



University of Massachusetts

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An aerial photograph of the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus during sunset. The image shows several large, multi-story red brick buildings with white window frames, arranged around a central green lawn. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds, and the sun is visible on the horizon. In the foreground, there are more green trees and a small white building with a green dome. A large blue circle is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing the title text.

IT VAR Contract User Guide

2021

OVERVIEW

The IT VAR (Value-Added Reseller) program seeks to establish buying power and greater user experience. It is the result of a joint collaborative effort between Campus IT and UPST that has led to the selection of three (3) full-service strategic partners: CDW-G, GovConnection, and WEI.

IT VAR will make purchasing "better, faster, cheaper."

BENEFITS

Efficiency

- Ability to bulk purchase and store assets at VAR distribution centers for pre-kitting, imaging, asset tagging, etc.
- Ensures all computer products sold to UMass are delivered promptly and meet the specs set forth by each campus

Pricing

- Aggressive pricing – avg. ~13.5% below UMass current competitively bid pricing
- Pre-negotiated hourly rates for professional services

Supplier Diversity

- Spend university dollars directly with diverse, minority-owned businesses (e.g. WEI)
- Buy from large resellers who prioritize their own spend with small and/or diverse suppliers and report this to UMass as Tier 2 diverse spend (e.g. Connection, CDW)

Terms and Conditions

- Most computer hardware sold with a 3-year onsite warranty
- Service levels with teeth (24-hour quote turnaround for most commoditized products, shipping, response times, etc.)
- Asset disposition programs ensure that technology assets are disposed of properly

HOW TO USE

While bidding is not required, competition always drives additional cost savings. We encourage you to compare costs for all three (3) VAR suppliers via the catalog (comparison capabilities will be available in the future) and request quotes from each vendor for non-catalog items such as services.

Campuses may choose any of the three (3) approved IT VAR for their product and services needs without performing any additional competitive procurement. The campus may want to consider the following when choosing from the list of approved IT VAR:

- Pricing
 - Prior positive experiences; e.g., quality of pre- and post-sale support
- from the VAR
 - Breadth and depth of product and services offerings; e.g., can a single
- VAR handle my entire project?
 - # certified technicians by manufacturer





Contract Number:
MHEC-F22
Catalog Supplier

ORDER FROM
CATALOG

REQUEST
A QUOTE

EMAIL
CDW-G

Products & Services Offered

- Desktops
- External Storage
- Video Conferencing
- Tablets/Mobile Devices
- Peripherals
- Networking
- Professional Deployment & Consulting Services
- Business Support Applications
- Cloud Storage/File Sharing
- Cloud Infrastructure
- Wireless & Mobile Computing
- Business Support Apps
- Virtualization

Account Team



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ORDER FROM
CATALOG

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A QUOTE

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CONNECTION

Products & Services Offered

- Networking
- Printers
- Servers
- Telephony
- Video Conferencing
- Datacenter Solutions – Servers, Storage, Virtualization
- Cloud Services
- Unified Communication as a Service (UCaaS)
- Industry-Specific Applications
- Operating Systems
- Productivity Software
- Virtualization
- Communications Solutions
- Software
- Professional Services/Managed Services
- Digital Signage
- Security & NW - NOC/SOC Services
- Lifecycle Services – Staff Augmentation, Helpdesk

Account Team



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Contract Number:

MHEC-F22

**Women Business Enterprise
Catalog Supplier**

[ORDER FROM
CATALOG](#)

[REQUEST
A QUOTE](#)

[EMAIL
WEI](#)

Products & Services Offered

- External Storage
- Peripherals
- Power & Climate
- Communications Solutions
- Online Backup/Restore/Recovery
- Security Solutions
- Cloud Infrastructure
- Wireless & Mobile Computing
- Business Support Apps

Account Team



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FAQs

PRICE COMPARISON, PUNCHOUT CAPABILITY, PRODUCT AVAILABILITY, BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

Will I have to obtain quotes from each of the awarded VARs and purchase from the least expensive one, or can I buy from any of the 3 regardless of price?

No. You can buy from any of the 4 awarded VARs without any form of competition. That said, if the expenditure is significant, it would make sense to compare pricing/related service offerings across all the awarded VARs.

Will I be able to see price comparisons for the awarded vendors in BuyWays?

That is a goal of once the implementation is completed in BuyWays but it will take some time to complete. Work is in progress to provide side by side available pricing through each of the VAR's in the Buyways system.

Will all available items be available for purchase through the punchout?

The majority of commodity items will be available through punch-out. That said, each VAR may have a different mix of products available through punch-out.

Will it be easy to know which of the three offers a particular product? Who has it in stock and delivery dates?

We are working toward the ability to quickly compare side by side the specific offers and delivery by each participating VAR, however that will take time. As of now, you will be able to obtain the pricing but must compare manually.

Can we still negotiate further discounts with the VAR's or directly with manufacturers?

Yes. The UPST would be happy to assist in those negotiations. We would want to ensure that any additional discounting is offering to the entire UMass System.

Is there a different process for commodity purchases, M&S agreements, and engagements for project-related professional services?

Yes, as these types of engagements are not conducive to punch-out. The VAR's will need to be contacted directly for the above procurement types. (See the section below on Large Projects and Professional Services.)

SPECIFIC VAR-CATEGORY ALIGNMENT

Will I be required to buy certain manufacturers products from specific awarded vendors?

No. There will however be recommendations made between some manufacturers with certain VAR's. That will allow the university to achieve preferred pricing, and enhanced service offerings for those manufacturers via certain VARs. Guidance will be provided by the UPST to support that alignment.

