**Office Supply Mandatory Contracts**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Updated December 7, 2023**

**Why are we doing this?**

The university is expected to seek out methods to save funds and/or increase efficiencies. There are substantial discounts and additional incentives being offered through the use of these contracts is an important cost saving and efficiency vehicle for the university. The directed volume purchases allow for deeper discounts. In addition, several other Virginia universities are also using these same contracts, so combined volume increases incentives the university receives back each year. The university has been using The Supply Room Companies (TSRC) through a mandatory contract arrangement since 2015, with that contract expiring these two new contract vehicles were established, providing an additional option for campus departments.

The strategic decision to consolidate our purchases to specific suppliers also allows for increased efficiencies across campus and allows for significant improvement in data analysis and reporting. It is understood that every single item may not be less expensive than a competitor, but the deeper discounts provided on the most commonly used items results in overall savings for the university.

**What is the benefit to me and my department?**

You will receive substantial savings on university wide commonly purchased office supplies. There is no more guess work for where you purchase office supplies. You no longer need to keep multiple office supply catalogs on hand. TSRC is a certified Small, Woman-Owned business and RGH Products is a small, minority-owned business so purchases help the university to meet state required SWaM goals. Resource time required for processing reimbursement requests for office supply items should decrease substantially. There are no delivery fees. TSRC and RGH will deliver directly to the department, not just to a receiving dock (except for the warehouse) and can take heavier items directly to the location of your choice. Both TRSC and RGH offer price match with other “like” office supply companies (Office Max, Guy Brown, B-K Office, etc.) so you should never pay more for a *comparable* item. RGH Productss a minority business partner of Staples, so this firm has the same wide range of products Staples.

**When did this start?**

Originally the Mandatory contract for Office Supplies started in March 1, 2015 with only TSRC. TSRC and RGH became valid options in the fall of 2023.

**Is it possible this will go away?**

Suppliers could change as we establish new contracts in the future, but it is currently expected that we will continue to require Office Supply related items to be purchased from specific contracted sources for savings, incentives and efficiencies to campus.

**What do I tell other office supply providers when the contact me?**

Inform any interested supplier that the university has identified TSRC and RGH Products as Mandatory Sources for Office Supply items and you are required to utilize them for your purchase. You may also refer them to Procurement Services for additional information. We will be happy to handle all their questions, concerns, or frustrations.

**What types of items are office supplies?**

Generally, office supplies are [consumables](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumables) and equipment regularly used in [offices](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office) by [businesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business) and other organizations, by individuals engaged in written communications, recordkeeping or bookkeeping, janitorial and cleaning, and for storage of supplies or data. The range of items classified as office supplies varies, and typically includes small, expendable, daily use items, consumable products, small machines, computer peripherals, as well as office desk/chair accessories and general art/teaching supplies.

A brief list of common items considered to be office supplies includes, but is not completely limited to: Glue sticks, multi-purpose spray adhesives, rulers, batteries, binders, dry erase boards and supplies, office tacks, calculators, calendars, clips/paper fasteners, writing instruments, surge protectors, correction tape, desk accessories, desk sorters/trays, easels/pads, blank/inter-office envelopes, files/folders, filing accessories, blank labels, office scissors, common chalk, sheet protectors, staplers, scissors, tape, hole punchers, message books, post-it notes, chair pads, ergonomic foot rests, and more.

The university has goals related to using our contracts efficiently, using eVA self-registered firms and utilizing SWaM businesses. TSRC and RGH meet all of these requirements. Given their broad range of offerings, TSRC and RGH are appropriate choices for a broad range of items.

**Will every item through TSRC and RGH be deeply discounted?**

No, a data analysis of previous office supply purchases was completed for the collective group of institutions utilizing the contract. That analysis identified items that were either heavily purchased in quantity or were high dollar purchases. Those items are the items being offered at the deepest discounts and will be reflected with a “C” within the TSRC catalog and “On Contract” in RGH. Other items will receive a minimum discount based on the individual contract and are available for price match (comparable items with a like office supply provider). The Virginia Higher Education Procurement Consortium Data Analyst continues to analyze data and ensure we are receiving the best discounts on items we purchase most often.

You may only receive the standard contract discount on an item we buy once or twice a year, but will receive much deeper discounts on those items that we (as a collective group) purchase more often. The biggest savings will come from finding and purchasing the items marked as being on contract in the catalog. Making some adjustments to the brand may be needed to receive the biggest savings.

