

# Clarion University of Pennsylvania Purchasing Policy

Procedure No. 31.601: **PURCHASING**

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- [Mission and Statement](#)
- [Appropriate and Allowable Purchases](#)
- [Principles of Good Procurement Practices](#)
- [Contracting Officer Authority](#)
- [Fiscal Officer Authority](#)
- [Council of Trustees Approval](#)
- [Purchases Over \\$20,600](#)
- [Exceptions to Competitive Bidding Process](#)
- [Purchases \\$20,600 and Under](#)
- [Vendor Solicitation and Selection](#)
- [Small and Disadvantaged Business](#)
- [Removing Vendors from the Vendor List](#)
- [Modification or Withdrawal of Bids](#)
- [Bid Protests](#)
- [Resolution of Contract Disputes](#)
- [Requisitions](#)
- [Requests for Consultants, Speakers, or Services](#)
- [Small Dollar Purchases](#)
- [Other Payments](#)
- [Employee Reimbursements](#)

## **I. Purpose:**

To establish institutional guidelines and prudent business practices for the procurement of goods, services, supplies and contracts in accordance with Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Procurement Code (Act 57 of 1998) and State System of Higher Education procurement policies.

## **II. Policy:**

It is the policy of Clarion University to maximize the value of goods and services received for the dollars expended by following prudent business practices in its purchasing and contracting activities. Competitive bidding procedures shall be utilized for all purchases in excess of \$20,600. Certain purchases \$20,600 and under (upon review of the purchase requisition) will also be bid when it is determined by purchasing and contracting personnel to be in the university's best interest, and will result in cost savings.

### **A. Purchasing Department Mission Statement**

Purchasing will provide the highest level of quality, value, and satisfaction to our internal customers while servicing their needs; maintaining the optimum level of professionalism, integrity, and ethics in support of the University's goals and objectives

### **B. Appropriate and Allowable Purchases**

It is the university's primary mission to provide a quality education to students. Consequently, appropriate and allowable purchases would include all goods, services, and construction necessary to accomplish that mission. These include expenditures, within budget limitations, for instruction, research, public service, academic support, student services, institutional support, operation and maintenance of facilities, technology and auxiliary operations.

Public funds should only be used for public purposes. University funds should not be used to purchase gifts or personal items for employees, alcohol, party supplies, flowers for individuals, or similar items that benefit only a select few or have no legitimate business or educational purpose. Also, the university cannot transfer funds to other organizations (i.e., foundations, associations, charitable organizations, public agencies, etc.) without receiving goods or services in exchange. In all instances, the Purchasing Office has the right to question any purchase request that appears inappropriate. If, after seeking further justification from the requestor, the Purchasing Office still believes the purchase request to be questionable, the matter will be referred to the Vice President for Finance and Administration, or his/her designee, for final determination of appropriateness.

University unrestricted funds cannot be used for scholarships unless they were received from the following sources of revenue:

- a) Gifts
- b) Unrestricted endowment income
- c) Corporate sponsorship
- d) Camp, conference, and similar event revenue (net of expenditures); and /or
- e) Other sources of revenue, as approved by the Chancellor.
- f) Grants

Tuition, fees, appropriation revenues, interest income, room, board, miscellaneous, and all other revenue (except as provided for above) shall not be used in the awarding of scholarships. This does not apply to scholarships that are based on sources of funding which are specifically restricted for that purpose by an external source or donor.

### **C. Principles of Prudent Procurement Practices**

The university has adopted the following principles of good procurement practices to implement this policy:

#### Responsiveness:

1. First consideration is given to the objectives and policies of the institution.
2. Community understanding of purchasing procedures and requirements is assured.

