



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS™

FACILITIES

FURNITURE STANDARDS & PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

When assisting departments on campus with furniture procurement, Facilities Management & Construction makes selections based on a number of factors: industry standards, availability of products (including flexibility/breadth of line and cooperative contracts), previous experience (with both manufacturer and dealership), and applicable warranty information.

Industry Standards

Our first priority is to ensure that the product that we procure meets all applicable standards related to public health, safety, and welfare. There are two primary associations that provide standards and guidelines by which interior furnishings are judged – BIFMA (Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer’s Association) and ACT (Association for Contract Textiles). BIFMA standards are intended to provide manufacturers, specifiers, and users with a common basis for evaluating safety, durability, and the structural adequacy of the specified furniture, while ACT has developed guidelines by which to judge performance of upholstery textiles applied to interior furnishings (guidelines include flammability, wet and dry crocking, colorfastness to light, physical properties such as pilling and seam slippage, and abrasion).

Availability of Products

Our second priority is to make decisions in the best interest of the University. Our goal is to purchase furniture that is durable and will withstand use over a lengthy period of time, but also to select furniture lines that provide many options for future growth. One feature of furniture lines that are less expensive is that the line offering is extremely narrow (this is one way that furniture manufacturers can provide furniture at deep discounts, by decreasing the number of standard pieces available). By upgrading to a mid-tier line, there is an assurance that in the future, if a single office (or even an entire office suite) needs to be relocated or reconfigured, it can be done reusing existing furniture by merely supplementing with what few new pieces are needed, thereby saving the department a great deal of money.

In addition, many lines of furniture are available for purchase referencing cooperative purchasing contracts that provide much deeper discounting structures than if purchased outright. Facilities works closely with UNT Purchasing to identify contracts that are the best value for the University, and have several years of experience in the procurement procedures involved. Utilizing cooperative contracts saves the University money, but also saves a great deal of time that could be spent navigating the bid process.

Past Experience

The third factor that Facilities takes into consideration when selecting furniture is our extensive past experience with various furniture manufacturers and local dealerships. A large part of what we do involves furniture procurement, and therefore, we have established relationships with local dealers based on the customer service they provide both during the order process and afterwards, when servicing the warranties on products purchased. By allowing us to assist you with your furniture needs, you benefit from the experiences we have had in the past and can be sure that we will go to great lengths to select manufacturers and dealers who understand the unique needs that institutions of Higher Education have.

Warranty

Our final priority is to ensure that the products that we purchase for University use have warranties that align with the level of usage products on our campus will receive. In addition, the same relationships that we have developed with local dealers are of benefit during the warranty period, as we're able to rely on those entities to service warranty issues in a timely and effective manner.

Facilities will always make furniture purchases with these four factors in mind, and because we use these criteria when making selections, we can be confident that the administrative charges assessed at the close of each project will be sufficient to cover any time spent assisting with warranty issues. However, if a project requires that Facilities match existing product or purchase new product that does not meet the aforementioned criteria (either for budgetary or aesthetic reasons), additional administrative charges may apply during the warranty period if excessive repairs are required.

References

BIFMA – Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association
<http://www.bifma.com/standards/index.html>

ACT – Association for Contract Textiles
http://www.contracttextiles.org/main.php?view=5_1