

Senior Officer Search & Selection Procedures/Guidelines

Title/Subject: SENIOR OFFICER SEARCH AND SELECTION PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

Applies to: Faculty Staff Students Student Employees Visitors Contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: January 2026

Policy Owner: Human Resources

INTRODUCTION

These procedures and guidelines have been developed to inform and to assist search committees in carrying out their responsibilities in a timely, orderly, and professional manner. The President has the authority to waive all or any part of these procedures. The procedures and guidelines apply to the filling of all regular and provisional Senior Officer positions except for the President, and do not apply to interim or acting appointments or when it is necessary to temporarily reassign duties to current employees. The procedures for the selection of the President are outlined in a separate Board of Trustees policy. In addition to exercising sound judgment in the selection process, search committees must use prudent judgment regarding recruitment expenses, as they actively seek strong candidates.

It is extremely important that all searches be conducted in a manner that ensures each applicant has a positive impression of Central Michigan University (CMU). Candidates are evaluating CMU at the same time CMU is evaluating them. To attract the interest of candidates requires that we actively promote and share the positive elements of the university and surrounding community. To obtain marketing materials for CMU and the Mount Pleasant community, contact Human Resources.

As search committees proceed through the process, it is important to balance the interests of the candidate and CMU by preserving the confidentiality of the application while learning as much about the candidate as possible.

Background checks including references are important at various stages throughout the process, but it is also important to communicate closely with candidates and provide flexibility that keeps their application confidential for as long as possible.

As an executive leader, it is important that each candidate understands and demonstrates CMU's Leadership Standards and are evaluated on these standards throughout the hiring process. The university is committed to equal opportunity and non-discrimination and fosters a culture that inspires excellence.

DEFINITIONS

Applicants: An applicant is anyone who meets the minimum qualifications and expresses a continued interest in a specific vacancy by submitting an application, résumé or curriculum vitae.

Candidates: All applicants who are interviewed (including video and off-campus) become candidates.

Division Head: Any Senior Officer who has responsibility for a division of the university and reports directly to the president.

Finalists: The top candidates (typically 1-3) who come to campus for the last round of interviews are considered finalists.

Internal Candidate: For the purposes of recruitment, internal candidate refers to an employee who is currently in a benefit-eligible position and was hired by the university through a prior external search. Therefore, internal candidates exclude temporary staff, some temporary faculty, students, independent contractors, graduate assistants, and conditional employees.

Supervisor: Individual to whom the vacant position reports.

INTERNAL SEARCH

Offering career opportunities internally enhances CMU's ability to retain quality employees. The Division Head may choose to submit written justification to seek approval of the Equal Opportunity Officer and the President to conduct a search internal to the university instead of conducting an external search. By promoting from within, a vacancy will likely result that will subsequently be posted and filled through an external search. All procedures outlined in this document apply to internal searches, unless noted otherwise.

USE OF A SEARCH FIRM (does not apply to internal search)

A search firm may be used to assist in the recruitment/screening of applicants for Senior Officer positions. When a Division Head or the President has decided to utilize the services of a search firm, they should work with Human Resources for assistance in selecting the search firm. Some firms have been pre-approved; other firms may be used following a bid process (see [Search Firm Policy](#).) The supervisor of the vacant position will determine the use/role of the search firm. Supervisors must work with Human Resources before entering into a contract with a search firm. A link to CMU's [voluntary self-identification form](#) will be provided to the search firm by Human Resources.

SELECTING A SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Division Head/President to whom the vacant position reports will appoint search committee members and a chair of the search committee. The composition of the committee will represent CMU's institutional culture and advance the university's commitment to the principles of equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination. Committee membership will be approved by the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee.

Once all committee members have accepted the appointment to serve on the search committee, the Division Head/President will work with University Communications to announce the search, including committee members.

The search committee chair will be expected to work closely with the supervisor throughout the recruitment and selection process. The search committee chair will work with the supervisor to determine a timeline to ensure that the search is carried out in a timely, orderly, and professional manner.

Human Resources or its designee will assist in the search process and act as an ex officio search committee member for all Senior Officer searches. Human Resources or its designee will contact the Office of Civil Rights and Institutional Equity (OCRIE) at the beginning of the process to schedule training as part of the first meeting with the search committee.