#### Accountability:

1. Compliance with all federal, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, State System of Higher Education, and university laws, regulations, and policies is maintained.
2. The maximum value for each dollar of expenditure is sought through:
  - a) Assertively seeking the widest possible audience of potential vendors to maximize competition.
  - b) Setting aside competitive practices only in the most justifiable circumstances.
  - c) Pursuing cooperation and collaboration with other universities and public agencies, including school districts, to maximize value.
3. Adequate documentation is provided for public review as an "audit trail" on all procurement decisions.

#### Fairness and Openness

1. All competitive suppliers are granted equal consideration insofar as state or federal statutes and institutional policies permit.
2. A reasonable effort is made to make all competing suppliers aware of institutional needs for goods and services.
3. Small and disadvantaged businesses, including Minority/Women Business Enterprises (MBE/WBE), are sought actively as suppliers of goods and services.
4. Honesty in sales representation, whether offered by verbal or written statement, an advertisement, or a sample of the product, is demanded.

5. Business is conducted with potential and current suppliers in an atmosphere of good faith, devoid of intentional misrepresentation.
6. Consent from the originator of proprietary ideas and designs is received before using them for competitive purchasing purposes.
7. Every reasonable effort is made to negotiate an equitable and mutually agreeable settlement of any controversy with a supplier. Major controversies will be submitted to arbitration or other third party review, as permitted by the established policies of the institution.
8. Personal and institutional gifts or gratuities are not accepted.

### **III. University Authority for Contracting and Purchasing:**

#### **A. Contracting Officer Authority**

The university President and his/her designees, are the only individuals authorized to procure goods, services, supplies and construction; enter into and administer contracts; and make written determinations with respect to contracts for the university. The Vice President for Finance and Administration, or his/her designee, has been designated as the "contracting officer" and, as such, is the only individual authorized to sign contracts for the university. This includes contracts for which the university acts as the "contractee" or purchaser of the goods or services, and grants or contracts for which the university is the "contractor" or provider of the goods or services. It is the contracting officer's responsibility to ensure that the provisions of the Commonwealth Procurement Code (Act 57 of 1998) and State System of Higher Education procurement policies are followed. The Provost and Academic Vice President has been authorized as the primary person to sign grants.

Purchasing authority has been delegated to the Purchasing Office, which acts as the official liaison between the business community and the university for all procurement activity. No other office or department of the university is authorized to purchase goods, services, or supplies for the university except as outlined in Section IV: Purchasing and Contracting Procedures, and Section V: Process for initiating a Purchase Request. All purchase requests must be submitted to the Purchasing Office for approval and processing. Any person attempting to make a purchase or contractual obligation on behalf of the university without the consent of the Purchasing Office will be held financially liable for their actions.

#### **B. Fiscal Officer Authority**

The Vice President for Finance and Administration has been designated as the primary "fiscal officer" for the university. Limited fiscal officer authority has also been delegated to the Director of Business Services, Director of Purchasing, and selected Purchasing Office personnel. It is the fiscal officer's responsibility to review and approve all procurements for fiscal responsibility, budgetary appropriateness, and availability of funds.

#### **C. Council of Trustee Approval**

The Clarion University Council of Trustees has established a Finance Committee, consisting of five council members, to review and approve all purchases greater than or equal to \$25,000 prior to the awarding of the purchase order or contract. The Finance Committee will be comprised of the three Executive Committee members of the Council and two other members appointed by the Chair. The committee will meet once a month to review the bid summaries and other relevant documentation for all proposed purchases greater than or equal to \$25,000. Purchase orders and contracts will be awarded for these purchases only after committee approval. Also, emergency procurements can be made without prior committee approval when there exists a threat to public health, welfare, or safety, or when circumstances outside the control of the university creates an urgency of need which does not permit the delay involved in using the normal purchase approval process.

For purchases less than \$25,000, the council has authorized the President and his/her designees to award purchase orders and contracts without prior approval of the council, subject to the following

reporting requirement. On a monthly basis, university management shall provide the Finance Committee with a list of all purchases and contractual obligations with a value between \$10,000 and \$25,000 that had been awarded during the past month. This list shall contain a brief description of the goods or services obtained, the dollar amount of the purchase, the period of the contract, and the contract or purchase order number.