**If I find an item cheaper somewhere else can I buy it there?**

No, an item less expensive elsewhere is not immediately a reason to use someone other than TSRC or RGH. The university made the decision to have the TSRC and RGH contracts be a mandatory source knowing that not every single item would be received at the deepest of discounts. The contracts are structured to provide the deepest discounts on items the universities buy in largest quantities, and you can now comparison shop between these two providers for the best rate. There is an expectation to utilize TSRC or RGH for all items. This ensures that as data analysis is done for the TSRC and RGH purchases, modifications can be made to the items receiving the deepest discounts based on new purchasing needs/patterns. Additionally, we have goals around contract usage and SWaM supplier usage; TSRC and RGH Enterprises meet those items. You may be able to purchase an item from another source for minimal amount of savings, but if it takes away from other university goals or we have to pay more in fees for a non-registered vendor, it hurts the university overall. That said, if you are trying to purchase an item and there is a *significant* difference in price, you may contact Procurement Services to seek approval for purchasing from another source. In addition, if the better priced item is from another comparable office supply company, TSRC and/or RGH may be able to price match. TSRC and RGH customer service reps may also be able to find comparable items for you at more reasonable prices. With having two suppliers to purchase from, your need to go off-contract should be greatly reduced.

**What if a member of my department purchases office supplies and then wants a reimbursement?**

Unless there is an extraordinary circumstance (ie. the individual is out of the state/country and needs and item for their work) they should be bringing all requests for office supplies to the individual that handles purchasing for the department. That person should then order the supplies through TSRC or RGH. We do not plan to reimburse individuals that make unauthorized purchases through other sources. Requests for waivers should always be done in advance of the purchase.

**What if a member of my department wants a specific item and TSRC or RGH can’t get the exact thing?**

If TSRC or RGH offers a *comparable* product we must purchase that product through TSRC or RGH. JMU faculty/staff need to be flexible in their requirements for office supplies. TSRC and RGH will work to get the same item or an item that is comparable. Items that have been identified with a “C” or “on contract” will have the best pricing. Other items will be offered at a standard contract discount. The items with the deepest discounts will be adjusted from year to year to adapt to changes in spending habits, based on data analysis performed. Purchasing all items through TSRC or RGH allow us to appropriately monitor and make decisions on which items we need to ensure the deepest discounts.

**What if my faculty or member of my department is out of state/country on JMU business and needs an office supply related item while on the trip?**

This is a special circumstance and they are able to purchase items while out of town as either point of sale (if they have their own SPCC) or for reimbursement. You must document your file with comprehensive notes on the situation, a copy of the receipt (which should have a location on it). It’s still always best to try to purchase items needed in advance through TSRC or RGH and take them along.

**What are valid exceptions and how to I document them?**

TSRC or RGH representatives have confirmed they do not offer the item or a comparable; document with written response from TSRC or RGH.

Department member is out of state/country and needs something; document with information that shows the location and any additional reasoning why the purchase could not have occurred here through TSRC or RGH.

Other unique circumstances require a request to Procurement Services and a written approval of waiver; this should be done in *advance* of the purchase.

**TSRC and RGH sell furniture, can I now buy furniture through TSRC and RGH?**

Maybe, Virginia Correctional Enterprise (VCE) is the first source for all furniture related items. These contracts, while Mandatory, do not override the need to place furniture purchases through VCE. However, there are some quick ship furniture items approved to be purchased through TSRC and we may be able to provide waivers for additional furniture items from TSRC and RGH. We are planning to work with RGH on a similar Quick Ship Program, but it is not in place yet. For questions about Furniture and TSRC or RGH, please reach out to Annie Korn kornah@jmu.edu or Terri Wuenschel wuenscth@jmu.edu .

**What if I use items like batteries or pens in a lab and code them as lab supplies do I still need to purchase them through TSRC?**

Yes, regardless of how you choose to code the item for accounting purposes or where you will actually utilize the product it is still considered an “office supply” and must be purchased through this contract.

**Is every type of battery considered an office supply?**

No, when we refer to batteries as an office supply we are referring to the normal sized batteries of A, AA, AAA, 9 Volt, C and D. Specialty button batteries, power equipment batteries, and computer batteries are not considered office supplies and can be purchased through other contract or SWaM suppliers.

