**Blank Template – OBFS Policy & Procedure Manual**

**Policy Topic Landing Page**

**Using and Purchasing Paper**

**Policy Statement**

The University is committed to both using paper efficiently and maximizing the use of paper and paper products with high post-consumer recycled content or other equivalent environmentally friendly content. Colleges, departments and other organizational units shall optimize paper efficiency in their operations. Employees responsible for purchasing shall purchase paper and paper products that contain 30% or higher post-consumer recycled content or other equivalent environmentally friendly content, unless the products cannot be used to meet the specified requirements or doing so would constitute an undue economic or practical hardship. Consistent with the Illinois Procurement Code, preference should be given to paper and paper products containing verified post-consumer recycled content or other recovered materials, with a remaining virgin tree fiber content that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or an equivalent certification system.

**Reason for the Policy**

Paper plays a key role in University of Illinois operations. The University is concerned about the future of the world’s forests and the environmental impacts of paper production, such as energy consumption (and associated carbon emissions), water usage, and waste production. State universities and other government units can take simple actions to reduce harmful impacts associated with paper purchases, including reducing usage (such as electronic rather than paper distributions, and double-sided printing), buying products with high post-consumer recycled content, and purchasing products certified by the FSC or an equivalent certification system.

Subject to certain limited exceptions, the Illinois Procurement Code mandates the use of recycled materials (30 ILCS 500/45-20) and recyclable paper (30 ILCS 500/45-25) and requires state agencies to contract for supplies and services that are environmentally preferable (30 ILCS 500/45-26). The University is committed to using and purchasing paper and paper products in ways that protect endangered forests, indigenous communities and their associated biodiversity, reduce pollution, decrease energy consumption, and minimize waste.

**Applicability of the Policy**

This policy applies to all University employees and to all paper and paper product purchases by the University, regardless of the funding source.

**Procedures and Related Information**

**Resource Links** *(Related Information)*
Illinois Procurement Code Sec. 45-20 Recycled Supplies [(30 ILCS 500/45-20)](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/003005000K45-20.htm)

Illinois Procurement Code Sec. 45-25 Recyclable Supplies [(30 ILCS 500/45-25)](http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/ilstatutes/30/500/45/45-25)

Illinois Procurement Code Sec. 45-26 Environmentally Preferable Procurement [(30 ILCS 500/45-26)](http://law.onecle.com/illinois/30ilcs500/45-26.html)

Higher Education Standard Procurement Rules Sections 4.4520, 4.4525 and 4.4526 (44 IL Admin. Code Part 4)

**Policy Topic Procedure Page**

**Using and Purchasing Paper**

**Policy Statement (same as main page)**

The University is committed to both using paper efficiently and maximizing the use of paper and paper products with high post-consumer recycled content or other equivalent environmentally friendly content. Colleges, departments and other organizational units shall optimize paper efficiency in their operations. Employees responsible for purchasing shall purchase paper and paper products that contain 30% or higher post-consumer recycled content or other equivalent environmentally friendly content, unless the products cannot be used to meet the specified requirements or doing so would constitute an undue economic or practical hardship. Consistent with the Illinois Procurement Code, preference should be given to paper and paper products containing verified post-consumer recycled content or other recovered materials, with a remaining virgin tree fiber content that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council or an equivalent certification system.

**Before you Begin *(to be mindful of)***

Familiarize yourself with the Policy Statement and available options for using paper and paper products containing verified recycled content or other recovered materials, or that are certified for sustainable forestry.

**Begin *(procedures)***

Reducing Paper Usage

Reducing paper usage is a key first step in decreasing the environmental impacts associated with paper use. Colleges, departments and other organizational units will institute practices that optimize paper efficiency, unless doing so would constitute an undue economic or practical hardship. Actions to reduce paper use include, but are not limited to:

* Substituting electronic communications for printing.
* Replacing paper forms with electronic and web-based tools provided they are accessible and properly protect personal privacy
* Purchasing or leasing copiers, printers, and fax machines that can be set to default to double-sided printing; setting the machines’ default to double-sided printing
* Reusing products such as file folders, storage boxes, and paper printed on one side.
* Reducing the basis weight and trim sizes of printed pieces.
* Designing processes and procedures that minimize printing and copying waste.
* Minimizing unsolicited mail, both sent and received.
* Minimizing overruns and maximizing sell-through for published materials.

Maximizing Recycled Content

Purchasing recycled-content paper and paper products has far-reaching environmental benefits and will encourage suppliers to increase their capabilities in providing these products at competitive prices. Unless, as determined and documented by the purchasing unit, the products cannot be used to meet the specified requirements or if doing so would constitute undue economic or practical hardship, units will take the following actions to maximize the recycled content in paper and paper products:

1. Purchase and source paper and paper products that contain 30% or higher post-consumer recycled content.
2. Give preference in purchasing decisions to paper and paper products with post-consumer recycled content verified by an independent, third-party organization, such as the FSC or an equivalent certification system.
3. Give preference in purchasing decisions to paper and paper products that also contain other recovered materials or rapidly renewable products (e.g. pre-consumer recycled content, agricultural residues, bamboo, etc.) after maximizing post-consumer recycled content.
4. Give preference in purchasing decisions to paper and paper products produced by sustainable forestry practices verified by an independent, third-party organization, such as the FSC or an equivalent certification system, after maximizing post-consumer recycled content.

Examples of where products cannot be used to meet the specified requirements or where doing so would constitute undue economic or practical hardship include, but are not limited to, cases where:

* Copying or printing equipment in use has been demonstrated to be incompatible with commercially available recycled paper;
* Appropriate recycled paper is not available (e.g., non-standard colors or thickness); or
* The cost of recycled content paper is excessive compared to non-recycled content products. If the premium for recycled content is 10% or less, this is presumed not to be a hardship.

Preference may also be given to paper and paper products containing other recovered materials or rapidly renewable products, either alone or in combination with post-consumer recycled paper content, provided the products are at least as environmentally friendly as 30% recycled paper content paper and paper products. Purchases of these products are subject to the same use and economic and practical hardship constraints as paper with recycled content alone.

Certification systems equivalent to the FSC may be considered if their performance-based forest management and chain of custody standards meet or exceed FSC’s standards; their governance and funding mechanisms are fully balanced, transparent, and independent; and they are widely accepted by environmental and social stakeholders.

**Additional Resources *(Related Information)***

At the time of implementation of this policy, 30% recycled copy/printing paper is available through iBuy at a price consistent with this policy; most offices can comply with the recycled content portion of this policy by utilizing that option. For offices on the Urbana campus, 30% recycled paper can be purchased from F&S Stores at a lower price than purchasing virgin paper through iBuy.

The Environmental Paper Network provides tools and resources to help assess the many aspects of environmentally responsible paper (http://environmentalpaper.org/buy-responsibly/ecopaper-toolkit-purchasers/). The Paper Steps: <http://environmentalpaper.org/paper-steps/> is helpful in understanding the components of paper and paper that meets the level of “Environmentally Improved Paper” that would fulfill the intent of this policy.