



FURNITURE FAQs

Q: Why does CU have furniture standards?

A: The University of Colorado has a furniture standards program to align with the following goals and values:

- Responsible stewardship of University resources.
- Procurement of only commercial grade furnishings suitable for a higher education environment.
- Consistency and compatibility of furniture components across campus.
- Utilization of competitively procured contracts and aggressive discount pricing.
- Consideration of the total cost of ownership, not just the front-end cost.
- Inclusion of warranty and product service is included in total cost.

Q: Can I purchase furniture from a home or office retailer, such as Target, IKEA, Staples, or Amazon?

A: No. While we understand budgets can be tight, home and office retailers do not sell furniture that meets the requirements for high traffic institutional use or fabrics with the smoke/flame spread ratings required. In addition, commercial warranties are typically 5-10 years, sometimes lifetime. Lastly, our suppliers employ certified and experienced installers to assemble and install furniture on-site.

Q: Why does commercial grade furniture cost so much?

A: It is helpful to think in terms of total cost of ownership, as cheaper items from home retailers will not hold up over time the same way commercial pieces do and will have to be replaced or repaired more often, resulting in the same, or greater, cost over time and more products in our landfills.

Some general reasons for the higher cost are that commercial grade furniture is crafted with extremely durable materials and is made to withstand everyday use in a high-traffic institutional setting. It goes through rigorous testing to meet or exceed industry standard requirements, which helps to support a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment. It comes with robust warranties, generally 5-10 years (minimum) and often lifetime. If warranty issues do arise, our vendors are able to resolve issues quickly at no additional cost.

Q: Why does it take so long for commercial grade furniture to arrive after ordering?

A: Most commercial grade furniture is highly customizable, and not manufactured until the time of order which generally results in a 4–6-week lead time.

Q: Can I order furniture on the CU Marketplace?

A: Yes. CU has awarded contracts to five commercial furniture suppliers (Interior Environments, Canter, Workplace Resource, BC Interiors, and OfficeScapes) to provide punchout catalogs of approved furniture items that are available for purchase directly by approved CU requestors within Marketplace. Common items such as desks, chairs, storage, and other ancillary items are available in the catalog for purchase and budgetary planning. For items requiring more detailed specifications (modular workstations, etc.), custom quotes can be requested from one of the five contracted suppliers. See the following site for supplier contact information:

<https://www.cu.edu/psc/procurement/how-buy-furniture>

Q: Is there anything I should consider when ordering furniture on my own through CU Marketplace?



A: Since commercial grade furniture is made to order, returns are not accepted. Measure your space accurately to make sure what you order will fit and allow necessary clearances to meet ADA guidelines. Note locations of power/data in relation to the installation locations of furniture. If attaching anything to the wall be sure to first determine if any hazardous materials such as asbestos are present in your space, and if abatement is needed. A representative from one of the five suppliers under contract can be contacted to assist with measuring and placement verification.

Q: Are there any rules regarding what finishes I can use?

A: There are not any hard and fast rules, however, below are a few guidelines to consider:

- Coordinate new finishes with existing adjacent finishes.
- Mid-dark tones and patterns on fabric can help limit visibility of soiling and staining.
- Moisture-barrier coatings and other repellent finishes help seating withstand spills and wear.
- Select fabrics tested with high ratings of durability (minimum 50,000-75,000 Double Rubs)
- Review physical samples of all finishes before making a selection (online images can vary significantly from actual material appearance) – if you need assistance ordering finish samples, contact one of the five suppliers under contract.

Q: Is there a waiver or exception process for furniture purchases?

A: No. The University no longer has a waiver or exception process for furniture purchases. If a department is interested in using a supplier other than one of the five approved suppliers, the following steps will be followed:

- The department will contact the PSC to discuss their furniture request.
- The PSC will encourage the use of one of the five approved suppliers and explain the benefits of using those suppliers.
- If a department is still interested in using a non-approved supplier, the PSC will connect the department with their campus project manager for further discussions. The project managers have the expertise to help departments evaluate the products available through the approved suppliers and help determine if their needs can be met by one of the five approved suppliers.
- If a department still wishes to use another supplier, that purchase will need to go through the normal procurement solicitation process, which, depending on scope, could take up to six months to complete.

Q: Who do I contact if I need help?

A: For questions about furniture projects and furniture standards, please reach out to your respective campus project managers. Contact information for your respective campus project managers can be found in the link below:

<https://www.cu.edu/psc/procurement/how-buy-furniture/contact-campus-project-managers>