FAQs

Would this impact Apple and Dell purchases?

Not necessarily. Dell and Apple products will be available through punch-out in Buyways through the awarded VARs, and may also be available for direct purchases. The campus teams are currently reviewing those alignments and there will be a buying guide to support those decisions/processes.

There are “small v” VARs (HQ Computers, for example); would these purchases be expected to be routed through one of the three VARs?

Yes. Those products will be available through punch-out in BuyWays through the selected VAR. The campus teams are currently reviewing those alignments and there will be a buying guide to support those decisions/processes.

Are specialized software purchases, such as InPlace student placement software, Modo Labs mobile apps, or an online student orientation platform outside the scope of this initiative?

No. If the products are available through the VAR, then there will be an option for purchase without any sourcing event required.

Are Audio/Video goods and services included in the scope of this initiative?

Yes.

Are telecommunications voice, data, mobile, conferencing contracting excluded from this initiative? What about telecom-related equipment, software and maintenance?

If the products are available through the VAR, then that will be an option for purchase without any sourcing event required.

Can I purchase software from the VAR without worrying about signing paperwork from the manufacturer? If so, are we bound by the manufacturer’s license agreement?

No. The word “signing” is misleading in the context. A common misunderstanding is that if you purchase software through a VAR, the purchaser somehow avoids software manufacturers licensing requirements. The UPST is working on a variety of strategies to expedite the process of completing software agreements, including a standard software addendum. Once a manufacturer agrees to execute that addendum, additional purchases through that vendor would be expedited. That said, there will be cases where the vendor will insist on the execution of their terms and those terms may require legal review.

Is this initiative meant to drive standardization across campuses?

The immediate goal is to standardize process and leverage economies of scale. Certainly, through consolidation and enhanced reporting, product standardization opportunities will be recognized.

FAQs

COMPLIANCE POLICY AND QUALITY CONTROL

How is compliance to be policed and enforced?

The UPST will be monitoring purchases for compliance and will be sharing reports with the IT leadership regarding non-contracted VAR purchases. In addition, as this was a team effort, the representatives from each campus are encouraged to assist in working toward compliance. Non-compliance “hurts” everyone as the University will not be leveraging its economies of scale.

Will the new initiative result in changes to Buyways approval workflow?

At this point in time there are no imminent changes to workflow or approval.

Will there be a process for requesting an exemption from compliance, as appropriate?

Yes, the process is TBD, but certainly is there is a valid business reason for an exception that will be available.

If I have a bad experience with one of the VARs, is there a feedback mechanism? What actions should I take?

There will be an assigned team for each of the VAR's that will be shared with each campus. There will also be an assigned UPST team to work with/update when service has been unsatisfactory. There will be quarterly meeting to review VAR service and performance at a system level. Each campus will also have the opportunity to meet with the VAR and discuss issues.

LARGE PROJECTS/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Will bidding processes for large projects (Network/Data Center upgrades) still be allowed?

Yes, but not required. UPST recommends that purchases, projects that exceed \$700,000, should be discussed directly with the UPST, to discuss strategy and the potential for cross campus collaboration. Bidding for large projects may drive more aggressive pricing.

If I elect to complete a competitive bid process for a product or service, and the winning bid is more than what the pre-approved VAR provides, do I have to use the pre-approved VAR instead?

The contracted (pre-approved) VAR should be invited to bid on the project. If they are low bidder/provide best value they should be awarded the business.

Is the process any different if I need to do a competitive bid?

You would submit a sourcing request to the UPST.

If I have a relationship with a vendor who has a lower hourly pro services rate than the awarded vendors, can I do business with them without a contract?

No, a contract would be required.

FAQs

What will be the 'rules of engagement' with these VARs?

a. What are the dollar amount thresholds?

b. Will we need signed contract for service agreements?

Direct engagement by the Campus will be allowed and encouraged, however, where there is "obvious" benefit by including UPST for a more formal "sourcing event" or negotiation then resources should be requested. Very large dollar procurements will most likely create better pricing structures through a strategic sourcing event. An executed SOW will be required for service engagements. The governing contract will already be executed and in place.

Can I engage any of the awarded VARs for professional services teams without an additional competitive process?

Yes, however there may be advantages to "quoting" each of them.

EXISTING CONTRACTS

What happens to existing competitive contracts?

They will still be available. However, the goal is to convert as much business as possible to the contracted VARs. When current contracts are expiring or need to be renewed the awarded VARs should be provided an opportunity to quote on the renewal.

Will we still be allowed to use OSD contracts for purchases where we already have contracts in place?

Yes, however when the contracts renew we should provide contracted VAR's an opportunity to bid/quote on the renewal

OTHER

Timing/Orientation/Training/etc.

The goal is to complete the contracts by mid-May and begin the implementation process. Implementation will include VAR training/orientation, key contacts etc. UPST will develop contract user guide.

Who can I contact at my campus for more information?

Each campus will provide contact(s) within their respective IT teams.

Will there be a main point of contact centrally for campus inquiries regarding guidance on IT related purchases?

Yes, UPST will fill that role and will provide contact information as part of implementation.

CONTACT

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VAR Glossary

VAR - Value added reseller

SLA - Service level agreement

SKU - The university recognized item number

Campus Photos

Amherst - pages 1 & 2

Boston - pages 4 & 10

UMass Chan - pages 9 & 11

Dartmouth - pages 3, 5 & 8

Lowell - pages 6 & 7