Technology Purchases

Summary/Purpose

The information technology landscape on a typical university campus is complex, and most people are unaware of the integration points between information systems, the impact on the campus network, information security issues, existing purchasing agreements, etc. This policy defines the review and approval process for University of Mississippi technology procurements to ensure compliance with Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) policies and state purchasing laws, as well as to promote the resourceful, informed utilization of technology within the University.

Background

Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) has established procedures for the acquisition of information technology equipment, software, and services for Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) in Policy 015-020, Procurement Limit Policies: IHLs'. Responsibility for certain types of purchases and lifecycle limits is delegated to the campus Chief Information Officer (CIO). Additionally, as part of the 2009-2010 IHL “Efficiencies and Effectiveness” initiative, guidelines were established to help ensure informed decisions about technology purchases, reduce redundant technical services, and to leverage technology to help bring about campus-wide efficiencies and improved business processes. Specifically, the IHL Board approved a recommendation that each institution adopt a reasonable process that ensures the involvement of central Information Technology (IT) in all aspects of information technology planning, acquisition, and deployment to reduce the number of uninformed decisions that result in waste, inefficiencies, and risk. The process for the University of Mississippi is described next.

Process for Technology Purchases

Technology purchases that meet any of the following conditions require approval by the campus CIO or her delegate.

- Technology projects with total lifecycle costs greater than $5000
- Campus-wide software licenses
- Contracts for campus-wide cloud services, e.g., IT services hosted off campus
- Technology projects involving the storing or transferring of sensitive data

Examples include but are not limited to: purchases of technology equipment (e.g., servers, laptops, projectors) exceeding $5,000; contracts for software hosted elsewhere that will be used by a majority of students or employees; and software applications that track student academic progress and thereby contain sensitive data.
Steps

1. When project planning begins, the project manager should send an e-mail message to itpurchase@olemiss.edu describing the project.
2. CIO or delegate will respond with purchasing information, cautions, and other information that should be considered as part of project planning.
3. When purchase requisition is entered, the user will be asked whether this is a technology purchase that meets any of the conditions above and to provide a narrative description of the project.
4. If yes, then the purchase requisition will be routed to IT for approval. If no, then the purchase requisition will be routed to Procurement Services.
5. If the purchase requisition is routed to IT for approval, then the CIO or delegate will approve or reject the purchase requisition.
6. If approved, then the user will receive an e-mail notification, and the purchase requisition will be routed to Procurement Services. If rejected, then the reason for rejection will be e-mailed to user as well as suggested revisions or alternatives to improve compliance with procurement policies. No further action on the purchase requisition will be permitted in the workflow.

Any acquisitions of computer equipment and services made with federal funds should be indicated as such in Steps 1 and 3 given that these are subject to slightly different purchasing rules. The most important step of this process is Step 1, i.e., involving IT at the start of the project. If this step is omitted then the chances for approval are reduced. Any questions should be directed to itpurchase@olemiss.edu.

http://dsitspe01.its.ms.gov/its/procman.nsf/8062143553201bd286256db0004d2051/d97f5ed17f4d26fb86256c95005f386b?OpenDocument