



**TO:** Officers, Deans, Senior Administrators, and the Office of the Provost  
**FROM:** Bridget Collier, Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity Programs  
Geertrui M. Spaepen, Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost  
**DATE:** May 18, 2021  
**RE:** *Process for Utilizing Search Firms for Academic and Staff Job Searches*

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This memorandum standardizes the process for engaging a search firm (“search firm” or “vendor” or “contractor”) for all academic and staff searches, including officer searches. Fidelity to this process will ensure that the search is compliant with the University’s equal opportunity and affirmative action obligations, which flow from its status as a federal contractor and an employer covered by federal, state and local civil rights statutes.

To achieve compliance, units must take the following steps when engaging a vendor for any academic or staff search:

1. The unit (and the Office of the Provost, where applicable) identifies an academic or administrative leadership position that needs to be filled.
  - a. For all positions reporting through the Office of the Provost, the position must be approved to confirm necessity and budgetary allowance.
  - b. The engagement of a search firm for staff hiring requires prior written approval by the Associate Vice President of Human Resources. If approved, the Human Resources Partner (HRP) must initiate position creation in Workday.
2. A search lead will be identified by the unit to manage the search. This individual must meet with the [Equal Opportunity Programs office](#) before the search begins to review the affirmative action obligations for all those staffing or leading academic or high-level staff searches. The search lead must be well-versed in the equal opportunity and affirmative action compliance policies and the process described in this document.
3. The search lead will identify a vendor for the search. In accordance with University financial policy and compliance with [federal regulations](#) for procurement standards, units must either demonstrate they have received competitive quotes or, if a vendor has already been identified, provide justification for using one source and demonstrate that the sole proposal is priced fairly and competitively.
4. The search lead will work with the vendor to establish the scope and needs of the search, as well as proposed fees. Discussions with the vendor must include, but are not limited to, the goals of the search, equal employment and affirmative action requirements and compliance, and must confirm the vendor’s responsibilities regarding compliance.
5. The search lead will provide the vendor with a search contract. Please see *Attachment 1* for the University’s Professional Services Recruitment Agreement template that must be utilized. The search lead will work with the Office of Legal Counsel to review the search contract, including the affirmative action compliance language. In addition, any requested modifications to this template from the vendor must be reviewed by Procurement.
6. The Office of the Provost and/or the unit must not sign the search contract; instead, the contract must be provided to Procurement Services for review and execution.
  - a. The search lead will submit the contract for review by creating a [Procurement Contract Review](#) request through ServiceNow.



- b. Following execution of the contract, the search lead and/or their designee will create a standing purchase order (PO) for the search in [BuySite](#).
7. Procurement Services will regularly communicate with Bridget Collier, Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity Programs, or her designee, who will then meet with the vendor to discuss the unit and vendor's respective equal opportunity and affirmative action obligations.
  - a. For example, search firms must direct all candidates to timely complete their application on Interfolio (for academic hires) or Workday (for staff hires) and offer candidates the opportunity to complete the voluntary demographic self-identification form on Interfolio or Workday, which includes information on race, sex, disability status, and veteran status.
8. Procurement Services will sign the agreement and send it to the vendor for a countersignature. The vendor will return the agreement to Procurement Services.
  - a. The PO will be sent to the search lead and to the vendor for reference when invoicing the University.
9. During initial search committee meetings, a job description must be written and finalized. The search lead will ensure that a job posting is created on Workday or Interfolio. The job description and other attributes of the posting must include components mandated by the Office of the Provost, including the "AAP/EEO" tagline, which cannot be modified under any circumstances. It must also state that applicant information and materials will be shared with the firm assisting the University in the search. The position must be posted on Workday or Interfolio from the beginning of the search. Once the position has been posted, the search lead will inform the vendor that this has occurred. Only after the posting is live on Interfolio or Workday can the vendor begin its outreach.
  - a. A seven (7) day minimum posting period is mandatory for all staff searches.
  - b. A thirty (30) day minimum posting period is mandatory for all regular academic searches.
  - c. All postings must include the following language:

