

Title/Subject: **SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING GUIDELINES**

Applies to:  faculty  staff  students  student employees  visitors  contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: October 16, 2020

Contact for More Information: Contracting & Purchasing Services  
Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Board Policy  Administrative Policy  Procedure  Guideline

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### **BACKGROUND:**

These guidelines are established to aid decision makers in purchasing environmentally preferable products and services.

### **PURPOSE:**

Central Michigan University desires to comply with the highest standards of sustainability outlined by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). Therefore, this document serves as a guideline to aide decision making to achieve the best sustainable return on investment.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Sustainable Purchasing:** the method wherein environmental and social considerations are taken in addition to the price, availability and performance criteria used to make purchasing decisions. Sustainable [Green] Purchasing minimizes negative environmental and social effects through the use of environmentally friendly products. It attempts to identify and reduce environmental impact and to maximize resource efficiency.

**Life Cycle Assessment:** a cradle-to-grave or cradle-to-cradle analysis technique to assess environmental impacts associated with all stages of a product's life, which is from raw material extraction through materials processing, manufacture, distribution use, and disposal.

**Sustainable Return on Investment:** an alternative methodology for assessing procurements that incorporates economic, environmental, cultural, and social impact by using a life cycle assessment in order to achieve cost neutral purchases.

### **GUIDELINES:**

Central Michigan University will make life cycle purchasing decisions, whenever possible, to reduce the University footprint on the environment. This includes, but is not limited to, purchasing products which will minimize air, water, and grounds pollution, energy and materials consumption, environmental destruction, single use products, and unsustainable packaging. This shall be achieved through balancing environmental, cultural, social, and economic sustainability when making purchasing decisions, and reusing and repurposing whenever possible.

Therefore, decision makers should make every effort to achieve the best sustainable return on investment. Consider short-term and long-term costs as well as quality and environmental impact when comparing product alternatives. Evaluate the total costs

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expected during the time a product is owned. All parties may collaborate to inform others of sustainable purchasing opportunities, and work to balance cultural, economic, social, and environmental sustainability when making a purchase.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING:**

The following recommendations were developed in accordance with recommendations from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), along with CMU Facilities, the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the 2018 Sustainability is Central Report.

1. It is the responsibility of all University Departments to consider sustainability-based decisions when purchasing, and the responsibility of the Purchasing Department and Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, to inform departments of their responsibilities in utilizing these guidelines.
2. Give consideration to environmentally sustainable products, where quality, function and cost are equal or superior. If a Life Cycle Assessment is necessary to determine whether or not a sustainable alternative should be purchased, please reference the Sustainable Facilities Guide in the Resources section of this document.
3. Communicate to vendors that Central Michigan University will give consideration to those vendors whose products and services meet the University's sustainability guidelines.
4. Prior to purchase, departments should review the Green Product Checklist to determine if the purchase is green.
5. Give first consideration to Michigan-based firms and locally produced and manufactured foods and products.
6. Give first consideration to contractors and work teams whose membership reflects the diverse population of the State of Michigan.

### **Sustainable Purchasing Toolkit:**

#### **“GREEN” CERTIFICATION:**

Although there are several “green seals” for products, the following EPA list contains common product certification labels which indicate that a product is environmentally green.

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-01/documents/pdf\\_version\\_of\\_recs\\_1.30.20.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-01/documents/pdf_version_of_recs_1.30.20.pdf)

#### **GREEN PRODUCT CHECKLIST:**

- Can the product be found at CMU, or reused from other internal sources as an alternative to purchasing?
- Does the product have “green” or environmentally friendly certification?
- Is the product disposable through methods other than trash (i.e.; recycle, compost, or biodegradable)?
- Can the product be later sold through CMU surplus?
- Can the same product be purchased in more sustainable packaging?
- Is the product necessary?
- Will the product last long and cost a minimal price for its intended purpose?
- Can the product benefit more than one Department?

#### **RESOURCES:**

Sustainable Facilities Tool Quick Life Cycle Analysis Guide: <https://sftool.gov/plan/401/conducting-lca>

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EPA Safe Cleaning Products Search: <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products>

AASHE Sustainable Purchasing Policy: <https://www.aashe.org/sustainability-policy/>

Sustainability is Central Report:

[https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/class/GLISS/Documents/Sustainability\\_is\\_Central\\_2018.pdf](https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/class/GLISS/Documents/Sustainability_is_Central_2018.pdf)

EPA Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines: <http://www.epa.gov/cpg/>

*Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.*