The Finance Committee will submit a report to the Council of Trustees of all purchases over \$20,600 that have been awarded during the current reporting period. The Council of Trustees will be asked to approve the Finance Committee's report at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Council. Complete records, including the bidding and awarding documentation for all purchases, will be maintained in the Purchasing Office and shall be made available for examination as requested by members of the council.

#### **IV. Purchasing and Contracting Procedures:**

##### **A. Purchases Over \$20,600**

Competitive sealed bids or proposals are required for all purchases over \$20,600. The request for quotation or request for proposal may take many forms. The appropriate format is determined by the Purchasing Office and depends upon the nature and complexity of the goods or services required. A request for quotation is used for the purchase of most commodities, supplies, and equipment when price is the only determining factor. A request for proposal is used for services and specialized product purchases when other evaluation criteria also need to be considered. Regardless of the bid solicitation method utilized, adequate public notice must be given with adequate response time. Bid solicitations may only be issued by the Purchasing Office, and will take at least six to eight weeks to process.

For the more complex purchases, a pre-bid conference will be held with prospective suppliers so that additional clarification of what is requested can be provided. The minutes of this meeting will be made available to all interested suppliers.

All bids received must remain sealed and the contents not disclosed until the designated bid opening time. Bids received after the formal bid opening time, regardless of reason, will not be accepted for consideration. Bids shall be opened publicly in the presence of one or more witnesses. No determination of the successful bidder will be made at the bid opening. An award will be made only after careful review by appropriate university personnel.

All proposals received in response to a request for proposal will remain sealed until the designated opening time. The opening of sealed bids is open to the public. Only the names of the vendors submitting proposals will be made available to the public. Proposals will be held in confidence and, except for the selected proposal which is subject to the Pennsylvania "Right to Know" Law, and the University's Right to Know Policy, will not be revealed or discussed with competitors to protect proprietary information.

All other materials submitted with the proposal will become the property of the University and may be returned only at the University's option. Proposals submitted to the University may be reviewed and evaluated by any person other than the competing vendors at the discretion of the University. The University has the right to use any or all ideas in any proposal. Selection or rejection of the proposal does not affect this right.

Only the awarded contract will be available for public inspection for a period of seven days, commencing from the day of receipt of the approved contract from the Attorney General's office. After seven days, the documents will be filed, and anyone requesting to see the documents will be charged a \$20 handling fee in addition to any applicable copy charges.

Bid information, including contracts awarded to successful bidders, is available on the University purchasing web site at [www.clarion.edu/admin/purchasing/index.shtml](http://www.clarion.edu/admin/purchasing/index.shtml).

On requests for quotations, awards will be made to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder within 60

days of the bid opening date. For request for proposals, the award is made to the bidder submitting the proposal deemed most advantageous to the university considering price and other evaluation factors as specified in the request for proposal. This involves review by an evaluation committee consisting of knowledgeable university personnel and at least one member of the purchasing staff. The contracting officer has the right to reject any bid or proposal that he/she has just cause to believe is not in the best interest of the university to accept.

The Purchasing Office will make an award recommendation and prepare the appropriate purchasing document (contract or purchase order) for submission to the contracting officer and fiscal officer, or their designees, for review and approval. Contracts for services in excess of \$5,000 must also be forwarded to university legal counsel and, if in excess of \$20,000 to the Commonwealth Attorney General for review and approval.

