# Allowable Exceptions to the University's Office Furniture Standards - Internal

**Effective Date: January 19, 2012**

**Statement**
The following provides guidance on roles and responsibilities relating to instances where a request has been submitted by a department to refrain from using the University's standard lines of office furniture and fixtures that are specified in the Steelcase "Columbia Line" Furniture contract.

**Reasons For This Document**
In partnership with a CU Facilities, CUMC Facilities and Central Purchasing a "*Columbia Line*" of Steelcase furniture has been established for office furnishings and fixtures. The standardization of office furnishings in the University leverages Columbia's collective buying power in the market; reflects good business practices; effectively manages fire code issues and encourages re-use and protects the best interests of the University. In addition, standardization ensures that furniture purchases meet fire code requirements, and are executed with consistent documentation in accordance with the University's policies.

There is recognition however, that in limited circumstances, items from the *Columbia Line* may not be suitable for use in all locations. This document describes the circumstances under which exceptions may be permitted in lieu of the Columbia Line.

**Related Policies**
The University Policies relating to this can be found in the Administrative Policy Library on Furniture and Fire Safety Requirements for Upholstered Furniture and Furnishings.

**Responsible University Office & Officer**
CU Facilities, CUMC Facilities and Central Purchasing are responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of this document. Except as described below, CUF's Capital Project Management and Operations and CUMC Facilities are responsible for managing/approving exceptions to the use of the "Columbia Line" as it relates to the provision of furniture in the projects they manage.

**Revision History**
None.

**Who Is Governed By This Document**
All faculty, staff, affiliates and students of Columbia University are governed by this document.

**Who Should Know This**
All CUF and CUMC staff who are responsible for the purchase of furniture as well as University faculty and employees who make procurement decisions including administrators in schools and departments who have primary responsibility for purchasing, and officers of instruction and research who make purchasing decisions have a particular obligation to be familiar with the requirements outlined in this document.

**Exclusions & Special Situations**
None

**Purchase Order Required**

Furniture purchased or re-used in offices may only be purchased or reconditioned through University Purchasing approved vendors who provide products meeting University standards. The University Policy on Furniture requires that all furniture must be purchased through an approved Purchase Order processed through the Purchasing Office or other Purchasing approved mechanism and preferably through a University-wide Preferred Agreement (UwPA) supplier.

**Facilities Related Furniture Purchases**

Recognizing that items from the Columbia Line may not be suitable for use in all locations, exceptions may be permitted to purchase furnishings outside these established standards. The exceptions and those responsible for their approval are as follows:

1. Replacement of existing furniture in kind, where furniture selection(s) must be made outside the standard selections to match existing furnishings. This exemption is approved by the respective Facilities Director overseeing the project.

2. Functionality, Layout or Program requirements cannot be obtained due to size, special functionality requirements, or geometry. This exemption is approved by the respective Facilities Director overseeing the project.

3. Recycled or reconditioned furniture. This exception is based on a department acquiring furniture products from internal resources only. This exemption is approved by the respective Facilities Director overseeing the project.

4. Architectural Considerations. This exemption category may include esthetic choices or client personal preferences and will require approval by the project's Executive Committee.

All purchases under these exceptions require that a memo approving the purchase and stating the reasons for the exemption is submitted with the Purchase Requisition. All purchases under these exceptions must follow the University's policies regarding vendor selection and competitive bidding.

**Non-Facilities Related Furniture Purchases**

Facilities should be involved in all office furniture purchases requiring installation if any part of the office/workplace is being moved or removed, a building service or life safety device will be blocked or affected; and if the installation may violate any building code or ADA compliance.

If you require further clarification to ensure your furniture purchase does not require Facility Management involvement, please contact Columbia University Facilities at 212-854-2222 or Columbia University Medical Center Facilities at 212-305-4357.

Once you have established that Facilities Management is not required, the same exceptions process will be required and purchases outside of the Furniture Standards selections may be permitted under one of the four categories noted in this document. A memo must be submitted with the Purchase Requisition indicating approval by a Vice President, Dean, Chair or Senior Financial Officer of the purchase the clearly states the reasons for the exemption based on the above referenced criteria.

## Contacts

| Office | Contact | Phone | E-mail |
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## Related Links

- Requisition Policy
- Fire Safety Requirements for Upholstered Furniture and Furnishings
- Procurements Using Federal Funds
- Procurement Mechanisms Policy

**Web Address for this document**
To be determined.

**Purchasing Website - http://procurement.columbia.edu/purchasing/**

**Steelcase Website -** http://esteelcase.yourensync.com/cu