

Scam - Fraudulent Purchase Orders

This message is for the attention of existing and potential suppliers to Birmingham City University.

While Birmingham City University cannot prevent this fraudulent activity we are supplying the Police with details to investigate the matter as we become aware of specific instances. We want to alert you to a fraud scam that is targeting existing and potential suppliers of equipment to the University, as well as other Universities and businesses in the UK. Please take the necessary precautions so that you are not a victim of this scam.

The fraud scam involves purchase orders and requests for product quotations that purport to originate from the University but are in fact fraudulent.

The scam operates in the following way: the supplier will receive an email requesting a quotation for specific item/s of equipment. Once the quotation 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 delivery to an address not affiliated with the University. After shipping the item/s of equipment, the supplier never receives payment and is unable to retrieve the shipped products.

Indicators of fraud:

- Incorrect domain name used to send emails and purchase orders. A valid University email address will always end in @bcu.ac.uk. Hovering over the email address may reveal the originator's email address if different from that displayed. An example of an incorrect domain that could be used is bcuac.co.uk
- The delivery address is not a University address. Fraudulent addresses will typically be a domestic residence or a self-storage facility.
- 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 new University contact that raises your suspicion then please contact a member of the Procurement team (0121 331 6204 or procurement@bcu.ac.uk) 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.
- Unusually large quantities are requested.
- Rush to ship priority/overnight

What to do if you suspect fraudulent activity:

Contact a member of the Procurement team to verify the validity of the request. If the request is found to be fraudulent then report to [Action Fraud](#).

Please do not attempt to call any phone numbers contained within the fraudulent emails that purport to be University numbers as they will attract a service charge. Typically these number begin with 0843 / 0844/ 0845 / 070.

What the University is doing:

- Contacting all its existing suppliers that may be subject to this type of fraudulent activity in order to raise awareness and provide basic guidance on how to deal with it.
- Requesting that domain names used for fraudulent activity are closed.
- Reporting all instances of known fraudulent activity to Action Fraud.