Each committee member should play a major role in the recruitment, interviewing, screening, and evaluation of applicants as outlined in the Search Committee Charge (Attachment A).

To minimize time spent on paperwork and increase the committee's productivity, a support person may be appointed by the supervisor or the committee chair to provide assistance to the search committee. They will be prepared to assist with meeting arrangements and committee activities which should ease the burden on the search committee chair and ensure that all required contacts are made with applicants.

For consistency and efficiency, the search committee chair, Human Resources, or the search firm should handle all inquiries regarding the search including any applicant or potential applicant's written or verbal request for information about the search process or timelines. In consultation with University Communications, the search committee chair should also handle any inquiries from the news media.

If it is determined that the electronic employment application system is not going to be used to collect applications because a search firm is being used, a job posting will still be placed on CMU's job website by Human Resources.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Division Head/President to whom the vacant Senior Officer position reports approves the job description, although the search committee may be requested to provide input. The search committee and/or search firm will use the job description as the basis for developing the advertisement; therefore, the final job description will be forwarded to the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee for approval before the position is advertised or otherwise announced. All Senior Officer job descriptions and advertisements must include as a minimum qualification “demonstrated commitment to ensuring that all members of the university community can thrive” which will be evaluated during the interview process. In addition, the standard statement outlining leadership expectations will be added to every senior officer job description.

ADVERTISING

Human Resources will assist the search committee/firm with the development of the advertisement, using the approved job description as the basis for the advertisement. Senior Officer positions are advertised nationally unless an internal search has been approved.

The advertisement may include the title of the position, a description of the major responsibilities, minimum required qualifications and any desired qualifications, application deadline date, where to apply, and the approved equal opportunity (EO) statement. In addition, a standardized statement describing CMU has been developed for advertisement and may be used to promote uniformity, consistency, and accuracy in describing the university. Use of this statement is highly recommended when advertising position vacancies externally. In the interest of conserving finances, a condensed ad may be placed; however, it must include at least a brief description of the job, the approved, shortened EO statement, and refer to the CMU website for the full-text version of the job posting.

Human Resources will ensure that the advertisement is placed on the CMU jobs website (jobs.cmich.edu), which will be the only announcement for internal postings and will also assist in placing advertisements in external resources.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is not a passive activity. Supervisors and search committee members have an obligation to actively participate in the recruitment process and assist in identifying a pool of qualified candidates. The rest of this section does not apply to internal searches.

A good faith effort must be made to utilize a wide variety of sources in soliciting a pool of qualified applicants. Human Resources may assist in advising units with respect to appropriate sources and techniques that constitute a good faith effort in providing equal employment opportunity to all applicants.

Advertising may not always be effective in attracting a mix of qualified applicants. Therefore, the search committee is encouraged to use other recruitment methods aggressively, such as, making personal contacts and sending vacancy notices to various universities, businesses, organizations, professional associations, alumni groups, listservs, and trade journals.

Human Resources will share market data and a recommended salary range to the President for approval towards the beginning of the recruitment process.

RECEIPT OF RÉSUMÉS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTERS

Once an applicant completes the application process, a confirmation number will be electronically generated, acknowledging receipt of their materials. In accordance with equal employment and non-discrimination guidelines, a voluntary self-identification form is available as part of the electronic process. If a search firm is used and CMU’s electronic system is not used to gather applications, Human Resources will provide the search firm with a link to CMU’s voluntary self-identification form that must be shared with all applicants.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of the names of applicants and information gathered about them and their employing institutions is necessary to attract high quality candidates, to avoid putting their current employment in jeopardy, and to protect CMU's integrity. Anonymity is extremely important until the finalist(s) are identified and come to campus to meet with representative members of the university community. Search committee members will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and will be expected to conduct meetings and deliberations consistent with this commitment (Attachment B). Confidentiality should also be maintained even after a position is filled. Discussions or comments about applicants or the search process with individuals outside of the search committee are not appropriate.

SCREENING QUALIFICATIONS

Using the approved job description, the search committee/firm will assess every applicant's qualifications and assure that all applicants are evaluated using the same criteria. The screening of applicants should eliminate from further consideration those applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications set forth in the advertisement/job description. The electronic system allows the use of required questions that assist with screening applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications. After the review and approval of the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee, search committees may choose to conduct video or off-campus interviews with applicants in order to assist in the screening process.