## **B. Exceptions to Competitive Bidding Process**

Competitive bidding requirements for purchases over \$20,600 may be waived by the contracting officer under the following circumstances:

1. Sole source procurements when,
  - a) Only a single contractor is capable of providing the goods or services required;
  - b) Exact replacement or repair parts must be ordered directly from the manufacturer or manufacturer's authorized dealer;
  - c) Services involving the repair, modification, or calibration of equipment must be performed by the manufacturer or manufacturer's authorized representative;
  - d) Copyrighted material or media items must be ordered directly from the producer/publisher; or
2. It is clearly not feasible to award the contract for supplies or services on a competitive basis.<sup>2)</sup> Purchases made through blanket contracts administered by the Department of General Services, COSTARS or the State System of Higher Education.
3. Purchases required to be made from the Pennsylvania Industries for the Blind and Handicapped (PIBH).
4. When goods or services must be obtained on an emergency basis. An "Emergency Contract Certification" form must be completed by the contracting officer and submitted to university legal counsel for approval prior to the procurement of the goods or services.

When the university intends to award a contract or purchase order on a sole source procurement basis the contracting officer must submit a "Sole Source Contract Certification" form to university legal counsel for approval prior to the awarding of the contract or purchase order.

## **C. Modification or Withdrawal of Bids**

Bids may be modified or withdrawn by the bidder upon written notice or in person any time prior to the date and time set for the opening of the bids. Except as otherwise provided in this part, requests for withdrawals and modifications of bids received after the exact hour and date specified for the opening of bids shall not be considered.

Withdrawal of erroneous bids after bid opening but before award shall be permitted by written determination of the contracting officer when the bidder requests relief and presents credible evidence that the reason for the lower bid price was a clerical mistake as opposed to a judgment mistake and was actually due to an unintentional arithmetical error or an unintentional omission of a substantial quantity of work, labor, material or services made directly in the compilation of the bid. The request for relief and the supporting evidence must be received by the Vice President for Finance and Administration within two business days after the bid opening.

## **D. Bid Protests**

A bid protest is a procedural mechanism that permits an unsuccessful vendor/contractor or a potential vendor/contractor to file a complaint in regards to the solicitation and/or awarding of a public contract. In

2002, amendments to Act 57 significantly altered the previous procedures of resolving bid protests. Every bid/proposal package issued by the University contains a Notice as to Filing a Bid Protest section with detailed bid protest procedures. Bid protest procedures are listed on the Clarion University Purchasing Department web page and can also be obtained by contacting the University Purchasing Department. The bid protest procedures must be followed when filing a bid protest.

### **E. Purchases \$20,600 and under**

Competitive bidding is not required for purchases \$20,600 and under, however, under no circumstances should items be bought in series to avoid this dollar limit. Buying in a series means making multiple purchases of the same item or service from the same vendor within a twelve month period. Even though competitive bidding may not be required for purchases \$20,600 and under, it may be utilized at the sole discretion of the Purchasing Office when time permits and the likely benefits of doing so exceed the costs. Such bids may be solicited and received by telephone, fax, email, or regular mail. Bidding will not be conducted if the Purchasing Office does not believe it is in the university's best interest to do so.

When bidding is not utilized, the Purchasing Office shall select a vendor based on the following criteria:

- ability to supply the required goods or services
- quality of goods or services offered
- pricing
- reputation
- prior history and experience with the university
- reliability (delivery and service)
- financial stability
- responsiveness
- conduct of sales representatives
- recommendations of qualified experts in the field

The Purchasing Office will consider vendor recommendations from knowledgeable personnel in other university departments but the final decision rests with the Purchasing Office. Purchasing personnel are prohibited from doing business with any supplier in which they have a financial interest.

### **F. Vendor Solicitation and Selection**

It is the practice of the Purchasing Office to cultivate sound business relationships with reputable vendors. Goods and services will be sought from vendors throughout the United States except in special cases that may require preference for Pennsylvania suppliers. Local vendors will be given full consideration in purchasing activity. In addition, the Purchasing Office will actively seek minority vendors with whom to do business.

