Preferred Supplier FAQ

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Q) Why do we need a Preferred Supplier list?

A) The list offers better value and service to the University, brings Queen’s University in line with many other Higher Education Institutions across Ontario, and is compliant with the provincially legislated Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive 2011.

Since the release of the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive, Higher Education Institutions are now held to the same standard as Provincial Government Departments when spending public money on purchasing products and services with a focus on obtaining the best value via an open, competitive and transparent process.

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Q) What are the benefits of this list?

A) The Preferred Supplier list provides Queen’s University Staff and Faculty with a choice of Suppliers that offer the best value and service for a variety of commodities. Each Supplier has qualified through a fair, open and transparent process based on the merit of their proposal (termed a Request for Supplier Qualification or RFSQ).

In addition, Queen’s has been able to leverage campus-wide spend to offer the best deals to the entire Campus Community rather than individual departments or Faculties. The resulting agreements are being centrally managed and if any Suppliers fail to meet their promised levels of product delivery and service they will be removed from the list.

The requirements and recommendations of the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive 2011 have been followed to ensure the Preferred Supplier List follows Procurement Best Practices.

Further commodities will be added to the list based on spend data and feedback from the Queen’s Community.

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Q) Who do I contact to find our more information or leave feedback regarding the list?

First point of contact - Eoin MacDonald, Director Strategic Procurement Services – eoin.macdonald@queensu.ca (x32175)

Specific questions related to Chemicals & Solvents, Furniture, Lab Supplies should be directed to - Andy Scotter, Sourcing Specialist, Strategic Procurement Services – andy.scotter@queensu.ca (x32209)
Specific questions related to *Printed Materials & Print Related Services* should be directed to – Steve Young, Print Manager – sy1@queensu.ca (x32912)

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**Q) Who was involved in choosing the Preferred Suppliers?**

Teams from across campus were created to address specific commodities. See below for specific on each team. A Sourcing Specialist/Manager from Strategic Procurement Services oversaw the public tendering process to ensure it complied with the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive 2011.

*Chemicals & Solvents:* The Office of VP, Research, Department of Chemistry, Department of Chemical Engineering and the Faculty of Health Sciences

*Furniture:* Campus Planning, Library Services, the School of Computing and the Faculty of Health Sciences

*Laboratory Supplies:* The Office of VP, Research, Department of Chemistry, Department of Chemical Engineering and the Faculty of Health Sciences

*Printed Materials and Print-Related Services:* Athletics & Recreation, Marketing & Communications, Queen’s School of Business and the Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science

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**Q) What is a Request for Supplier Qualifications (RFSQ)?**

A RFSQ is a publicly tendered call for Suppliers to Qualify as “Vendors of Record” (or more commonly “Preferred Supplier”) for a particular product/service.

Each Proponent provides a response to the RFSQ and these are evaluated by a team of subject matter experts based on the same rated criteria (based on performance and pricing metrics). The highest scoring proponents (that therefore have offered the best combination of performance and price) then enter into a written agreement with Queen’s for a specified term.

Each RFSQ has a threshold dollar value, any orders above that value must be publicly tendered in a separate request for quotes or proposals. In this case, each Preferred Supplier will be invited to provide a quote/proposal and other non-Preferred Suppliers can also bid.
Q) A vendor I use regularly is not on the list, can I still purchase items from them?

Queen’s made every attempt to qualify incumbent suppliers for each category. In some cases the Suppliers chose not to respond to the public tender. We recommend that you contact the Preferred Suppliers to see if they can supply you what you need. If none of the Suppliers can provide you with a suitable replacement for a similar price then a purchase from a non-Preferred Supplier is allowable.

We recognize that, for Research in particular, there are some very specialized products that can only be supplied by certain Vendors for a variety of reasons and users are still permitted to do so.

The purchase of an in-scope commodity from a Supplier other than one on the Preferred Supplier list will only be permitted with the consent of your Faculty/Administrative Unit and Strategic Procurement Services.

If a key Vendor that is used regularly for supplying any of the commodities on the list is absent please contact Strategic Procurement Services. There are vacant places on the list for Chemicals & Solvents and Laboratory Supplies.

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Q) I regularly use a product from a Vendor that is not on the list, can I still purchase items from this non-Preferred Supplier?

First check that the product you are using is covered under the relevant commodity. Each Preferred Supplier commodity specific webpage contains an out-of-scope list. If the product is in-scope then we recommend that you contact the Preferred Suppliers to see if they can supply you with the product of choice. If none of the Suppliers can provide you with a suitable replacement for a similar price then a purchase from a non-Preferred Supplier is allowable.

We recognize that, for Research in particular, there are some very specialized products that can only be supplied by certain Vendors for a variety of reasons and users are still permitted to do so.