Some committees may also check listed references to narrow the pool of candidates. As a professional courtesy, the search committee should inform candidates prior to checking references. At this point, reference checks should be limited to references supplied by the candidate. The search committee should honor requests to refrain from contacting particular references until the candidate reaches the finalist stage.

INTERNAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Prior to conducting the initial interview, the search committee chair will formulate interview questions in conjunction with Human Resources, which may include the input of the search committee and the supervisor. All candidates will be asked a standard question about CMU's Leadership Standards and how they have demonstrated commitment to ensuring that all members of the university community can thrive. Information gathered will include verification of circumstances under which a candidate was ever terminated or asked to resign from a position. The search committee chair will ensure that interview questions are specifically job related in order to gather pertinent information. The interview questions must be presented to the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee for approval prior to conducting interviews.

If using a search firm, the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee will need to approve questions used to pre-screen applicants. The search firm representative will present and discuss applicants who are recommended for candidate status. Search committee members may recommend other applicants for further consideration.

INTERNAL INTERVIEW APPROVAL

Prior to the initial interviews, Human Resources or designee must update the electronic hiring system to accurately reflect the status of each applicant and obtain the approval of the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee. The Equal Opportunity Officer or designee will notify Human Resources of the approval status. Once approval is received, the committee can begin making arrangements for interviews.

OFF-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS (INCLUDING VIDEO INTERVIEWS)

Interviews conducted off campus may be used to assist the search committee in determining the finalist(s) to invite for on-campus interviews. The search committee may instead choose to conduct video interviews to assist in identifying the finalist(s). Video interviews should not be recorded. This paragraph does not apply to internal searches.

WESTLAW AND INTERNET SEARCHES

Before finalist(s) are invited to campus:

1. Human Resources or designee will work with Library staff to conduct a WESTLAW search. WESTLAW provides authoritative legal, news, public records, and business information online.
2. In addition, Human Resources or designee will conduct a search of the current employer's website. The search may be used to confirm information given by the finalist(s), review publicity related to the finalist(s) and assist in analyzing any other information that may be helpful in making the final hiring decision.
3. Search committee members may also choose to search public information; however, if they choose to do so, they must follow the same process for all the finalists invited to campus. All information must be evaluated by the entire committee from a job-related perspective. If information is found that may negatively impact the candidacy of an applicant, hiring managers/search chairs must contact Human Resources.

Any information resulting from the above searches will not be used to automatically disqualify any candidate. Information will be discussed with the appropriate candidate and evaluated in connection with the responsibilities of the position. The search committee chair must be confident that a good-faith effort is made to collect all appropriate information from relevant sources (within legal guidelines).

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

Finalist(s) will be invited to campus for interviews with the search committee, representative members of the university community, the supervisor and the President. The search committee chair should work with University Communications to release the names of finalist(s) to the campus community prior to on-campus interviews. The search committee chair or designee should share a draft of the campus announcement with the candidate or search firm prior to sharing it with the campus community so candidates are aware that their names will become public. However, the President has the authority to forego open forums and not release the names of the finalists if protecting the privacy of the candidates is in the best interest of the university.

It is the responsibility of the search committee chair to establish, in conjunction with the supervisor, a schedule of campus meetings. All time spent with a finalist(s) is considered part of the interview process including social functions and meals. The search committee chair should caution everyone who meets with the finalist(s) in a business or social context to avoid asking personal questions that are not job related. Questions related to areas such as race, gender, religion, age, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, and marital status are non-job related and are not allowed when interviewing candidates for positions. For more information, see [Pre-Employment Inquiry Guide](#).

If open forums are held, faculty, staff and students should be encouraged to attend the forums. A member of the search committee must be present at all meetings to ensure that no inappropriate questions are asked of the finalist(s). Open forums may be live-streamed; however, they should not be recorded.

The finalist(s) may have lunch or dinner with the President and/or search committee to provide less formal interaction. For positions that report to the President, all finalists will be scheduled to meet with the President's direct reports. This paragraph may not apply to internal searches.

TENURE

Where academic tenure might be included in the offer of employment, the supervisor must first inform the Provost/Executive Vice President and Faculty Personnel Services (FPS) to ensure that tenure is appropriate for the position.