The University of Chicago has retained **[INSERT NAME OF SEARCH FIRM and WEBSITE]** to support this recruitment. **[INSERT SEARCH FIRM CONTACT(S) AND TITLE(S)]** are leading the search. Inquiries, applications, and nominations must be sent by email to **[INSERT SEARCH FIRM CONTACT NAME and EMAIL ADDRESS]**. Please note all job seekers wishing to be considered for the position must also submit their materials through the University's Workday site (for staff positions) / Interfolio site (for academic positions).
10. The search lead and the vendor must agree upon the process for soliciting applications from individuals who believe themselves qualified for and are interested in being considered for the position. Job seekers may submit their interest and materials through the vendor's system, but all job seekers wishing to be considered for the position must submit their materials through the University's Workday site (for staff positions) or Interfolio site (for academic positions). To be considered an applicant, all job seekers must meet the minimum qualifications and must submit all materials required by the posting.



11. Before any interview with the search committee, the vendor will inform any candidates who will be interviewed to apply for the position on Workday or Interfolio.
  - a. In accordance with the University's equal opportunity and affirmative action applicant tracking obligations, the search lead (in conjunction with the search firm) will simultaneously track all applicants on an applicant tracker spreadsheet (*Attachment 2*). Applicants who apply through Workday/Interfolio and are interviewed by the University must be tracked on this sheet.
  - b. All search-related records must be retained by the unit for a period of three years from the date of the last search action.
  - c. The vendor, in accordance with the search contract, must also maintain all search related records and cannot destroy or discard search related records.
  - d. The search lead is responsible for making recruitment updates in Workday. All interviews must be documented in writing, and all applicants must be notified and dispositioned with applicable disposition code.
12. The search lead will be in contact with the vendor at regular intervals to confirm that the contract's compliance processes are being followed and implemented. The search lead is responsible for ensuring that the terms of the search contract are being enforced, with support provided by the Office of Legal Counsel, as needed.
13. Before an offer letter is provided to the final candidate, the search lead will verify with the Office of Legal Counsel whether the offer letter must be reviewed and endorsed by the Office of the Provost and/or by the Office of Legal Counsel.
14. All academic appointments are subject to review and approval by the Office of the Provost and failure by the unit and/or the vendor to adhere to this process, and the EEO/AA compliance requirements herein, may invalidate a search.

Any questions or concerns must be directed to Associate Provost Bridget Collier ([bcollier@uchicago.edu](mailto:bcollier@uchicago.edu)) or to the Director of the Office for Affirmative Action Scott Velasquez ([svelasquez@uchicago.edu](mailto:svelasquez@uchicago.edu)).



## Search Firm Process Checklist

- Position approved by Office of the Provost or unit leadership, as appropriate
- For staff positions, obtain written approval for search firm use from the Associate Vice President of Human Resources
- Identify a search lead
- Search lead meets with the Equal Opportunity Programs office to review its affirmative action obligations
- Identify a search firm
  - Discuss scope of the search
  - Discuss equal opportunity and affirmative action compliance requirements
- Provide vendor with search contract
  - Ensure that contract contains language ensuring search firm's affirmative action compliance obligations
- Submit contract to Procurement Services for review and to create a Professional Services Recruitment Agreement
- Procurement generates a report to be sent to Bridget Collier or a designee, and the Equal Opportunity Programs office separately contacts the unit and search firm to discuss their respective equal opportunity and affirmative action obligations
- Create a PO with Procurement Services
- Finalize a job description with the search firm/lead/committee
- Provide HR Partner with the job description for posting on Workday (staff position) or Interfolio (academic position)
- Post position at the start of the search and for at least the minimum required number of days
- Inform vendor the position has been posted on Interfolio or Workday
- Confirm candidate application processes with vendor
- Vendor and search lead confirm that all applicants have applied to the posting through Interfolio or Workday
- Search lead regularly checks in with the vendor to ensure compliance processes are being followed and implemented
- Search lead to update Workday/Interfolio with interview records and disposition/notification
- Offer letter approved by Office of the Provost leadership, if applicable, and the Office of Legal Counsel.
- Additional recruitment resources, including the Academic Searching and Screening Policy, can be found on the Office of the Provost's website [here](#).