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Information Technology Hardware, Software, and A/V Equipment Purchasing Policy

I.   PURPOSE

This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for purchasing Information Technology (IT) hardware, software, and Audio/Visual (A/V) equipment at Goucher College. The goal is to ensure that purchases align with the institution's strategic objectives, budget, cybersecurity, and compliance requirements, while maintaining cost-effectiveness and compatibility with existing systems.

II.   SCOPE

This policy applies to all departments, faculty, staff, and any other individuals or groups within the College involved in seeking to procure IT hardware, software, and A/V equipment. It covers all types of equipment, including but not limited to desktop computers, laptops, servers, peripherals, networking equipment, software, and A/V devices.

III.   DEFINITIONS

A. Audio/Visual (A/V) Equipment:
Refers to hardware used for the recording, processing, and presentation of visual and auditory content. This includes, but is not limited to, projectors, speakers, microphones, video conferencing systems, display screens, cameras, and control systems.

B. Hardware:
The physical components of a computer or electronic system. This includes devices such as desktop computers, laptops, servers, tablets, and physical components like hard drives and motherboards.

C. Network:
A system of interconnected computers, servers, and networking devices that communicate and share resources via wired or wireless connections. This includes routers, switches, access points, and firewalls.

D. Peripherals:
External or auxiliary devices connected to a computer to expand its functionality. Common examples include monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, external drives, and webcams.

E. Server:
A specialized computer or system that provides services, resources, or data to other computers (clients) over a network. Servers may host applications, databases, file storage, or websites.

F. Software:

Programs, applications, and operating systems consisting of code and data that instruct a computer or device on how to perform specific tasks. This includes licensed and open-source software, utilities, system software, productivity tools, and enterprise applications.

G. IT Equipment:

A broad category encompassing all hardware and software used for information technology functions. This includes computers, networking devices, storage solutions, and all supporting technologies necessary for IT operations.

H. Procurement:

The process of researching, requesting, approving, purchasing, and deploying goods or services, including IT hardware, software, and A/V equipment, in accordance with institutional policies and procedures.

IV. APPROVAL PROCESS

A. Pre-Purchase Approval

All IT hardware, software, and A/V equipment purchases must be pre-approved by the IT Department to ensure compatibility with industry standards and best practices.

1. Requests for purchases should be submitted through the appropriate Purchase Request Form:

   Software Request Form

   Hardware Request Form

   a. The form must include detailed specifications, vendor information, cost, and intended use.

   b. The IT Approval Committee meets once a month to review all requests.

B. Departmental Approval

After receiving IT approval, departments must seek final approval through the College's standard purchasing procedures (see Section VII) to ensure compliance with budgetary constraints and institutional priorities.

V. BUDGETING AND FUNDING

A. Purchases must be made within the allocated department budget for IT, software, and A/V equipment.

B. Any purchase that exceeds the department's annual allocation must receive prior approval from the appropriate vice president for that division and/or the CFO, senior vice president for finance and administration.

C. Departments must use bulk purchasing opportunities whenever feasible to reduce costs.

VI.   SELECTION CRITERIA

A. **Compatibility**: All hardware and software must be compatible with existing college systems and infrastructure, as determined by the IT Department. Any additional testing required could extend the approval time.

B. **Vendor Evaluation**: Purchases should be made from reputable vendors with a proven track record of quality, support, and warranty services.

C. **Cost Effectiveness**: All purchases must represent the best value for the College, considering the total cost of ownership (including purchase price, maintenance, and support).

D. **Security and Compliance**: Software must meet all cybersecurity standards as prescribed by the IT Department, and any software that involves sensitive data must adhere to applicable legal and regulatory requirements including FERPA and HIPAA. Software that involves sensitive data may need further review by the Data Governance Committee.

VII.   PROCUREMENT METHODS

A. **Standard Procurements**: For routine purchases of hardware, software, and A/V equipment, departments should follow the standard procurement procedures outlined in Goucher's standard procurement policy.

B. **Emergency Procurements**: If an urgent need arises, exceptions can be made, but approval must still be obtained from the IT Department and the Procurement Services. Such purchases should be documented and reviewed to ensure compliance after the fact.

C. Goucher prefers to establish relationships with trusted vendors and may enter into preferred vendor agreements to streamline the procurement process.

1. Any contract or service agreement with a vendor involving IT or A/V equipment must be reviewed and approved by the College's Procurement Services and Legal departments before execution using the Contract Review Request form.

VIII.   INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

A. All IT hardware, software, and A/V equipment must be logged into the College's IT asset management system upon receipt.

B. Equipment must be tagged with an inventory number, and its location must be tracked.

C. Annual audits of IT assets will be conducted to ensure proper accountability, and that all equipment is properly maintained and functional.

IX.   SOFTWARE LICENSING AND COMPLIANCE

A. **Software Licensing**: All software must be licensed and legally obtained. The IT Department will track and manage licenses to avoid unlicensed use and ensure compliance with vendor terms and conditions.

B. **Open-Source Software**: Open-source software may be used but must be vetted by the IT Department for security, stability, and compatibility prior to installation.

C. **Software Updates**: Software should be kept up to date through regular updates and patches as per industry best practices.

X.   DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING

A. When IT hardware or A/V equipment is no longer required or is being replaced, it must be disposed of in accordance with the College's approved process utilizing the College's vendor.

B. Devices containing sensitive information must be securely wiped or destroyed to prevent unauthorized access to data.

C. Recycling of hardware will be done through certified e-waste vendors to ensure environmental responsibility.

XI.   SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

A. All IT hardware and software must comply with the College's **Computer and Data Use Policy** to ensure data security and privacy.

B. Any equipment that connects to the College's network must meet cybersecurity standards established by the IT Department, including installation of antivirus software and encryption where necessary.

XII.   POLICY VIOLATIONS

A. Any unauthorized purchase, failure to adhere to this policy, or mismanagement of IT assets will be subject to review and may result in disciplinary action.

B. Violations of this policy should be reported to the IT Department or Procurement Services for further investigation.

C. Any unauthorized purchases may not be supported by IT and IT reserves the right to remove software at its discretion and to not allow hardware on the Goucher network.

XIII.   POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed annually by the IT Department in collaboration with Procurement Services and other relevant stakeholders. Any necessary updates or amendments will be communicated to all departments.

XIV.   RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

For questions or additional information regarding the purchase of IT hardware, software, or A/V equipment, please contact:

- **IT Department**: helpdesk@goucher.edu

- Procurement Services: purchasing@goucher.edu

XV.   HISTORY

Adopted: April 2025.