Only reputable vendors will be considered as sources of supply for the university's needs. Potential vendors are identified through the use of business directories, trade association publications, buyer guides, newspapers, magazines, internet searches, trade and product shows, catalogs, and contacts with marketing and sales representatives. Vendor representatives are encouraged to call on university purchasing personnel for the purpose of doing business with the university. Visitation is permitted by appointment only. Calls and visits should only be made with reasonable frequency. Vendors should not be contacting other departments or individuals of the university.

Vendors can request to be added to the list by completing a "Vendor Application Form" which can be obtained from the Purchasing Office. The application will be reviewed by the Purchasing Director who will decide if the vendor qualifies for inclusion on the vendor list. In order to qualify, vendors must not be currently debarred from doing business with any Commonwealth agency; must be financially viable; must not be an employee of the university; and must have satisfactory references.



Vendors whose applications are not approved will be so notified by the Purchasing Director and will have the right to appeal the decision to the Director of Business Services. The university does not discriminate in its purchasing practices and welcomes vendor applications from small businesses, persons with disabilities, and minority and women owned business enterprises. Vendors who feel they have been unfairly treated by the Purchasing Office may file a grievance with the university contracting officer (Vice President for Finance and Administration).

Adding a vendor to the university vendor list does not guarantee that a request for bid, contract, or purchase order will be sent to that vendor immediately. Timing of requests will depend upon the university's need for the particular commodity or service offered by the vendor and the number of other qualified vendors supplying that same commodity or service. It is not economically feasible to solicit bids from each and every vendor who can supply a particular item. Therefore, only a limited number will be chosen based on the professional judgement and discretion of the purchasing staff. Vendor reputation, pricing history, and responsiveness to previous bid solicitations are some of the factors considered when choosing vendors. The number of bids solicited is dependent upon the estimated cost of the goods or services and the likelihood of value being added to the process through additional solicitations.

During the spring of each year and as needed throughout the year, the university advertises in the Pennsylvania Bulletin for interested vendors for all of the recurring contracts that are expected to be bid during the upcoming year. Vendors are encouraged to contact the Purchasing Office if they are interested in bidding on any of these contracts.

### **G. Small and Disadvantaged Businesses**

It is the university's policy to seek and recruit small and disadvantaged businesses, including minority and women owned business enterprises (MBE/WBE), for inclusion on the vendor list. Vendors are identified through minority magazines, trade fairs, and the Commonwealth Office of Minority and Women Business. On a yearly basis, at least one MBE trade show is attended by the Purchasing Director or his/her designee. The names, addresses, phone numbers and product listings, if available, of identified small and disadvantaged businesses are shared with other universities in the State System of Higher Education as requested. The Purchasing Office is required to track and report annually the total dollar amount of contracts and purchase orders awarded to such vendors.

When identified, qualified small and disadvantaged businesses are added to the vendor list for the goods or services they can provide. The Purchasing Office will make every reasonable attempt to include one or more of these businesses on every request for quotation or proposal. The University may also reduce the level or change the type of bonding requirements and modify progress payments for small and disadvantaged businesses. However, bid and proposal evaluation procedures do not allow for preference or advantage ratings for any vendors, but provide equality for all vendors.

### **H. Removing Vendors from the Vendor List**

At all times, vendor and vendor representatives are expected to perform their duties in a professional and ethical manner. In instances where it has been proven that such is not the case, that vendor will be banished from campus and removed from the vendor list for a period of not less than five years.

Unprofessional activities would include, but are not limited to, harassment, coercion, or badgering of any university employee through personal visits, telephone calls, or written material. Unethical behavior encompasses the offering of gifts or gratuities to any university employee; the misrepresentation of products or services; etc.

A vendor may be removed from the vendor list for reasons other than those outlined above. These reasons might include, but are not limited to, consistently high bidding results, unresponsiveness to bid requests or product/service inquiries from the Purchasing Office, or unsatisfactory performance. Under these circumstances a vendor would be removed for a period of one year after which the vendor may request reinstatement to the list.

