

Top tips for lab procurement

Swansea University Sustainability team

1 Do you need to buy?

- a) Can you share within your laboratory?
Utilising communal equipment, chemicals and consumables can save on purchasing, packaging and materials. Speak to your lab colleagues and see if their grants allow it.
- b) Can't share? See if you can minimise the volume/size of chemicals or consumables to reduce redundant items requiring disposal when you finish your research.

2 Whole life costs

- a) What does your equipment need to run e.g. filters, bulbs, batteries etc.? How are these disposed of or replaced? Can you get a reusable version? Always consider materials required for efficient operation. Ask the supplier about lifecycle costs and take back schemes during the purchasing process.
- b) Understand the energy used by the equipment and any ways of reducing this; including switching off, running at different temperatures (cold storage) and changing velocity of equipment (fume hoods/MSCs).
- c) Extend equipment's life through effective servicing and maintenance. Also, ask the suppliers what simple maintenance you can do to increase longevity of the equipment.

- d) Need to dispose of something? See the [waste management guidance notes](#) or contact estates-waste@swansea.ac.uk

3 Packaging

- a) Single deliveries of multiple items: Minimising the number of deliveries and boxes will reduce your impact on the environment from transport. Local rules may vary in the Colleges.
- b) Ask for reusable or returnable packaging: Companies are legally responsible for their packaging. Ask to see what schemes are available.
- c) Unpack boxes or packaging as soon as possible after delivery: This reduces the likelihood of contamination and it becoming hazardous or clinical waste.
- d) Collapsible/stackable: Speak to suppliers about what they can do to minimise waste from a shipment.

4 Suppliers credentials

- a) Labelling: Check the labels associated with the products you are purchasing. Some labels you should know include:
 - a. FSC
 - b. Energy efficiency – star rated system
 - c. Recyclable materials



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- b) Frameworks: Use frameworks to purchase the items you need. Speak to your local procurement team for more information.
- c) Ethical considerations: Be aware of other aspects of the supply chain, including:
 - a. Workers conditions during raw material processing, manufacturing, delivery and installation
 - b. Environmental impacts associated with manufacturing, use and disposal

5 Mindful of materials

- a) Reduce single use plastics: Look at the lab's activities and see where reusable options (e.g. glass or plastic) are safe and practicable.
- b) Look for products that can be recycled, PET and HDPE are plastics recycled on campus. Always decontaminate and ensure clean before disposal. Check local lab rules to understand what can be recycled.
- c) Consider less harmful chemicals using the principles of Green Chemistry. Consider using this tool <https://ehs.mit.edu/green-chemistry/> to investigate further.

6 Contact us

Innovative idea? Great working practices you want to share? We are always open to new ways and ideas for reducing our environmental impact

Contact us if you have any questions or queries about sustainable purchasing at Swansea University:

- Teifion Maddocks: Sustainability Officer
- Emily Ingram: Environment Officer
- Hayley Beharrell: Environment Officer

Or email us at: sustainability@swansea.ac.uk



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