



Furniture FAQs

Q: Why does UO have furniture standards?

A: The University of Oregon has a furniture standards program to align with the following goals and values:

- Responsible stewardship of University resources.
- Procurement of only commercial grade furnishings suitable for a higher education environment.
- Consistency and compatibility of furniture components across campus.
- Utilization of competitive state contracts and aggressive discount pricing.
- Consideration of the total cost of ownership, not just the front-end cost.
- Inclusion of warranty and product service is included in cost.

Q: Can I purchase furniture from a home or office retailer, such as Target, IKEA, or Staples?

A: No. While we understand budgets can be tight, home and office retailers do not sell furniture that meets the requirements for high traffic institutional use. Our vendors employ certified and experienced installers to assemble and install furniture on-site, which can often require prevailing wage/BOLI rates.

Q: Can I order furniture on DuckDepot?

A: Yes. UO has collaborated with three commercial furniture manufacturers (Herman Miller, Knoll and Steelcase) to provide a curated catalog of approved furniture items that are available for purchase directly by approved UO buyers within DuckDepot. Common items such as desks, chairs, storage and other ancillary items are available in the catalog for purchase and budgetary planning. For items requiring more detailed specifications (modular workstations, etc.), custom quotes can be requested via DuckDepot with any of our vendors, or through the [Design and Construction Project Initiation Request](#).

Q: Why does commercial grade furniture cost so much?

A: It is helpful to think in terms of total cost of ownership, as cheaper items from home retailers will not hold up over time the same way commercial pieces do, and will have to be replaced or repaired more often, resulting in the same, or greater, cost over time.

Some general reasons for the higher cost are that commercial grade furniture is crafted with extremely durable materials and is made to withstand everyday use in a high-traffic institutional setting. It goes through rigorous testing to meet or exceed industry standard requirements, which helps to support a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment. It comes with robust warranties, generally 5-10 years (minimum) and often lifetime. If warranty issues do arrive, our vendors are able to resolve issues quickly at no additional cost.

If cost is a concern, designers in our office can help with finding budget friendly solutions.

Q: Why does it take so long for commercial grade furniture to arrive after order?

A: Most commercial grade furniture is made to order, and has to be shipped across the country (most is made in the USA, usually in Michigan).

Q: Who do I contact if I want to place a furniture order?

A: If you don't find what you are looking for on DuckDepot from one of our three vendors and would like additional assistance with space planning, selecting products and finishes, and/or obtaining quotes, please fill out a project initiation form via the [Design and Construction Project Initiation Request](#).

Q: Is there anything I should consider when ordering furniture on my own through DuckDepot?

A: Since commercial grade furniture is made to order, returns are not accepted. Make sure to measure your space accurately to make sure what you order will fit and allow necessary clearances to meet ADA guidelines. Note locations of power/data in relation to the install locations of furniture. If attaching anything to the wall be sure to work with EHS to determine if any hazardous materials such as asbestos are present in your space, and if abatement is needed.

Q: Are there any rules regarding what finishes I can use?

A: There are not any hard and fast rules, but a few guidelines to consider are:

- Coordinate new finishes with existing adjacent finishes.
- Mid-dark tones and patterns on fabric can help limit visibility of soiling and staining.
- Moisture-barrier coatings and other repellent finishes help seating withstand spills and wear.
- Select fabrics tested with high ratings of durability (minimum 50,000-75,000 Double Rubs)
- Review physical samples of all finishes before making a selection (online images can vary significantly from actual material appearance) – if you need assistance ordering finish samples, contact a designer in our office.

Q: How long does a furniture-only project take?

A: Every project is different, but for general planning of furniture projects, please take note of the following guidelines, from the date of project initiation:

- **Total furniture-only project: 10-14 weeks**
 - Initial meeting is scheduled, scope and budget is developed and approved = **2-3 weeks**
 - Field measurements and verifications, development and selection of furniture and finish options, obtain quotes, and process a Purchase Order = **3-4 weeks**
 - Typical lead-time for furniture after the Purchase Order has been issued = **6-8 weeks**.
 - *Note: select items may be available on quick ship in limited finishes, but those orders can still take 2-4 weeks following issuance of a Purchase Order.*