In situations where a vendor may be subject to removal from the vendor list, a letter will be sent to the vendor addressing the problem. The vendor would then have ten working days to respond to the charges in writing. The vendor has the right to personally refute the charges in addition to submitting the required written response with appropriate documentation to the deciding committee. Said committee is comprised of the Purchasing Director, the Director of Business Services, the Comptroller, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and possibly the President and/or university legal counsel.

If, in the opinion of the contracting officer, the vendor's misconduct is serious enough to warrant further action, he/she may refer the matter to the Office of the Chancellor for possible debarment action. Debarment may be considered for the following vendor actions:

- embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, etc.
- fraud, criminal offense, or improper conduct in obtaining or performing a contract
- various violations of state and federal laws and regulations
- unsatisfactory performance
- failure to comply with the terms of a contract

### **I. Resolution of Contract Disputes**

If a controversy arises between a contractor and the University as a result of a contractual relationship (i.e., breach of contract, mistake, misrepresentation or other cause for contract modification or recession) a claim must first be filed in writing with the contracting officer, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, within six months after it occurs. The contracting officer has the authority to settle or resolve this action without the necessity of bringing the matter before the Board of Claims for formal adjudication. However, all settlements must be reviewed and approved by Chief Council and a release must be prepared and executed by all parties that must include the contractor, the University, Chief Council and the OAG. Untimely claims are to be disregarded by the contracting officer in consultation with University legal council.

The University President has the authority to negotiate a settlement or resolve a contract dispute within sixty (60) days of its filing. Any such proposal for settlement must be forwarded to the Office of the Chancellor for final approval and to Chief Council who must approve any action resulting in settlement. A final statement letter and release will come from the Office of the Chancellor. In order to insure successful resolution of these matters, University legal council should be consulted throughout each stage of the process.

If a settlement is not reached within sixty (60) days, the President should advise the contractor in writing that the matter is being referred to the Office of the Chancellor. When forwarded to the Office of the Chancellor, all relevant supporting documentation should be included for review.

In the case of no mutual agreement/settlement, the Office of the Chancellor will, within one hundred twenty (120) days from filing the claim, issue a decision in writing. The decision, which is to be sent registered mail to the contractor and any other interested party, must state a rationale and advise all affected parties of their rights to file a judicial action with the Board of Claims within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the decision.

If a timely decision is not issued by the Office of the Chancellor, the contractor may proceed to court as if an adverse decision was rendered.



## **V. Process for Initiating a Purchase Request**

### **A. Requisitions**

All University purchases begin with a requisition initiated by the department requesting the goods and services, and must be entered into SAP before the purchase is made. This allows the requisition to be electronically approved by the appropriate management officer, and also assures there are budget funds available to pay for the goods or services. For services \$5,000 or more, a requisition should be entered four to six weeks before the service is required for Purchasing to complete a Service Purchase Contract. For purchases over \$20,600 a requisition should be entered six to eight weeks before the goods or services are required so Purchasing can solicit bids. While certain situations or times of year may allow for faster processing, following these timelines will ensure timely and cost-effective procurement. A requisition can not be entered into the SAP purchasing system after the services or commodities have been received. All requests are subject to prioritization, so please give us your best estimate of when your purchase is needed when entering a requisition into SAP.

Requisitions must include as much information and specification of the goods or services required that you can obtain to be placed in the header text, or the item detail text section of the SAP electronic requisition. Insufficient information or specification may delay the purchasing process and/or result in goods or services differing from those desired. Purchasing personnel can only purchase precisely what is needed when the requisition adequately describes the requirements. The Purchasing Office can provide assistance in the form of catalogs, lists of suppliers, product specifications, and price estimates. Requests for computer and telecommunication equipment should first be coordinated with the Computing Services Department to ensure compatibility and conformity with university standards for such equipment.

