

How to Choose a Search Firm

1. The use of search firms is not required, but when used shall be limited to the following senior level positions: Provost, Vice Chancellors, Deans, Athletic Director, and Associate VCs/Provosts/Deans. Any request to use a search firm for a position at a level lower than described requires an exception from the Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs. The Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs is the final approver and will sign the contract with the search firm.

2. Review list of UNC Charlotte approved search firms (see below)

Often, the first step in the process of selecting a search firm is to talk with colleagues and associates to identify the firms or individual consultants they have worked with in the past. While compiling the list, assess their experiences and ask questions about specific consultants as well as the firm. Typical questions for references may include:

- What kind of position were you seeking to fill?
- What impressed you the most about this firm/consultant?
- How did working with this firm compare to other experiences you have had using search firms?
- If the search committee drafted a job advertisement prior to the search engagement, how did it differ from the advertisement used by the search firm (i.e. what was the contribution of the search consultant)?
- Did you get quality candidates that you may not have gotten on your own?
- How well did the search consultant represent your organization to sources and candidates?
- How accessible was the search consultant?

3. Determine how the firm builds its candidate pool

The methodology used to access good candidate talent pools is a point of differentiation between firms. For example, if the position requires someone with specific business skills, the organization will want to understand how the search firm would build the candidate pool, if it has done this type of search before, and how successful it has been. In their assessment, the search committee will want to ask:

- Is this firm tapped into the networks needed for a successful outcome?
- Is the firm innovative in its approach in a way that will bring access to a talent pool that would otherwise not be accessible?
- Who will be working on the search? Will it be only one consultant or will there be a team assigned to build the pool, review resumes, and screen applicants?

4. Understand how the search firm is paid

Search firm services typically require an organization to pay a fee that is one-third of the position's salary plus expenses related to the search. However, fees will vary and can often be negotiated depending on the firm's guidelines and type of service provided.

- In a retained search, the organization commits to work with only that particular firm on the search.
- Some search firms will offer unbundled services. For example, an organization could hire a firm only for advice on formulating the job advertisement, or developing a candidate pool. Terms of engagement with search firms are usually negotiable.
- Check with the Purchasing Office to make sure a formal solicitation of offers is not required.

5. Final steps

- After gathering all relevant information, request references and proposals from your top choices and schedule a follow-up interview.

- A fully executed contract must be in place before the search begins. EEO information requirements and applicant tracking requirements should be included in the contract.

Search Firms Approved for Use by Materials Management

[Academic Search](#)
[Rent Consulting](#)
[TURNKEY](#)

[AGB Search](#)
[Spelman Johnson](#)

[Korn Ferry](#)
[Storbeck Search](#)

Links and Information

- [EHRA Non-Faculty Administration Website](#)
- [EHRA Non-Faculty Recruitment and Selection Website](#)
- [Legal Affairs – Search Committee Fundamentals Website](#)
- [Purchasing Department](#)
- Contact eparecruitment@uncc.edu with any questions.