

Supplier Fraud Notification

This message is for the attention of existing and potential suppliers to the University of Essex, regarding the use of fraudulent purchase orders. We are not aware of this particular type of fraud using University of Essex branded documents; but there have been similar instances at other institutions.

The fraud operates in the following way:

- A supplier will receive an email requesting a quote for the supply of specific items of equipment. This will look as if it is from a member of University staff but will actually be from the perpetrator of the fraud.
- Once the quote has been provided, a purchase order is emailed to the supplier that bears resemblance to an authentic University purchase order.
- The purchase order typically instructs the supplier to deliver the items to an address not affiliated with the University.
- After shipping, the supplier never receives payment and is unable to retrieve the items.

Indicators of fraud:

- Incorrect domain name used to send emails and purchase orders. A valid University email address will always end in **@essex.ac.uk**. Hovering your cursor over the email address may reveal the originator's email address (if different from that displayed). An example of an incorrect domain is @essex-ac.co.uk (note the dash rather than a full stop)
- The delivery address is not a University address. A genuine University purchase order will request delivery to one of the following:
 - Department/School/Section Name, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex, CO4 3SQ;
 - Department/School/Section Name, C/O Reception, Gateway Building, Elmer Approach, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 1LW
 - Department/School Section Name, Hatfields, Rectory Lane, Loughton, Essex IG10 3RY

Fraudulent addresses will typically be a domestic residence or a self-storage facility. If you are unsure of the delivery details you have been given, please contact the University's [Procurement Team](#) to verify them.

- Poorly written email with grammatical errors.
- Use of a false or unknown contact from the University. If requests for quotations or purchase orders are received from a University contact that raises your suspicion, then please contact a member of the University's Procurement team to verify the validity of the request. **Do not** contact the name/number used on the email/purchase order.
- Phone numbers not associated with the University - typically these numbers begin with 0843/0844/0845/070.
- Unusually large quantities are requested.
- Rush to ship priority/overnight.

What to do if you suspect fraudulent activity: Contact a member of the University's Procurement Team to verify the validity of the request. If the request is found to be fraudulent then you must report the matter to [Action Fraud](#).