

College of Engineering Information Technology Purchasing Policy

Type of Policy: IT departmental

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Policy Owner: College of Engineering IT

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Reason for Policy:

The College of Engineering Purchasing Policy provides the guiding principles for the procurement of Information Technology (IT) related assets at the College and Unit level. The intent of this policy is to rationalize acquisition of IT assets and minimize technology diversity with the goal to provide more reliable and consistent IT support to faculty, researchers and students.

Policy Statement:

Purchasing of all Information Technology related equipment shall be coordinated and executed through the College or corresponding Unit's IT group, or the person designated by the unit.

Software purchases should be coordinated and executed through the same personnel. All software purchases should be recorded and tracked, and Unit IT personnel should work to ensure that any license requirements are appropriately followed. End users may start the process of requesting and negotiating quotes for such software prior to asking the IT team to proceed with the purchase, in order to facilitate the proper selection of licenses and product versions. IT personnel should be involved in the negotiation at an appropriate time to assist with that selection and ensure the end user receives the product choice which can be properly supported and will provide the level of functionality required by the end user. When applicable, software license review should be coordinated with the Office of Purchasing by Unit IT personnel.

All purchasing of hardware and software shall be done using state approved vendors. Software purchases must undergo the Business Process Manual (BPM) approval process (<https://procurement.gatech.edu/purchasing/article/BPM344>). It is understood that if such vendors do not carry the required items, other vendors may be utilized given the purchase is in accordance with GT, USG, and State regulations.

Acquisition of hardware or software requiring GT signature authority shall be submitted to Purchasing or GTRC by the College or Unit IT personnel.

Scope:

This policy applies to all College of Engineering IT items used to conduct research, instruction, or business. In scope are all items - unless specifically excluded in appendix A - that will be connected to any device, used on or off the GT network.

See Appendix A for excluded items.

This policy extends and supports Institute IT policy as well as University System of Georgia IT policy. Any College of Engineering system which cannot comply with this policy, Institute IT policy, or USG policy must have an approved Institute policy exception on file with GT Cyber Security.

Institute IT Policy: <http://policylibrary.gatech.edu/information-technology>

USG IT Handbook:

https://www.usg.edu/assets/information_technology_services/documents/IT_Handbook.pdf

Replacement Cycle

A three to five-year computer/systems replacement cycle, where budget considerations allow, is recommended. It is recommended that servers or specialized IT related devices, including data collection equipment, should be on a five to ten-year replacement cycle. However, relying on any electronic device over 10 years of age is considered very high risk and should be avoided where possible.

Procedure

Purchasing requests shall be placed, logged, and tracked, according to College or Unit procedures. Proper authorization from the fund's owner or their designee must be recorded. It is recommended to use ticketing systems, Buzzmart, or equivalent where possible.

Equipment sourcing and assembly

Priority should always be given to purchasing desktops, laptops, workstations, and servers from State and GT approved vendors (such as Apple, Dell, HP, Lenovo, Penguin Computing, Ace Computers, ...) through GT Buzzmart system.

This policy recognizes the critical role of instrument-connected systems and systems with built in computers in research labs. Nevertheless, all efforts should be made to ensure that these systems can comply as much as possible with Institute IT policies. It is critical that College or Unit IT personnel be consulted prior to the acquisition of these systems.

Shall the need arise where a pre-assembled computer from an authorized State vendor cannot satisfy a specific research need, and upon confirmation by the College or Unit's IT team that there are no other ways to satisfy said need within the State vendor system, the requestor shall work with College or Unit IT personnel to procure and assemble such systems. The procurement of parts should follow all applicable GT policies, including but not limited to DFARS 252.246-7007 and GT policy on counterfeit components <https://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/business-finance/counterfeit-electronic-part-detection-and-avoidance>.

Assembly of computer or IT related equipment from parts procured directly by end users, PI, lab members, etc., without approval from College or Unit IT personnel is prohibited. All computer systems in office environments shall be purchased from enterprise vendors.

The purchase of equipment from secondary market vendors (eBay, other used equipment resellers) or vendor outlets (Dell, Lenovo, HP....) is highly discouraged unless a specific and reasonable need exists.

Such purchases cannot be placed without written prior approval from College or Unit IT personnel and must follow all GT policies (including tax exemption).

Any assembled system with a total value of \$3,000 or greater must be properly inventoried and a Fabricated Property Report completed, per the policy on Fabrication of Property.

<http://policylibrary.gatech.edu/business-finance/fabrication-property>

Warranties and Asset Tracking

Purchase of a three-year on-site warranty for computers and laptops is a standard GT business practice. As such, all systems purchased for use at the College or Unit level shall meet or exceed this standard. For workstations, servers and any equipment with a total value of \$3,000 or greater, it is highly recommended to extend the warranty to 5 years. Assembled systems are also subject to this practice where possible.

For laptops, especially tablet devices, the purchase of an accidental protection warranty is recommended, provided funds are available. Any other warranties which enhance or extend coverage above the 3-year period from the vendor are permitted.

All items purchased under this policy must be logged into an inventory tracking system in accordance with applicable University System of Georgia and Georgia Tech property control and asset tracking policies. This includes items that are below the \$3,000 property control threshold.

Georgia Tech owned equipment may be insured under the Special Property All Risk Agreement (<https://procurement.gatech.edu/sites/default/documents/SPARFY23.pdf>), while being used at home or offsite, provided the equipment is being used for official Georgia Tech business. Device registration should be coordinated through Procurement & Business Services by emailing GTinsurance.ask@business.gatech.edu.

Donated equipment or software

College or Unit IT personnel must be consulted prior to accepting any hardware and or software donations. Personnel should ensure that such donations are recognized properly by working with their assigned Development Officer. Donations of software are subject to the same review of software license purchases and requires proper inventory controls. This should be handled through the Purchasing Office per normal procedure.

Cloud/High Performance Computing (HPC) Services

College or Unit IT personnel must be consulted when considering the use of cloud or HPC resources. Every attempt should be made to utilize existing Georgia Tech campus resources. Georgia Tech has made a considerable investment into these services which are available to all academic and research units. These services contain a robust support unit with specialized skills necessary for the maintenance, troubleshooting, and upkeep of clustered resources. For this reason, research personnel are discouraged from setting up in-house clusters and should consider participation in the Partnership for an Advanced Computing Environment (PACE) program. PACE also includes accommodations to address equipment-only awards like DURIP, and NSF's CC* and MRI. Information regarding PACE may be found here: <https://pace.gatech.edu/update-gts-research-cyberinfrastructure-cost-model>. For clarification, standalone GPU servers are not considered a clustered resource unless they are being joined together as a single computing entity. In the event that an in-house clustered resource is the only option for supporting a specific research need, a policy exception must be submitted to CoE for approval.

Appendix A

Excluded Items: items which can be purchased directly by PI or admin professionals.

Storage Devices: Removable media such as USB keychains, disc media, etc., providing it is not an SSD, HDD, Hybrid or similar device. **Note: per https://gatech.servicenow.com/governance?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0024735, removable media should not be used for storing protected data (CUI/DFARS/FERPA/HIPAA/ITAR).**

Cables, Adapters, Power Strips: Any cables including network, USB, video, power, etc., as long as these are not for highly specialized applications (i.e. fiber optic, Myrinet, InfiniBand).

Phones: Landline or cordless based (cell phones are not included in this exclusion) phones.

Privacy Screens: Any add on screens to reduce visibility by third party may be purchased directly by end users. End users must ensure that the screen is properly designed to fit their device.