



# Purchasing FAQ's

Please contact the Purchasing Division if you have any questions about your purchases or if you require help with a purchase. We are always happy to be of assistance.

**Purchasing Division Office**  
**Room B230 "B" Building**  
**Hours: 8:30am to 4:30pm M-F**  
**Fax: 605-853-4502**

BUYERS:	604-851-6315	PAT NEUFELD
	604-851-6316	TBA (Vacant)
PURCHASING CLERK:	604-854-4519	DANIELLE FOURNIER
DIRECTOR:	604-854-4511	AUDREY BAKER

## **When should I get a quote or bid for my order?**

When you are researching vendors for information about a possible purchase you may request a written quote or estimate from them to determine the cost of equipment or services. Be sure to include it with your Supply Purchase Requisition.

- Items up to \$1,000—one verbal or written quote (written preferred)
- Items between \$1,000 and \$2,500 - minimum of two quotes (written preferred)
- Items greater than \$2,500—**send to Purchasing to obtain quotes** (it may need to be competitively bid by Purchasing if we do not already have a contract in place)

Purchasing has access to contracts and information from previous purchases and has the expertise to acquire goods competitively on behalf of the entire organization. Vendors provide their most favourable pricing to Purchasing Agents whereas they often only provide "ballpark" pricing to staff.

## **When does Purchasing obtain quotations or bids?**

Dollar Amount	Process Required
\$2,500 or greater	Up to three (3) written quotes
\$10,000—\$25,000	Informal bid process (written quotes)
\$25,000+	Formal bid process (sealed bids)
\$75,000+ Goods, or \$200,000+ Construction	<b>Must be publicly tendered</b> (e.g. BC Bid).

**Why does Purchasing need to get so many bids?**

Fair competition is the central principal of public procurement. In its purest form, competition ensures a free, open and fair process that should result in a fair & reasonable price paid for products and services. When competition is available but is artificially restricted, the principles of public procurement are defeated. Our taxpayers expect that we will conduct our business in an open process.

**Why does Purchasing spend extra time sending out for quotes when the department has already gotten quotes?**

The solicitation of bids and quotations is a Purchasing function. Quotations received by departments from suppliers usually contain legal terms and conditions contrary to those contained in UFV's bid/ quotation documents. Purchasing will ensure that the suppliers adhere to the appropriate terms and conditions. Note: It is our experience that, in many instances, the bidder will respond with a better price (bid) when the invitation or solicitation comes from the University's purchasing department as they recognize Purchasing's authority to commit funds.

**What if the lowest bid is not acceptable?**

A justification memo must be sent with your recommendation. It must state how and why the lowest bid does not meet the specifications.

**Why should I buy from UFV or Group Purchasing Organization contracts when I can get items cheaper from other vendors?**

Saving money is always a prime consideration when making a purchase. While it may seem that a vendor offers a better price there are many other factors to consider – prompt delivery, warranty and repairs, shipping charges and compatibility with existing equipment. It is important to remember that these contracts are developed with much more than just lowest cost in mind. Purchasing off-contract without justifiable cause subverts the bidding process, and lessens the volume and its related benefits to UFV as an institution.

**I have questions regarding Printing and printing services.**

Contact the Print Services Division for information and assistance at 4682. UFV has in-house high speed copiers for colour and black and white printing and offers full bindery services. If Print Services is unable to accommodate your printing requirement they will redirect you to the Purchasing Division.

**What is the procedure for processing received invoices?**

Invoices should not be sent to the Purchasing Department. All invoices should be stamped and signed and sent directly to the Accounts Payable. If the invoice does not match the amount(s) on the Purchase Order, a Change Order will need to be processed by the Purchasing Division unless the goods were tendered. In that case the purchase order price will prevail.

**If a vendor calls wondering why they haven't been paid, what should they do?**

Advise them to contact the Accounts Payable Department first. Purchasing can also assist.

**I have questions regarding travel and travel reimbursements.**

Contact Colleen Olund in Accounts Payable.

**How do I renew magazine subscriptions?**

Submit your request to Accounts Payable with the necessary authorized signature from your department.

**If I'm uncertain about a procedure...**

Contact the Purchasing Division Office for questions regarding the purchase of materials and services or anytime you need guidance. It's always best to check **before, not after**, when uncertain about a procedure.

