

## 1106.31 PLANT ASSETS - RETIREMENT OF COMPUTING EQUIPMENT

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Effective: October 2004  
Revised: September 2009  
Last Reviewed: March 2016  
Responsible Office: Comptroller  
Approval: Comptroller

### PURPOSE

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To provide a retirement and disposal policy for computing equipment that no longer meets the current business needs of the department.

### DETAILS

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- **Computing Equipment:**
  - **Desktop and/or Workstation** - A computer primarily used to provide direct access (via a locally attached keyboard, mouse and monitor) to applications such as web browsers, email clients, office productivity and data analysis tools for use usually by one individual.
  - **Server** - A computer used primarily to provide network-based services (e.g. web, file, or email), for use typically by multiple users
  
- **Re-Use** - pass on to another person within same/or another department (i.e. cascade)
  
- **Donate** - present as a gift without reimbursement or payment for
  
- **Recycle** - transfer to a vendor licensed to handle CRT and other hazardous elements of computers

### POLICY

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1. Departments may donate, sell or recycle computing equipment that no longer meets either the current needs of the department or the minimum qualifications to remain on the campus network. Donations may be made through the Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) or other affiliated donor programs [[refer to #7 below](#)]. You may sell used and no longer needed equipment to employees, staff or faculty [[refer to #5 below](#)].
  
2. The decision to donate, sell or recycle computing equipment should occur in consultation with the designated Information Technology (IT) support unit.

3. Before transferring computers containing any software, first make sure that Penn is properly licensed to transfer it, that it was not obtained illegally or in violation of license terms, and that the software was never copied illegally or in violation of license terms. Also, make sure that the transfer conforms to terms of the software license. Internal software license inventory records should be updated to reflect any transfer or deletion of software.
4. Determine the funds used to purchase the computing equipment and ensure the disposal method corresponds with the source fund's instructions. Some source funds, i.e. grants, may prohibit the resale or donation of computing equipment.
5. If selling the equipment - establish the fair market value:
  - a. First, find current sale listings for the comparable equipment on an auction site, such as:
    - i. eBay.com (for both MACs and PCs)
    - ii. dellauction.com (for Dell brand)
    - iii. ThinkBid.com
    - iv. uBid.com
  - b. Second, calculate the average cost based on the computing equipment in the last hours/stage of the auction. Document this information.
  - c. Third, the sale proceeds for any University of Pennsylvania property belong to the University.
    - i. Checks should be payable to the "Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania".
    - ii. State sales tax must be collected and remitted on these purchases. The tax may be included in the sales price. See Example for calculation of tax amount:
      1. Sales price = \$100.00.
      2. Tax Rate = 8% (PA=6% + Phila=2% Effective October 8, 2009 [for sales prior to that date, sales tax is 7% (PA=6% + Phila=1%)])
      3. Sales Revenue = \$92.59 (100/1.08)
      4. Tax Amount = \$7.41
    - iii. Deposits should record the sale to the appropriate revenue object and the sales tax should be recorded to object 2111 A/P Sales Tax. The Sales & Use Tax worksheet should be completed and forwarded to Corporate Tax Office (See Sales & Use Tax Guidelines).
  - d. The University of Pennsylvania will not provide technical support for the ongoing use of the computer once the transaction has been completed.
6. Electronically wipe computers or destroy the physical media. Remove non-public data on a University computer or other electronic devices before the sale or transference out of the department's direct control occurs.
  - a. Use a secure file deletion utility that ensures that the data cannot be recovered by successively writing binary ones and zeros over files to be deleted. Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) includes a secure delete function and is freely available for non-commercial use for Windows and

Macintosh at <http://web.mit.edu/network/pgp.html>. Norton Utilities' Wipe Info feature and the "gdisk" utility within Ghost will also securely delete files.

- b. The same advice applies to storage media like computer tapes, disks, diskettes, etc. Be sure to completely remove any sensitive information before disposing of electronic storage media. University Archives and Records offer a standard service for secure destruction of confidential electronic records. For further details, see <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/home/URC.html>. If you need further help finding tools or services to do this, contact [security@isc.upenn.edu](mailto:security@isc.upenn.edu).

7. If donating or recycling

a. Computer Donations Programs

- i. Penn's Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) accepts certain computer equipment donations. Equipment that can be refurbished is upgraded and donated to various organizations. Refer to: <http://www.upenn.edu/ccp/digitaldivide/>

b. Recycle

- i. Recycling may be arranged through your school or center's computing services group.
- ii. Computing equipment may be disposed of through buyers of surplus and used computer equipment
- iii. Check the Information Systems and Computing web site for names of buyers and electronic salvagers. <http://www.upenn.edu/computing/provider/recycle.html>

8. Departments may *not* discard computing equipment.

- a. Do not place any electronic equipment in the trash, even if it is broken. Electronic equipment may contain heavy metals and other materials that can be hazardous to human health and the environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers some discarded electronic equipment as characteristic hazardous waster under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Unwanted electronic equipment must therefore either be sold/donated for reuse or sent for recycling. See additional information from Environmental Health and Radiation Safety web page: [http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/resources/waste/puter\\_disposal.html](http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/resources/waste/puter_disposal.html)

9. Maintain records documenting all related transactions.

10. If the equipment had an original acquisition cost of \$5,000 or greater and is recorded in the University's equipment inventory system, BEN Assets, the disposition must also be properly authorized by completion of the Authorization of Retirement of Equipment form in accordance with policy 1106.3 Plant Assets: Retirements. The Authorization of Retirement of Equipment form can be found on the Comptroller's web site in the Document/Forms Library at: <http://www.finance.upenn.edu/comptroller/Forms/forms.shtml>

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## REFERENCES

1. Information Systems and Computing (ISC)

- a. Computer Recycling and Disposal Options at Penn <http://www.upenn.edu/computing/provider/recycle.html>

2. Office of Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (EHRS)
  - a. Computer Recycling and Disposal Options [http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/resources/waste/puter\\_disposal.html](http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/resources/waste/puter_disposal.html)
  
3. Center for Community Partnerships (CPP)
  - a. Partnership with Americorps to Bridge the Digital Divide in West Philly <http://www.upenn.edu/ccp/digitaldivide/>
  
4. Office of the Comptroller  
Forms Library: Property Management - Authorization of Retirement of Equipment <http://www.finance.upenn.edu/comptroller/Forms/forms.shtml>

## RISK OF NON-COMPLIANCE

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The use of automated tools and break-in scripts makes it easy for an unauthorized person to quickly access computing equipment and stored data if not properly processed for disposal. Systems that are not properly disposed of are likely to be discovered and broken into. Break-ins can also result in the destruction, alteration or disclosure of sensitive data. Improper disposal of computing equipment may be in violation of EPA regulations.