



## Importing and Exporting Goods

### *Guidance for University Departments*

Importing and exporting of goods is subject to various U.S. and foreign laws that can be quite complex. University staff and resources are available to guide you through the intricacies of importation and exportation. It is advisable to consult the resources shown below; doing so will ensure that you do not miss important (legal or cost related) details regarding your import or export request.

### Finding Guidance

Expertise in importation and exportation is provided by two departments (PantherExpress-Purchasing Services and the Office of Export Controls Services), respectively.

- Prior to **importing** goods, contact your [procurement specialist](#) for guidance, particularly regarding duties (taxes on imports), freight terms, and duty-free entry of specific scientific equipment. *Reminder:* Importation is only an option if an equivalent of the item is not available through a University-wide contracted supplier or through a supplier in the U.S.
- Prior to **exporting** goods out of the U.S., seek guidance from the Export Controls (E.C.) team, located at the Office of Export Controls Services. The E.C. team ([EChelp@pitt.edu](mailto:EChelp@pitt.edu)) is responsible for export controls, and a thorough guide on this topic is [located here](#).

### Managing Duties and Customs Bonds (Costs) on Imports

Duties and customs bonds on imports can significantly increase the costs associated with a purchase. In order to help departments save money on duties, the University has put a continuous bond into place that eliminates the need to bond individual shipments.

The University has also contracted with *Priority Worldwide Services (PWS)* specifically for customs brokerage services. PWS provides assistance in evaluating and managing imports – particularly in applying the University’s continuous bond to your import.

## Transactions (Charges and Level Reports) with PWS

The University's *Mailing Services Department* has a blanket PO in place with PWS. All University transactions with PWS should run through this Purchase Order. When importing something that requires brokerage services, PWS will request the department's 32-digit account number that will be charged for the services. PWS will then invoice the Mailing Services Department directly using that account number. The Mailing Services Department will pay the invoice and process an Interdepartmental Charge (IDC) that will appear on the appropriate Level report.

## Guidelines

The cost of the item will determine how to initiate contact with PWS:

- If your purchase is \$5000 or less, [contact PWS](#) for assistance. PWS will ensure that the University's continuous bond is applied to your import.
- If your purchase is over \$5000, contact your [procurement specialist](#) for assistance.

## Determining Duty-Free Status on Imported Scientific Equipment

Scientific equipment imported strictly for University research or education purposes may qualify for duty-free status. In order to qualify for duty-free status, you must apply to the U.S. Department of Commerce for an exception. This involves time and possibly additional paperwork but may result in significant cost savings.

Consider applying to the U.S. Department of Commerce for this exception if your purchase fits this description: *A scientific instrument or apparatus intended exclusively for educational purposes or pure scientific research use by qualified nonprofit institutions may enjoy duty-free entry if equipment of equivalent scientific value is not being manufactured in the United States.*

- Apply for duty-free entry of scientific instruments [by following these instructions](#). Your [procurement specialist](#) will be able to help you with this process. The procurement specialist will need the technical details of the item (from you) in order to provide the proper guidance.

## Purchasing Biological Materials and Lab Chemicals from a New International Supplier

Biological materials and laboratory chemicals must be purchased from University-wide contracted suppliers or suppliers already established in the supplier database. If you need to obtain biological materials or laboratory chemicals from a new supplier, then you must follow [this process](#).

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In conclusion – for best results consult established resources and consider your options prior to setting up an import or export. *Reminder:* Importation is only an option if an equivalent of the item is not available through a University-wide contracted supplier or through a supplier in the U.S.

### Contacts and Resources Summary

- **Imports:** PantherExpress-Purchasing Services [procurement specialists](#)
- **Exports:** Export Controls (E.C.) team [contact](#) and [web guide](#)
- **Customs Brokerage Services (for imports):**  
Priority Worldwide Services [contact information](#)
- **Duty Exceptions on Scientific Equipment (for imports):**  
U.S. Dept. of Commerce [application](#)
- **Biological Materials and Lab Chemicals (special purchasing instructions):**  
PantherExpress [web page](#)