Requests to purchase large equipment or equipment needing building systems (electrical, mechanical or structural) modifications should first be approved by the Facilities Management Department. This is to insure that the equipment will function within the capacities of the building systems.

Requisitions for goods or services in excess of \$20,600 will be processed by the Purchasing Office in accordance with the competitive bidding procedures described in section IV. When competitive bidding is not required or desirable, the Purchasing Office will select an appropriate vendor and award the contract or purchase order accordingly.

If funds are not to be encumbered immediately (i.e. funds to be encumbered upon payment of an invoice), the requisition should be completed as usual. However, the requisition type should be changed to 'Outl. Agmt requisition'. If you have questions, call the Purchasing Office.

### **B. Requests for Consultants, Speakers, or Any Type of Service**

All contracts for services in excess of \$5,000, including consultants and speakers, must be approved by university legal counsel and, if in excess of \$20,000, by the Commonwealth Attorney General before the service is performed. These dollar limits include travel expenses. Under no circumstances should services be bought in series to avoid these dollar limits. Buying in series means making multiple purchases of the same service from the same vendor over a short period of time to avoid this contract requirement.

Depending on the complexity of the contract, the approval process may take up to eight weeks to complete; therefore, it is vitally important for the requesting department to notify the Purchasing Office of its need for any service as early as possible. Under no circumstances should any contractor provide services for the university in excess of \$5,000 without the necessary pre-approvals. University legal counsel and the Attorney General will not sign any after-the-fact contract for which the service has already been received. University personnel are also warned not to have any contracted service performed without such approval. Employees who fail to comply may be held financially liable for their actions. Check requests may be used for paying for consultants and speakers if the total cost (including airfare/travel, lodging, and subsistence) is less than \$5,000.

All requests for services should include a detailed explanation of the service to be provided, the dates the service is to begin and end, a list of potential bidders, and a brief justification for expense. For consultants and speakers, a brief explanation of the contractor's qualifications is also required. Please note that university employees are prohibited from contracting with the university as consultants or contractors, rather they must be processed through the payroll system. Since there are limitations on how and when such payments can be made to employees, discussions should occur with the Human Resources Office staff before making any commitments or authorizing any work to be performed.

Procedures for paying honorarium and travel expenses for these and like contracted parties are as follows:

1. A requisition should be posted to the SAP finance system that includes two lines; a) the first line for the honorarium amount and; b) the second line for the maximum travel amount to be paid. This will be stated as an amount not to exceed and should be based on estimated travel costs. This line should be entered as 1 "au" unit to allow for multiple payments for travel expenses as submitted by the vendor.
2. Travel expenses should be submitted by the consultant to the requisitioning department as soon as possible after they have been incurred. Travel expense receipt(s) are to be submitted with a cover invoice/form that has been signed by the consultant. Having the vendor provide a signed document with the travel expense receipts documents his/her confirmation of travel expenses incurred as part of the Clarion engagement. Receipts are required for all expenses.
3. The cover invoice/form provided by the consultant for payment of travel expenses is to be approved by the requisitioning department supervisor or designee. The cover invoice/form should also indicate if it is a partial or final payment.
4. If travel costs have been incurred before the travel and work has taken place, travel reimbursement could logically be received before the work has been done. The only limitations on that would be the approval by the department of the travel charges the consultant has incurred and time to process the payment. Another acceptable possibility may be the incurring and reimbursement of part of the travel costs before the visit, and the rest during or after the visit. Again, whenever associated travel costs are incurred, they should be submitted for approval and reimbursement soon thereafter.
5. In those cases when travel arrangements are made by and paid directly by Clarion the travel costs should be included as part of the consultant requisition travel expense amount (refer to 1 above). Travel expense amounts paid directly by Clarion will be deducted from the consultant requisition travel amount after that cost has been determined.

