

Office of Financial Services	Issue Date: August 1, 2018
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Purchase Specifications Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of this documentation is to provide guidance to University Departments/Colleges on purchase specifications for material, scope of work, engineering drawings, and detailed descriptions of the measurable characteristics such as quality, size, weight, performance parameters, safety requirements, etc.

Specifications are incorporated into requests for proposals, purchase order documents, and contractual agreements. Procurement Services will provide assistance with regard to specification development if needed.

Guidelines

When a Department or College plans to purchase products or services, it is important that they provide Procurement Services with detailed requirements and specifications for the items or services being acquired. This requires planning and communication, and it is the requesting department's responsibility to provide complete and thorough product specifications to Procurement Services. The Buyers will then use this information when requesting bids, issuing scopes of work or requests for proposal. Specifications and requirements that are incomplete or poorly written can lead to incorrect or high bids. The Buyer and the requesting department must work together to improve them before soliciting bids.

Specifications describe the technical, design, quality, or materials requirements for a product, including its intended use and application.

Well written specifications will:

- Adequately describe what is required and set minimum standards
- If applicable, list allowable test methods, industry standards, or certifications to be used in testing for compliance
- Not be so specific as to not allow for competition if competing product exists

Specifications should be:

- Clear and concise
- Simple, but exact enough to avoid loopholes for bidders to evade provisions
- Identify products desired with some brand or specification already on the market
- Measurable and capable of being checked or verified
- Reasonable in respect to tolerances and requirements
- Fair to bidders and allow for competition