

University Procurement Policy	
Access: Public	Position Responsible for overseeing compliance: Business Services Cooperating with: OSPFR, Controller, General Counsel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Administration, EVP

Policy

“Procurement” is the process by which the university identifies and purchases the resources necessary to effect its operations and mission.

This policy covers all purchases for the university, regardless of the funding source. Together with the policies on “Audit,” “Conflict of Interest,” “Credit Card Use,” and other policies related to fiscal controls, this policy will ensure procurement at Niagara University both complies with the law, and contributes to the strategic stewardship of university resources.

Employees making purchases are encouraged to consult Business Services to ensure purchases, especially those involving reimbursement, are properly authorized before they are incurred.

“Procurement” breaks down into many tactics for prudent and compliant purchasing:

Generally Allowable Expenditures

University faculty and staff authorized to spend University funds need to carefully exercise discretion. Expenditures must be directly related to University operations and programs and should never be made for personal benefit or for the exclusive benefit of co-workers. In making a purchasing decision, ethics and a sensitivity to the shared responsibility for the University funds need to be the guiding principles in deciding what expenditures are allowable in performing university business. In addition to these principles, Procurement must not be approved unless funding source is demonstrated, the expenditure is allowable, and funding is verified as sufficient to cover the total cost.

Cooperative Buying Agreements

The university will seek out cooperative buying agreements with major regional and national corporations.

Grant-funded Purchases (external, public and private)

For grant-related purchases, the requisitioner must check with the Office of Sponsored Programs & Foundation Relations (OSPFR) for additional requirements.

General Requisitions

So long as they meet the criteria for “Generally Allowable Expenditures” above, purchases up to \$2,499.99 require a Department Head’s approval, but need not be put out for a comparative bid.

Requisitions Requiring Pre-Approval

All technology/media purchases, regardless of cost, must be reviewed by Business Services to assess the need for pre-approval. These include but are not limited to: media, software, and data requisitions, computer hardware, the purchase of printers, copiers, and fax machines.

Competitive Requests for Proposal & Sole Source Procurement

Purchases from \$2,500.00--\$9,999.99 shall be submitted to Business Services with at least three completed Requests for Information (“RFI”) and justification for the selected commodity; Business Services will review and approve the purchase choice based on university criteria. Business Services shall send out a written Request for Proposal (“RFP”) to four or more vendors for purchases over \$9,999.99, and approve the purchase choice based on university criteria.

A “RFI” is a quote or other substantiation of purchase price and conditions.

A “RFP” is developed by Business Services based on the specifications, basis of design, business plan, and scope of services sent by the requisitioner.

Business Services must pre-approve procurement from preferred vendors, sole source, or brand-name requisition; Departments with routine needs in this regard shall work with Business Services to have the VP for Administration approve different criteria, which shall be evaluated every three years.

Vendor Code of Conduct

All vendors supplying under the Procurement Policy must consent to that relationship being governed in part by the Niagara University Vendor Code of Conduct.

Preferred Vendors (see Exclusive & Preferred Vendor List)

Preferred vendors are those with whom the university has negotiated special terms and conditions beneficial to Niagara. Many times, those terms come with a commitment by the university that the vendor shall be the “exclusive” provider of a particular service, or that such vendors have a “right of first refusal” when similar services are necessary. A list of Exclusive & Preferred Vendors is kept by Business Services and maintained on MyNU.

Engaging and Qualifying Independent Contractors (or “Consultants”)

An “independent contractor” is an individual or entity hired to perform a service for the university that is not part of its normal operations. An independent contractor must not be provided with a university phone number or e-mail address, should not use university resources in the fulfillment of their contract, and should carry insurance commensurate with the risks inherent in the tasks they are being paid to perform. A “consultant” arrangement is a contract through which the University hires an independent contractor to convey knowledge, skill, or expertise. Any department at NU must obtain approval from their sector VP and follow established contract, payroll, and insurance procedures before advertising for or authorizing the performance of such services.

Emphasis on Local, Women/Minority-Owned Vendors

Niagara University has traditionally emphasized placing University business with local firms. The university is committed to promoting opportunities for small business, minority and women vendors to participate in the university’s procurement, and for following the New York State MWBE guidelines for advertising opportunities for same.

Exceptions to this Policy

This policy and procedure are written in general terms to allow reasonable discretion and will not cover every possible purchasing situation. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Vice President for Administration (or designee) and must be clearly justified as beneficial to the mission, goals, and objectives of Niagara University.