

How to Manage Product Options

Product options give vendors a way to offer choices – such as size, color, material, or finish – that buyers can select when purchasing products on *GSA Advantage*. Vendors can implement options by using the **OPTIONS** tab in the Product File.



What is a product option?

Product options are choices like size, color, and finish that buyers can pick when buying a product. Instead of listing every possible configuration of a product as a separate line item, options let vendors list the base product (e.g., paper, trash bags, desk, pens, hard drive) and then the options (e.g., color, size, finish). This makes it easier for vendors to manage catalogs and for buyers to find things they need instead of navigating repeats of the same product. Options can increase, decrease, or not impact the final item price.

Some examples of options include product features like:

- **Sizes, volumes, or capacities** such as small/medium/large, 0.5mm/0.7mm/1.0mm, 10GB/500 GB/1 TB, 4-gallon/13-gallon/30-gallon
- **Colors** like clear/green/brown/red/black
- **Durability** such as regular/heavy duty contractor-grade
- **Scents** like unscented/lavender/lemon
- **Fabrics and finishes**, like wool/polyester/cotton or brass/stainless steel
- **Configurations, country, language, or set-ups** that are only available at first purchase, like US/Canada, English/Spanish/French, electronic tablet with/without GPS, or engraved/not engraved
- **Extended warranties and delivery options/services**, when available, like desk with/without assembly or basic warranty/extended warranty



How are options included in *GSA Advantage*?

Products with options will have an “Options” button near the “Add to cart” button that buyers can use to find and pick options in different categories (e.g., Size, Color, Finish). Option names are listed in dropdown menus with related price changes in parentheses (e.g., 128GB (+\$0.00), 256GB (+\$100.00), 512 GB (\$200.00)) that adjust the total cost as buyers pick. Unlike product accessories, options don’t have associated photos. Consider showing options in the base product photo carousel by listing them in the Photo File References section for the base item on the **PRODUCTS** tab.

Pro tip! Mention option categories in the base product’s Product Description. For example, a portable hard drive description might include at the end “*See options menu for other hard drive capacity, finish, and warranty options available.*”

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How do vendors add product options to their catalogs?

For **new products**, add the options when adding the products. For **existing products**, use the “Product Descriptive Change” in eMod and associated “Change Action” in FCP to add options.

In the FCP Product File’s OPTIONS tab:

1. **List one option per line:** Copy and paste the **manufacturer name** and **manufacturer part number** (MPN) from the PRODUCTS tab to associate options with base products. Use a vendor-defined **option part number**, a **meaningful category name** (like “Size”) to group related options in dropdown menus on *GSA Advantage*, and clear option **names** (like Small, Medium, Large).
 - a. If the same options exist for multiple base products, copy and paste the lines again and change the manufacturer and MPN.



Pro tip! Vendors define the option category names and should use the same category name (e.g., Size) for multiple options within the same category. This is extremely important for populating the Options menu on *GSA Advantage* (e.g., to create a Size menu with S, M, L).

2. **Use I, S, or A for the base_item_relationship:**
 - a. **(I) Included:** Assign only one (1) “I” Included option per category. This option is the default if the customer does not make any selections, and is therefore captured as a part of the base price.
 - b. **(S) Substituted:** For items with an included option, vendors can include substitutes that can replace the Included option. Price can be negative, zero, or positive.
 - c. **(A) Added:** Use if there are options that customers can add to the base configuration (e.g., setup, installation, engraving) for free or a price. These options do not replace an included option choice. Note: *GSA Advantage* automatically adds “None” as the default selection for Added options and buyers can change as desired.
3. **List quantity, unit_of_measure, and price_with_fee:** For options that are included, don’t cost more, or can be refused, use 0.00 as the price. If the option affects the price, use a negative price (-x.xx) to lower or a positive price (x.xx) to increase.

Pro tip! To avoid buyer confusion, use “I” and “S” options when substitutes are available and a selection is included by default. Otherwise, if product options exist in a category but users do not need to select one, use “A” options.

