

System Acquisition and Development Policy

Version 1.2	Last Updated: 4/10/2026
Security Level: Public	Issued: 10/7/2022

Purpose

This policy establishes a framework for acquiring information technology and hardware, or for developing new software, at Fitchburg State University.

Scope

This policy applies to all hardware and software systems utilized by Fitchburg State University. It applies to any purchased or leased hardware and software, as well as licensed software, Software as a Service (SaaS), and proprietary software developed by Fitchburg State University or for Fitchburg State University by a third party.

Policy

Involvement and approval from the Technology Department are required for any software/systems acquisition or development. This is important for reasons including:

- Ensuring the hardware and software are consistent with the overall information technology strategy, standards, and best practices, and will operate effectively within the existing infrastructure
- Evaluating the hardware and software interface requirements to existing systems
- Evaluating the security capabilities, deficiencies, and/or vulnerabilities
- Ensuring there are not already existing hardware and software products owned, leased, or licensed by the university that provide equivalent functions
- Ensuring that any hidden costs of provisioning/licensing/ownership are accounted for, including integration with existing systems and support costs
- Ensuring that the university takes advantage of preferred and volume pricing from state-approved vendors by centralizing technology acquisitions.
- Ensure proper review of licensing agreements for all software to avoid conflicts with the Commonwealth of MA Terms & Conditions for Information Technology Purchases.
- Accounting for any internal costs for programming, systems administration, training, networking, and other support requirements
- Ensuring the software/system meets compliance requirements for any laws, regulations, or industry requirements
- Ensuring adequate knowledge and documentation exist for proper user support

Acquisition

- All systems (hardware or applications) shall meet applicable compliance requirements for laws, regulations, and industry requirements.
- Acquired systems shall be reviewed to ensure that proper review of the following:
 - Security capabilities, deficiencies, and vulnerabilities
 - Hardware and software requirements to interface with existing systems
 - The existing system's ability to perform the same functions
 - Licensing agreements for all software.
 - Hidden costs of ownership (licensing, ownership, provisioning)
- Prior to acquiring a new technology resource, vendor contracts will be reviewed for compliance with University policies and practices, as well as applicable state or federal regulations and standards. See the [Vendor Management Policy](#).
- Before the acquisition of major systems or applications, as defined by costs adhering to MA state financial guidelines, internal evaluations shall be conducted to account for internal costs, including administration, training, networking support, and other costs.
Note: This does not apply to group acquisitions or purchases.

Purchasing Software

The Technology department implements and maintains a software purchase process. This process facilitates the necessary evaluations and information security measures for potential software. As part of this process, the appropriate department Chair or Dean must approve the software request.

Once approved, the Technology Department will review the software terms and conditions, ensure seamless data integration, validate compliance with our security standards, and obtain competitive pricing from State/MHEC-approved vendors. In specific cases, we may capitalize on discounted agreements to optimize cost efficiency.

This process can be found on the Technology website:

<https://fitchburgstate.edu/campus-life/campus-services/technology/university-technology-purchases>

A Vendor Security review is conducted on the purchase and renewal of software contracts. This review focuses on the data collected in the software and applying appropriate protections based on the [Data Classification Policy](#).

Software Maintenance and Installation

Fitchburg State works to have updated and fully patched software in its environment. This helps to prevent potential security vulnerabilities and risks.

- Users are responsible for updating the software on their devices to comply with the [Configuration Management Policy](#). For assistance, users must reach out to the Technology Department.

For new software installations, users should follow the [Software Installation Policy](#). This process can be started by submitting a Help Desk ticket to the Technology Team.

Development/refinement or changes to Software

As a rule, Fitchburg State University does not develop its own applications; however, changes to vendor software shall be conducted using secure coding techniques.

All internally edited applications shall have source code securely maintained with appropriate revision controls.

Applications shall have source code reviewed and must be tested prior to deployment.

Database and application test environments shall be separated from the production environment.

Decommissioning and Retirement

The technology staff will work with the application owners to determine when a system has reached its end of life. This might include the end of support for a solution or a lack of use due to the solution's cost.

When decommissioning a system, staff must make sure they are following the [Information Retention and Destruction Policy](#). Key steps include:

- Identifying retention needs for data stored on the system.
- Securely disposing of media based on its data classification.
- Appropriately erasing media on systems being returned to the vendor.
- Ensuring that vendor-hosted data is properly removed.

Physical systems must be sent to the Materials Management for proper disposal. The exception is systems being returned directly to a vendor after being cleaned or sent out for support.

Staff will work with the Technology Business Manager to ensure licensing requirements are kept and decommissioned systems are not inadvertently renewed.

Roles

- Fitchburg State University Staff: Involve the Technology department in any acquisition of hardware or software.
- Technology Staff: Works with University Staff and Business Manager to identify and recommend solutions to meet university business needs.

- Technology Business Manager: Process the requests for new systems and software and maintain an inventory of software and licensing for the campus.

References

CISv8 1.1 Establish and Maintain Detailed Enterprise Asset Inventory

CISv8 2.1 Establish and Maintain a Software Inventory

PCIv4 - Requirement 5

MA 201 CMR 17:00 Section 17.04

Enforcement

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including loss of access rights and/or termination of employment under adherence to their respective collective bargaining agreement. Students found to have violated this policy may have their access removed and may have additional actions taken as directed by the Student Code of Conduct.

Revision History

Date of Change	Revision	Responsible	Summary of Change
8/15/2022	1	Steve Swartz, CIO Sherry Horeanopoulos, CISO	Creation of Policy, Start of Revision Tracking, Formatting of Document
5/10/2024	1.1	Eric Boughton, CISO	Formatting, added Software purchasing and Maintenance sections. Combined information from the Acquisition and Development policy to reduce duplicate policies
4/10/2026	1.2	Eric Boughton, CISO	ADA Compliance, Added Decommissioning section