,R

5.2 IT Purchasing Exception Request Form

The IT Purchasing Exception Request form may be found here: https://forms.gle/jp2SBFY9E498J3hTA

REVISION TABLE

Policy and Revision Number	Section Reference	Summary of Changes	Approved Date	Approved By
IT.01.00		Original.	7/27/2022	Debbie Carraway Director of IT