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Consider a hard drive with different sizes, colors, setup, and engraving options:

- Size: 128 GB (Included), 256 GB, or 64 GB
- Color: Silver (Included), Rose Gold
- Setup: Basic Setup, Premium Setup (Added options)
- Engraved: Up to 2 or 4 Lines (Added options)

In the Product File, the vendor would do the following to offer these options:

- **PRODUCTS** tab: In the item_description, include a description such as “Pocket-sized hard drive with 128 GB capacity in Silver color. Offers mobile storage for data, photos, presentations, and videos. Check options for more sizes and colors. Setup and engraving options are also available.”
- **OPTIONS** tab: Copy the manufacturer_part_number from the PRODUCTS tab and paste in the OPTIONS tab to associate each option line with the base. Use the base_item_relationship column to indicate the option type.
 - In this example, the Size and Color come with an “I” included option and possible “S” substitutes, and Setup and Engraving are optional “A” added options.





option_manufacturer	option_part_number	category	name	base_item_relationship	quantity	unit_of_measure	price_with_fee
MFR PN 1	Size-128	Size	128 GB	I	1	EA	0.00
MFR PN 1	Size-256	Size	256 GB	S	1	EA	100.00
MFR PN 1	Size-64	Size	64 GB	S	1	EA	-150.00
MFR PN 1	Col-Sil	Color	Silver	I	1	EA	0.00
MFR PN 1	Col-Ros	Color	Rose Gold	S	1	EA	50.00
MFR PN 1	Set-Bas	Setup	Basic Setup	A	1	EA	50.00
MFR PN 1	Set-Prem	Setup	Premium Setup	A	1	EA	150.00
MFR PN 1	Eng-2	Engraving	Up to 2 Lines	A	1	EA	15.00
MFR PN 1	Eng-4	Engraving	Up to 4 Lines	A	1	EA	25.00

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How do buyers find options?



Buyers will notice options are available via the:

-  **opt** indicator in the *GSA Advantage* search results Features column
-  **Options** button on the product details page

What about photos?

Use the base product photo to hint at options and describe them in the product description. Vendors can also include a link to their websites for more photos.

Do all options need to be listed?

No! If a category (e.g., Color) has more than 5-10 options, just list the most popular ones to avoid overwhelming buyers. Then, in the Product Description, tell buyers they can contact you or visit your website for more options (e.g., “56 colors are available at no additional cost. Visit ourwebsite.com/product-colors for others, then select 99 for the color option and we’ll contact you for the desired color.”).

How can options be changed?



Options can be adjusted (add, change, remove) at the same time as base products, or on their own, with an eMod modification and FCP “Change Products” action. For:

- **Non-price changes:** Use a “Product Descriptive Change” eMod modification.
- **Price changes:** Use an “Economic Price Adjustments (EPA) with Commercial Price List (increase)” or a “Permanent Price Reduction” eMod modification.

Adjust the options you wish to change as needed in your Product file:

1. Download your last approved catalog file from the Catalog Overview page.
2. Update your base products if needed.
3. In your OPTIONS tab, keep all options and categories you want to keep, and adjust those that need adjustments.
 - a. If you wish to remove options, delete those options and/or categories, as desired, to remove them from the catalog.
 - b. **The updated file should include only categories and options you wish to KEEP.**
4. Upload the updated file during the FCP Change Products action.

Important! Any option changes or deletes will overwrite the existing option information. **Download the last approved catalog file before making changes** to base products or options. When submitting **any** change action, include all remaining options you wish to keep.

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How do options differ from accessories or related products?

Options differ from accessories in that options:



- **Are part of the configuration or integrated with the base/accessory**, while accessories can stand alone.
- **Can ONLY be purchased with the base product**, while accessories can be purchased alone.
- **Are not directly searchable**, while accessories are.
- **May or may not impact price**, while accessories typically add to the price.

Product	Sample Categories & Option Names	Sample Accessories
Trash can	Category: Finish Option Name: Stainless Steel, Satin Nickel Category: Capacity Option Name: 13 Gallon, 30 Gallon	Trash bags Air freshener clips
Inkjet printer	Category: Color Option Name: Black, Silver Category: Tray Capacity Option Name: 50 sheets, 100 sheets Category: Warranty Option Name: 1 year, 3 year	Printer paper Printer toner Printer stand

Questions?



Visit <https://catalog.gsa.gov/help#product-options> to learn more about options. Please work with your CS/CO or contact vendor.support@gsa.gov for more help.