**I need to make a change on a Purchase Order.**

Mail, fax, or email a memo to Purchasing stating the changes that need to be made. Indicate in your memo whether a copy of the changes should be sent to the supplier. The memo needs to be signed by an authorized signature on the account that is being increased/decreased.

**I need to cancel a Requisition or a Purchase Order**

Mail, fax, or email a memo to purchasing stating the PO number and Vendor Name with instructions to cancel the order. Indicate in the memo the reason for canceling the PO. Purchase Orders must be canceled with the supplier – we will advise if the goods have already been shipped – a restocking charge may be assessed if the goods are already received.

**What is a blanket/standing purchase order and how do I establish one?**

A blanket or standing purchase order is an order with a single vendor for items that you purchase regularly throughout the year. Rather than issue a purchase order each and every time, you would estimate the total amount you expect to spend in a year. Note that with the new TILMA regulations if the value of the contract is greater than \$75,000 it must be tendered publicly on BC Bid. You may still want to obtain competitive quotes before committing to one vendor.

**What are preferred vendors?**

These are vendors who have agreed to a price structure or are under contract with University of the Fraser Valley that offer preferred (or discounted) pricing. For more information on preferred vendors or contracts, contact the Purchasing Division.

**Can I "transfer" a Standing Order from the current fiscal year into the next fiscal year?**

No – we require a new requisition each year – however, we will send you information at the end of the current fiscal to ask if you wish to establish a new standing order for the next fiscal year.

**My standing order had a fixed dollar amount and has now run out of money – what should I do?**

Mail, fax, or email a memo to Purchasing asking for an increase to the PO -- the memo will need an authorized signature. Please note that if the standing purchase order was as the result of a bid process it may need to be re-bid.

**Is it all right to use University property for personal use?**

No.

**Can University funds be used to purchase and/or mail Christmas cards or other personal greetings.**

No.

**What if I have an emergency? How can I get what I need in a hurry?**

Please call Purchasing and we can tell you the fastest way to process your request. An emergency purchase is one made in response to an unforeseen circumstance beyond the control of the university that may impact the delivery of education to students, presents an immediate threat to essential university functions, may result in excessive loss or damage to property, and/or may result in bodily injury or loss of life.

**What if I've made a mistake in ordering something and need to change the order. How do I do it?**

Please mail, fax, or email Central Purchasing a memo stating the problem and the responsible buyer will issue a change order to the vendor.

**What if what I receive does not meet the specifications on the Purchase Order?**

Please contact Purchasing and the responsible buyer will contact the vendor to rectify the error with the vendor.

**What if there is only one vendor that sells what I need?**

If your vendor has a unique product or service, a sole source form will need to be submitted to purchasing prior to a Purchase Order being issued. When the vendor is a sole source, you must submit written justification, not just stating, but explaining why the vendor is a sole source.

**What does Sole Source and Proprietary mean? How do I order these items?**

"Sole Source" is defined as a product or service that is practicably available only from one source. A proprietary specification restricts the acceptable product(s) or service(s) to one manufacturer or vendor. A common example would be specification by brand name that excludes consideration of approved "equals". Although all sole source specifications are proprietary, all proprietary specifications are not sole source. Proprietary items may be available from several distributors. A sole source item is described as an item with only a single supplier. Sole source items are exempt from the formal bidding process. Many times departments send requests for sole source purchases that describe an item made only by one manufacturer, however the item is distributed and readily available from many different suppliers, so it does not qualify as sole source. It has a sole manufacturer, but not a sole supplier. As long as there is more than one potential bidder for the item or service, there is no justification for a sole source determination.

**What should I do if my shipment is not correct?**

Please call, mail, fax, or email Purchasing stating the problem and the responsible buyer will contact the vendor.

**Can employees participate in or benefit from UFV purchases or sales?**

Staff may not personally benefit from their position with the University. This includes asking vendors to provide the same preferential pricing that they provide to UFV.

**What is the Staff Computer Purchase Plan?**

This plan is offered by Employee Services—contact the department to obtain information about purchasing on this plan.

**Please refer to the UFV Supplies Management website for the entire Purchasing Manual.**

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