If an in-scope product that you regularly purchase cannot be supplied by any of the Preferred Suppliers contact Strategic Procurement Services to request setting up an agreement with the Vendor to supply this product.

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Q) Which products are out-of-scope for each commodity?

Chemicals & Solvents: Bottled gases, dry ice and liquid cryogens, radioisotopes

Furniture (non-Office): Office Systems Furniture (until Teknion agreement expires in February 2012)

Laboratory Supplies: Dry ice, bottled gases, cleaning products, radioisotopes, antibodies, biological enzymes, plasmid kits (and other molecular biology kits), oligonucleotide synthesis, RNA/DNA sequencing, animal care supplies, chemicals and solvents

Printed Materials and Print-Related Services: Direct Mailing, Printing Mugs and T-Shirts.

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Q) What advantages are there by using one of the Preferred Suppliers for Chemicals & Solvents or Laboratory Supplies?

The Preferred Supplier list provides competitive pricing and a variety of options to save on shipping and surcharges. Many vendors have waived their fuel surcharge fees, dangerous goods fees and removed their thresholds for free shipping. This can result in savings of around $50 per order (depending on the size of the order and the Supplier used) in addition to any savings on the products themselves.

Options are also in place for rush and next day shipping with a majority of items stocked in Ontario. Several Suppliers can also track the products ordered by Queen’s and they will hold popular items in a Queen’s specific inventory ready for fast shipping upon placement of an order.

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Q) Do I have to buy furniture from one of the Preferred Furniture Dealers?

Queen’s University has selected five Furniture Dealers that offer a large array of products at various price points. All of the products that they will supply meet quality, safety, ergonomic and environmental standards set by Campus Planning. The products they supply will often appear to be expensive compared to those available on the high street but the quality and durability of these products means they offer much better life time value.

We recognize that, for Research in particular, there are some very specialized products that can only be supplied by certain Vendors for a variety of reasons and users are still permitted to do so.
The purchase of furniture from a Dealer or Manufacturer other than one on the Preferred Supplier list will only be permitted with the consent of your Faculty/Administrative Unit, Strategic Procurement Services and Campus Planning.

Q) I purchase products/services that are not covered by these Preferred Suppliers, can Queen’s create a new category to provide better deals on these products/services through the RFSQ process?

Strategic Procurement Services is planning on adding new products/services to the Preferred Supplier list on a continual basis. Contact the team to suggest a product/service that you feel Queen’s could get better deals on than those currently available.

Q) I'm not happy with the service/product I have received from a Preferred Supplier, what do I do?

Contact Strategic Procurement Services to leave feedback regarding your experience. Preferred Suppliers have signed an agreement that states they must provide the service and products that they have included in their RFSQ responses and that they will be subject to regular performance and pricing reviews.

If a particular Supplier continually fails to meet these standards they will be disqualified from the Preferred Supplier list and can only reapply when the RFSQ is retendered (in 5 years time).

If a place on the list becomes vacant then the highest scoring vendor that did not qualify will be contacted to become a Preferred Supplier. If there were no non-qualifying Suppliers Queen’s can extend an invitation to a new Supplier to join the list provide they complete the RFSQ proposal. Queen’s can also modify the number of Preferred Suppliers at any time.

Q) How long are the Preferred Supplier Agreements valid for?

Each Supplier has signed on for 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years subject to regular performance and pricing reviews.
Q) How was the number of Preferred Suppliers determined?
Each team looked at spend data and market data to determine a suitable number of Preferred Suppliers for each commodity. The target was to cover at least 90% of spend and provide a choice of qualified vendors with local and/or Canadian representation where available.

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Q) How much money does Queen’s spend on these four commodities?
The total spend on these commodities for Fiscal 2011 (April 1st, 2010 to March 31st, 2011) was approximately $4.2 million.

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Q) Is Queen’s trying to control who I spend my budget with?
Queen’s is beginning the process of central contract and procurement management as directed by the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive introduced in April 2011. Centrally managed contracts offer the opportunity to leverage campus-wide spend to gain better deals for everyone on campus compared to decentralized contracts negotiated by individual departments.

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Q) Why do I have to change who I am ordering from?
In many cases the Queen’s Community will not have to make any changes. The Suppliers that were already being used for the majority of purchases for each commodity are now Preferred Suppliers. All the major incumbent Suppliers were invited to take part in the publically tendered RFSQ process that led to the Preferred Supplier list being created and several of these chose to respond.

There are also new Suppliers entering the marketplace that are keen to establish a good business relationship with Queen’s so they are offering very competitive pricing and levels of service to attract new business.

The Preferred Supplier list offers choice and options for each commodity while providing the best deal available to users campus wide.

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