### **C. Small Dollar Purchases**

Small dollar purchases/payments are defined as buying items or services for less than \$1,000. It is important for University employees to utilize the most accurate and convenient method allowable when procuring supplies and services under \$1,000. There are three primary methods of making small dollar purchases or payments: 1) The Clarion University Purchasing Card; 2) Vendor payment by Check Request and; 3) Employee reimbursement. A purchase requisition can also be used if it is deemed appropriate and adds benefit or value to the transaction. The Purchasing Department should be contacted prior to making a small dollar purchase if there is any question concerning the best method to use. (P-Card limits can be adjusted for one time purchases over \$1,000.00 if deemed necessary.)

Under no circumstances should items be bought in series to avoid the \$1,000 small dollar purchase limit. Buying in series means, making multiple purchases of the same item or service from the same vendor over a short period of time.

The primary method to purchase and pay for small dollar items or services is the Clarion University

Purchasing Card. This process allows the cardholder to place an order and pay directly with a vendor to expedite delivery of the goods/services without the need for a University purchase requisition or purchase order. Purchasing Card information can be found at the Purchasing web site [www.clarion.edu/admin/purchasing](http://www.clarion.edu/admin/purchasing). The key when using the purchasing card is dealing with vendors that the University already has relationships and contracts established with. Some examples of these are Office Max (office supplies), Computer Support and Computer Showcase (non-warranty repair and computer supplies), and Chartwells (catering/food service). Questions concerning the use of the Clarion University Purchasing Card should be directed to the Purchasing Card Administrator.

Check requests or an SAP parked invoice transaction (Transaction Coded FV60) can be used for small dollar payments when the vendor does not accept the purchasing card for small dollar purchases and for other approved direct payments. The check request form can be found at [www.clarion/admin/accounts payable](http://www.clarion/admin/accounts_payable), completed and approved and then submitted to the Accounts Payable Office for payment. A vendor invoice or other appropriate payment documentation should be supplied with each check request. A check request should only be used if the purchasing card is not accepted by the vendor or a purchase requisition is not appropriate.

#### **D. Other Payments**

Payments for certain items over \$1,000 can be made with a check request when no value is provided by issuing a University purchase requisition and/or a University purchase order and with the approval of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Items currently approved for payment with a check request include payments for:

- Bulk or Package Shipments (Fed-Ex, UPS, etc)
- Chartwells Food Service – (Check Request for Eagle dollars. All catering expenses should be paid with a pcard or AP Ghost Card)
- Continuing Education Program Student Refunds
- Continuing Education Wednet Program
- Dual Employment Compensation
- Grant Refunds
- Out Service Training
- Postage
- State System of Higher Education (including other universities)
- Stipends - Check Request unless it's a feed from department to Computing Services or when several stipends to be a paid an email is used providing the list and payment information
- Student Financial Aid Refunds
- Student Loan Returns
- Teacher Co-ops -Automatic feed from department to Computing Services
- Utilities

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The following should not be submitted for payment using a check request:

- Athletic Game Officials - Submit for payment using the Athletic Official Form
- Parent Loan Refunds – Payment is made via automatic feed from SFS PeopleSoft to SAP
- Travel Vouchers – Submit for payment using the Travel Voucher form

Questions concerning the use and processing of check requests should be directed to the Accounts Payable or Purchasing Offices.

#### **E. Employee Reimbursements**

Employee reimbursement is utilized when necessary, practical, and more expedient. An employee may pay for an allowable expense, and then be reimbursed directly upon submission of the necessary documentation. Examples include reimbursement for business meals, postage, items purchased at

seminars, and small supply purchases. Employee reimbursement should only be used for special cases and on a limited basis, and for dollar amounts less than \$250. A check request should be completed and submitted to the Accounts Payable office for payment along with all supporting documentation such as vendor sales slips/invoices, etc.

Vendors are only permitted to sell commodities or services to Clarion University via the methods described in this policy. Vendor charge accounts that allow employees to purchase items and subsequently bill the University are not permitted without the appropriate purchase order or contract.