COVID-19 FAQs for Services, Supplies and Shipping
(Updated: March 18, 2020)

What is the continuity plan for Procurement?

Procurement Services will continue to operate as normal whether working from campus or remote locations. Effective Tuesday, March 17, Procurement Services, as part of an F&T wide initiative, will be working remotely. Contact Procurement as you normally would via phone or email.

What steps can be taken to ensure needed supplies are received?

Contingency planning is an important first step. Order crucial supplies now to ensure availability in the event of a supply disruption.

Items in short supply, such as hand sanitizer and masks, are being sourced from many existing and new suppliers with stocks available to Princeton. Available stock will be communicated by the Procurement buyers with an expectation that orders are placed right away. Products not ordered timely may not be available due to high demand and low supply in the market.

Will shipping materials to and from campus be affected?

Shipping will continue. There are no known constraints on domestic shipments. However, there may be delays in getting materials to and from affected areas globally. Shipments from Chinese ports are nearly back to normal. Air shipments to and from Asia and parts of Europe may be delayed for several days or more due to the extensive cancellation of flights from these regions. Currently, FedEx has suspended deliveries to the Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy.

For the most recent information, please refer to the latest alerts on the FedEx website, here. A link to this site will soon be available on the eShipGlobal main page.

Will critical gas supplies, such as Liquid Nitrogen and Helium, continue?

Procurement maintains regular communications with Airgas regarding deliveries of liquid nitrogen and helium. At this time, there are no current or planned disruptions of supply for these two materials. If there are other materials which are critical, please contact Procurement.

To mitigate the spread of the virus, Airgas drivers are complying with basic social distancing practices and using hand sanitizer. Some Airgas customers, including hospitals with known COVID-19 patients, will have their bulk tanks filled and their cylinders dropped off. However, the pickup of empty cylinders will not occur until those cylinders are decontaminated. The University is not affected by this additional protocol.
For helium, there is no planned change to our current allocation which is a result of global events and market conditions unrelated to the coronavirus. Procurement is working with Airgas to understand the supply risks and evaluating information on the impact of the coronavirus to the demand of natural gas, from which helium is a production by-product.

Should there be any updates, Procurement will communicate this information.

**Are there precautions which need to be taken with regard to incoming shipments?**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance indicates that incoming shipments pose minimal risks and thus no special equipment or procedures are needed. In addition, one of our contract customs brokers has advised that there are no constraints for incoming products. People working in shipping and receiving should take the utmost care to follow the general CDC-recommended hygiene practices as they handle materials.

**Will suppliers’ personnel be allowed on campus?**

The University instituted a series of policies and practices based on the concept of social distancing. This includes the need to limit the number and size of campus gatherings and meetings, and the use of virtual meetings wherever possible. In-person meetings are strongly discouraged amongst Princeton colleagues. Therefore, we highly discourage in-person meetings with suppliers. For those suppliers who have personnel on campus in support of regular operations, we ask that you align with your University contact for guidance and that you follow social distancing practices.

And, as of March 4, the University has prohibited anyone from CDC Warning Level 3 countries (currently mainland China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea) from visiting campus unless they have been outside of these countries for at least 14 days. This is due to the particularly international nature of our campus and our limited capacity to review travel itineraries and undertake medical assessments of visitors.

**Can suppliers be on campus to perform needed services or deliver goods?**

Some suppliers may need access to buildings in order to deliver goods or perform services. With access to campus buildings now in weekend mode, this should not affect many of our suppliers as they have access cards. Should it be necessary for a supplier to have an access card to enter the building, please send a request to purchase@princeton.edu and our team will work with the appropriate departments to provide such access.

As noted above, suppliers should ensure they are employing social distancing practices when performing services. If it is necessary to work with those suppliers, Princeton employees should be sure to do so using social distancing.
Because of the coronavirus situation, how do I order supplies to have them sent to an offsite location?

This is possible for certain products though there may be additional shipping costs and time involved. To do this, it is necessary to add a new Ship-To profile which can be selected by the requisition creator when completing the requisition. This new profile will be available for future orders.

To request the new Ship-To address, contact the Financial Service Center (FSC) at finance@princeton.edu with the details of the request including the supplier, the address, and the reason for the request. If it is not possible because of the supplier or the item in question, it would be necessary to have the item delivered to the department as per normal procedures and then shipped back out via FedEx or UPS using eShipGlobal as per a normal outbound shipment.

As always, if the item is of significant value, it should be tracked, require signature, and be appropriately insured in the event of the theft of the item from the residence destination.

What should be done if a supplier advises us that there will be supply shortages or their operations will be shut down?

In many cases, alternate suppliers may be able to supply the goods and services needed. If this is the case, contact another University supplier. The list of contract suppliers is accessible via this webpage, here, or contact Procurement at purchase@princeton.edu for information about suppliers who provide that good or service.

If a shortage or operation shutdown is critical to your operation, please advise Procurement by sending the details to purchase@princeton.edu and someone will be in touch to begin the process of mitigating the situation.

What expectations does Princeton have of its suppliers with regard to Business Contingency Planning?

While adverse events are unpredictable, best practice requires a thoughtful, complete, and tested set of plans which allow suppliers to operate through those situations with minimal disruption. When contingency plans are being executed, these should be transparent to the supply of goods and services to the University.

As above, should there be issues in the supply chain which will cause a downstream effect impacting the University, we’re encouraging suppliers to provide early, clear, and regular communications to mitigate any disruption.
Will supplier payments be delayed?

Payment processing will continue and payments are being disbursed without delay. As always, the payment date is determined by your existing payment terms, and is calculated from the date an invoice is received by Procurement Services.

A supplier wants me to sign a quote or waiver before they will begin work; should I sign?

Even before the coronavirus situation, we discourage the signing of supplier forms as these typically provide terms favorable to the supplier and not to Princeton. If you need assistance, please contact Procurement at purchase@princeton.edu and someone from our team will contact you to help guide the process, negotiate with the supplier, and partner with the Office of General Counsel to find a solution.

We recognize that some purchases may be urgently needed and may require the University to accept unfavorable contract terms. We ask that you contact us as soon as possible so that we can minimize these situations.

What do I do if I’ve engaged with a supplier for a service or event, and now with the coronavirus limitations, we need to cancel the service or event?

The first thing that should be done is to have a conversation with the supplier to attempt to resolve the situation and work out a solution which both parties can accept. In most cases, Princeton is not the only customer who is dealing with this situation. In many cases, a resolution offered by the supplier may be acceptable. We ask that if there is any contract, waiver, or other form provided by the supplier that you send these to purchase@princeton.edu for review by our contracts manager prior to signing.

It should also be noted that the University contract language has effective language which helps us to mitigate these types of issues. We strongly encourage departments to use University contracts when engaging with suppliers. For questions, please contact Procurement.

Our department uses a temp who will now need to work from home and the temp agency wants me to sign a form?

As noted above, we discourage signing supplier forms. Our senior category manager, Arturo Perez, is actively engaged with our preferred and contracted suppliers to address this situation. Please contact Arturo at arturop@princeton.edu with details of your specific situation.
If a supplier has a question about working with Princeton during this time, where do they get the latest information?

The University maintains a website which is updated frequently and as early as circumstances permit: https://www.princeton.edu/content/covid-19-coronavirus-information

Under the Visitor FAQs there is a link to FAQs for suppliers, and available here, on the F&T website.