**Is computer peripheral equipment considered office supplies?**

No, printers, computer cords, computer batteries, monitors, and the like are not considered office supplies. You can order these items through TSRC or RGH as available, but you can also order them from other eVA registered, SWaM and/or contract vendors (Daly Computers, CDWG, Dell). You should always choose to order from a contracted or SWaM supplier first over non-contracted suppliers. TSRC or RGH are always a better choice than a non-contracted or non-SWaM supplier.

**Do I have to purchase break room supplies through TSRC or RGH?**

No, paper towels, facial tissues, coffee and other break room supplies are not considered office supplies. You can order these items through TSRC or RGH as available, but you can also order them from other eVA registered, SWaM and/or contract vendors as well as point of sale locally. ***Please Note: these items are not typically allowed to be purchased with state funds.*** You must ensure you are following the requirements of the Financial Procedures Manual. Please confirm that any break room supply purchase is acceptable through advance communication with Accounts Payable. TSRC and RGH do have these items and as contracted and SWaM suppliers, they are always a better choice and strongly encouraged over a non-contracted or non-SWaM supplier.

**TSRC and RGH sells promotional supplies am I required to purchase promotional supplies through them?**

No, the university already has multiple *mandatory* promotional supply contracts. Promotional supplies are not considered “office supplies” and therefore are not be mandated to be purchased from TSRC or RGH. However, promotional supplies must be purchased through the mandatory promotional supply vendors. Visit our [site](https://www.jmu.edu/procurement/departmental-guide/06.shtml#Set-1-A-promotional) to learn more about those mandatory contracts. To reproduce the JMU logo/trademarks, it is essential to utilize firms with CLC licensing. All the mandatory promotional supply vendors maintain this licensing.

**I usually buy copy paper through the copy center/Madison Print Services, can I still do that?**

Yes, please continue or start to buy your copy paper through Madison Print Services. Madison Print Services orders bulk paper through TSRC. Madison Print Services will handle all the ordering for you. In addition, when you order through Madison Print Services you don’t have to worry about entering the order in eVA or reconciling your SPCC transaction, because they will just bill your department directly. Anytime you can purchase through Madison Print Services you are strongly encouraged to do so. They offer a variety of printing services, now including printed envelopes, letterhead, and business cards.

If you don’t purchase your paper through Madison Print Services, you are required to utilize TSRC or RGH for your paper purchases.

**I sometimes buy items through the bookstore on my Duke card, can I still do that?**

Yes, you can continue to buy items through the Bookstore. If the item is an unprinted office supply item we would encourage you to purchase that item through TSRC or RGH; however, any printed/specialty item is fine A(as long as it follows other Financial Procedures) and they, along with Madison Print Services and the JMU Warehouse are other areas we would encourage you to use for those “need it right now” situations.

**I get items like batteries through the JMU Warehouse/Storeroom, can I still do that?**

Yes, the JMU Warehouse/Storeroom will be purchasing all of their stocked office supply items through TSRC or RGH.

**I know you don’t want office supplies being purchased point of sale (as we must go through TSRC or RGH), but can I buy non-office supply related items point of sale?**

Yes, if the item is not an office supply item you can still do point of sale purchases as usual. Examples: 1) I purchase for a grant that needs toys for young children. Yes, you can purchase point of sale.

2) I purchase specialty art supplies from places like Hobby Lobby or Michaels. Yes, you can purchase point of sale.

3) I purchase various food items for feeding live animals, performing experiments, or for dietary coursework. Yes, you can purchase point of sale.

**What if TSRC or RGH really don’t have what I need and they don’t have any comparable item?**

If it is an office supply item, you should contact TSRC and RGH and ask them if they can provide a closely comparable item. If they respond that they cannot provide the item or a comparable, please document your file and then you may purchase from another appropriate source. It is always best to use another contracted or SWaM certified supplier. You must have documentation to show the mandatory sources cannot provide comparable items. Contact askeva@jmu.edu for assistance as needed.

**What if I don’t see the item I’m looking for in the TSRC or RGH punch out catalog, can I buy it somewhere else?**

Not finding an item in the punchout catalog does not mean you have approval to purchase elsewhere. Every item TSRC and RGH have available is not necessarily in the eVA punchout. Contact our TSRC or RGH customer service reps to ask if they can quote the item or find a comparable item. If neither TSRC or RGH has the item or a comparable, that would be a justifiable reason to purchase elsewhere (must be documented). Normal procurement rules dictate that you would attempt to use another contracted and self-registered eVA supplier, or a SWaM certified firm before using non-contract or non-SWaM suppliers. If you’re unsure contact askeva@jmu.edu for approval and assistance with sourcing.

