

UW POLICY DIRECTORY

Rescinded 03-03-2026

APS 52.1 – Procurement of Goods and Services

(Approved by the Senior Vice President for Finance and Facilities by authority of Administrative Order No. 9)

1. State Statutes and Delegated Authority for Purchasing

The University of Washington, as an agency of the state of Washington, is required to operate under rules and regulations adopted by the legislature and other governing bodies. Legislation is contained in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW); other regulations are part of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

The following requirements from [RCW 28B.10.019](#) and [Chapter 39.26 RCW](#) reflect the primary rules which govern purchases by the University for all of its programs.

A. Competitive Solicitations

Insofar as practicable, all purchases of or contracts for goods and services must be based on a competitive solicitation process. However, formal solicitations are not necessary for:

- Emergency purchases.
- Purchases not exceeding \$100,000. Quotations from \$10,000 to \$100,000 shall be secured from at least three vendors to assure establishment of a competitive price. The buyer shall solicit quotes from at least one certified minority owned and one certified woman owned business in addition to majority owned vendor(s). A record of competition for all such purchases shall be documented for audit purposes and are considered public records subject to disclosure to the extent provided in [Chapter 42.56 RCW](#). Bid submissions and bid evaluations are exempt from disclosure until announcement of the apparent successful bidder.
- Purchases which are clearly and legitimately limited to a single source of supply.

The University must provide public notice for all competitive solicitations and post all contract opportunities on the state's enterprise vendor registration and bid notification system (WEBS). In addition, the University may notify contractors and potential bidders by sending notices by mail, electronic transmission, newspaper advertisements, or other means as may be appropriate. When purchases are made through a competitive solicitation, the contract shall be awarded to the most responsive and responsible bidder, taking into consideration the quality of the articles proposed to be supplied, their conformity with specifications, the purposes for which required, and the times of delivery. In determining the "lowest responsive and responsible bidder," the University will consider, but will not be limited to considering, the following:

1. The ability, capacity, and skill of the bidder to perform the contract or provide the service required;
2. The character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience, and efficiency of the bidder;
3. Whether the bidder can perform the contract within the time specified;
4. The quality of performance of previous contracts or services;
5. The previous and existing compliance by the bidder with laws relating to the contract or services;

6. Such other information as may be secured having a bearing on the decision to award the contract;
7. Whether the bid satisfies the needs of the state as specified in the solicitation documents;
8. Whether the bid encourages diverse contractor participation;
9. Whether the bid provides competitive pricing, economies, and efficiencies;
10. Whether the bid considers human health and environmental impacts;
11. Whether the bid appropriately weighs the cost and non-cost considerations; and
12. Whether the bid appropriately considers life-cycle cost.

After reviewing all bid submissions, the University may enter into negotiations with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder in order to determine if the bid may be improved. The University may not use this negotiation opportunity to permit a bidder to change a nonresponsive bid into a responsive bid.

B. Service Contracts

When specialized skills, knowledge, resources, and experience are needed which cannot be provided reasonably by existing departmental staff or University service departments, such services may be obtained from firms or individuals outside the University on a fee for service or contract basis. A request must be made and appropriate approval(s) obtained as described in Administrative Policy Statement [32.3](#), "Independent Contractor Policy," with all requests for outside service contracts, regardless of source of funding, submitted to Procurement Services for processing. However, a service contract should not be used to bypass competitive employment procedures or to accomplish a job that:

- A present employee can do;
- Could be accomplished by resources available within another University department; or
- Calls for full-time, continuous employment.

C. Additional Oversight

As a state agency, the University must also comply with Washington State's requirements regarding the utilization of Minority and Women Businesses (per [Chapter 39.19 RCW](#)).

As a major recipient of federal funds, the University is obligated to follow additional regulations, which may include compliance with federal statutes, agency rule, the [Federal Acquisition Regulations](#) (FAR) for federal contracts and provisions of [Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations](#) (CFR) for federal grants, including disclosure of real or potential conflicts of interest to the federal awarding agency.

Apart from all the regulations which apply to the University as a state agency, the University must conduct its purchases in accordance with the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) as codified in [Title 62A RCW](#). This set of laws has been adopted by each of the states to govern the actions of buyers and sellers in the commercial environment.

2. Purchasing Ethics

A. Basics of Ethics Law

As employees of the state of Washington, faculty and staff of the University must follow all of the state statutes and regulations regarding ethics and conflicts of interest. State law is found primarily in [Chapter 42.52 RCW](#), and sets out a strong statement of ethical principles and values for state officers and employees. In part, that statement provides:

"State officials and employees of government hold a public trust which obligates them, in a special way, to honesty and integrity in fulfilling the responsibilities to which they are elected and appointed. Paramount in that trust is the principle that public office, whether elected or appointed, may not be used for personal gain or private advantage." ([RCW 42.52.900](#))

B. Ethics in Purchasing

University staff and faculty who are involved at any point in the process to select suppliers, award and administer contracts and approve payments must adhere to high standards of ethical behavior and ensure that they do not show favoritism to any supplier(s) over others who are also interested in doing business with the University.

University guidelines regarding ethical practices may be found in [Executive Order No. 32](#), “Employee Responsibilities and Employee Conflict of Interest.”

Employees with questions about whether certain situations pose ethical questions should seek advice from the head of their department. Department heads may consult with Procurement Services, the Internal Audit office, and/or the Attorney General’s division as necessary for any specific ethics question.

C. Ethics in Relation to Sole Source Statements

Individuals writing sole source statements need to understand that the statements carry weight similar to a perjury statement. [RCW 42.20.040](#) discusses public employees making false reports. It states “Every public officer who shall knowingly make any false or misleading statement in any official report or statement, under circumstances not otherwise prohibited by law, shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor.” [RCW 42.20.050](#) states “Every public officer who, being authorized by law to make or give a certificate or other writing, shall knowingly make and deliver as true such a certificate or writing containing any statement which he or she knows to be false, in a case where the punishment thereof is not expressly prescribed by law, shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor.”

D. Departmental Purchasing Controls

Departments are responsible for maintaining accurate and complete records of all orders placed by the department. It is recommended that the person who authorizes a purchase not be the same person who receives the goods and/or approves payment.

3. Delegation of University Authority for Purchasing

[Chapter 28B.10 RCW](#) vests the University’s Board of Regents with the authority to handle all aspects of the University’s operation. The Board has delegated many responsibilities to the University President, who in turn delegates them to the Vice Presidents and operating units such as Procurement Services.

- Authority is delegated from the UW Board of Regents in the Board of Regents Governance, Standing Orders, [Chapter 1, Section 6](#), “Execution of Instruments, Business Affairs, and Operations.”
- Authority is delegated from the UW President to the Senior Vice President for Finance and Facilities in [Administrative Order No. 1](#).
- Authority is delegated from the Senior Vice President for Finance and Facilities to the Associate Vice President and Controller.
- Authority is delegated from the Associate Vice President and Controller to the Executive Director of Procurement Services.

4. Purchasing Procedures

[Purchasing procedures](#) and online guides to using the University’s eProcurement system and [PAS—Purchasing and Accounts Payable Online System](#) are available to guide the purchasing process.

May 1, 2002; February 21, 2014; RC, January 21, 2015.

For related information, see:

- Board of Regents Governance, Regent Policy [No. 60](#), “Statement of Business Equity for the University of Washington”

[Edit](#)