**What if it is an item that TSRC or RGH carries, but I wouldn’t normally code it 131200/131300?**

Regardless of how you code it, you still have to purchase through TSRC or RGH if it is normally considered an office supply (see list above for examples). For computer peripherals, promotional supplies, specialty batteries, we discuss exceptions elsewhere in this document. If you are unsure, it’s always better to email askeva@jmu.edu first for guidance.

**Where should I buy Dell toner cartridges?**

Dell brand toner cartridges can continue to be purchased through Dell. Other items you can find within the Dell punch-out can also continue to be purchased directly through Dell. Other toners and computer peripherals are available through TSRC and RGH, and can also be purchased through them.

**Where should I buy other printer toner cartridges?**

Other toner cartridges should be purchased through TSRC or RGH, if they can supply the type compatible to the printer (HP, etc.). If TSRC or RGH does not carry it then you should consider other eVA registered and SWaM or contracted vendors for your purchase. Daly Computers, CDWG, and others – see the Sourcing Guide on our website.

**If I get toner through the vendor I am leasing equipment from, do I now have to buy from TSRC or RGH?**

No, if you have a leased printer/copier and toner and other supplies are included within your lease for “free” you should continue to get the toner through that source.

**Are there delivery fees?**

No, TSRC nor RGH charges a delivery fee.

**Is there an order minimum?**

TSRC has no mandatory order minimum, but the prefer orders to have a minimum of $25.00. RGH has a mandatory minimum of $25.00, but actually prefers orders to have a minimum of $50.00. Accumulating office supply purchases into larger orders is more efficient and has an environmental sustainability factor in fewer boxes, and more efficient use of delivery vehicles.

**When can I expect delivery?**

TSRC and RGH make every attempt to stock common items in their warehouse. If you have your order placed by 3 p.m. you should receive delivery the next business day. Special order items will have a longer delivery period, depending on when the manufacturer can get the items to TSRC or RGH. Post COVID, many items are still on backorder or in short supply; these issues may delay delivery.

**How should I pay for items ordered?**

The university requires orders under $10,000 to suppliers that accept our SPCC to be paid with the departments SPCC. Both TSRC and RGH Enterprises accept the JMU SPCC. RGH requires the SPCC to be with the order when submitted; they will not provide staffing to fix orders after the fact. If the SPCC is charged RGH will send the end user an electronic “receipt” for the amount charged on the SPCC. TSRC processes orders as they are received and will either invoice or charge the SPCC as the order is marked; end users that forget to attached their SPCC to the TSRC order would need to contact TSRC directly and get them to charge the card. NOTE: In all cases it is extremely important to remember to select your SPCC in eVA ***BEFORE*** you submit the order.

**What if I or members of my department don’t comply?**

Procurement Services in coordination with AP & Cash & Investments will be reviewing purchases and identifying potential non-compliance. Initially, Procurement Services will work with the individual on record for making the purchase (eVA end user, SPCC card holder, etc.) in attempt to understand if there were extraordinary circumstances that validate the purchase or to make sure the individual understands the non-compliance. Repeat offenders for non-compliance will then be escalated within the department. Ultimately, campus departments and individuals in those departments only have authority to make small dollar purchases because Procurement Services has authorized that delegation. Should a department have any continued non-compliance with purchasing rules, that department risks losing their delegation entirely and would not be able to make any purchase on their own until such time as Procurement would chose to return the delegation. It is very important for any department that enjoys the flexibility of being able to process their own small dollar purchases follow all university Procurement policies, including the use of Mandatory Sources.

**What if I get a special quote for a volume order or something that is not in the punchout catalog?**

Non-catalog orders can be entered to these firms using a quote. RGH has very specific instructions for a quote purchase for your order to be processed. Please contact the Buyer in Procurement Services that works with Office Supplies or askeva@jmu.edu for assistance. RGH customer service can also assist.

**Where do I find the customer service contact information for each firm?**

Customer Service contact names are listed in the [Campus Sourcing Guide](https://www.jmu.edu/procurement/newsletters/jmu_user_sourcing_guide_-_v9-01.pdf) .