Once a finalist is determined and a conditional offer is made and accepted, the finalist's CV must be shared with FPS for analysis of where a grant of tenure would be appropriate. FPS will then work with the appropriate Dean to arrange a faculty review of the CV to determine if the faculty have any objection to the grant of tenure within that department. FPS will notify HR and the Provost's office, identifying the department that should be memorialized in the

appointment letter. Where possible, the departmental review and indication of support will be completed before a final appointment letter is issued.

REFERENCE CHECKS ON THE FINALIST(S)

As a professional courtesy, Human Resources or designee will inform finalist(s) prior to checking references. Reference checks are only required on the selected finalist, but the search committee or search firm may use them to assist in determining the best qualified candidates. Human Resources should honor requests to refrain from contacting particular references until the candidate reaches the finalist stage. If a finalist refuses to allow contact with a potential reference that the committee deems important, the finalist should be informed that this refusal limits the committee's ability to complete its evaluation and that the finalist may not receive full consideration.

The search firm, search committee chair and/or supervisor of the position are encouraged to check "off-the-list" references on the finalists to assist in making the hiring decision; in addition, an attempt must be made to contact the selected finalist's current supervisor. The search committee chair will remain accountable for responsibilities delegated to other members of the search committee.

SELECTION APPROVAL AND CRIMINAL/FINANCIAL CHECK (Prior to a job offer)

Prior to any job offer, Human Resources or designee will work with the supervisor to document a rationale for the selection of the recommended hire and a reason why each of the other finalists were not selected. Responsibility and authority to select and appoint Senior Officers resides with the President; therefore, the supervisor will affirm in the justification document that the President approves the hire prior to making a contingent job offer. For Associate Dean positions, the president delegates the hiring decision to the Provost/Executive Vice President; however, the appointment letter will still be issued from the president. The justification must be electronically forwarded to the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee for approval. Once Human Resources receives the approval from the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee, they will notify the supervisor that the recommended hire has been approved.

The Division Head/President must consult with Human Resources regarding the terms and conditions of employment. Human Resources or the search firm will conduct a state and national criminal history check and a national sex offenders check on the selected finalist, in accordance with current policy. For selected Senior Officer positions, a financial background check may also be necessary after obtaining consent of the selected finalist.

Information obtained from background checks will be shared with the Division Head and with the President as appropriate. Any information of concern will be discussed with the President or his/her designee before a final offer of employment is made.

SALARY AND BENEFITS (prior to job offer)

Human Resources will assist in determining an appropriate salary for the selected finalist. Consideration will be given to the candidate's education and overall relevant experience, current applicable external market data, and the experience and salary of internal employees in comparable positions. The final salary for Senior Officers must be approved by the President prior to any offer of employment.

A summary of Senior Officer benefits can be found at <https://www.cmich.edu/fas/hr/Documents/bso.pdf>. Benefits are standard and no one has the authority to offer benefits outside of those outlined in the Senior Officer Handbook. For the full terms of employment, refer to the Senior Officer Handbook at <https://cdn.cmich.edu/sitefinity/documents/senior-officer-handbook.pdf>

OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Once the hiring justification has been approved by the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee, the supervisor may extend a contingent offer of employment. This will permit direct conversation about important topics such as initial salary, start date, benefits, moving expenses, house hunting expenses, at-will status, information about the community,

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and all other terms/conditions of employment. The offer of employment will remain contingent until successfully passing the background check(s) and affirming the required degree, even when a search firm has been utilized.

The amount of reimbursement for moving expenses is negotiable up to the equivalent of two times the employee's monthly wage base, not to exceed \$20,000. As an alternative, a recruitment bonus may be offered that could be used at the employee's discretion, including moving household belonging to the area. The same maximum applies to the recruitment bonus. All moving reimbursement and recruitment bonuses are taxable income for the employee. Any exception to the maximum must be approved in advance by the president.

When the final selection has been approved and an offer is made and accepted, the supervisor will be responsible for an announcement to the search committee, senior officers, and the campus community. The supervisor or designee should work with University Communications regarding the campus announcement. Human Resources will notify the search firm, if applicable.

APPOINTMENT LETTER

Human Resources will generate the official appointment letter, which will be shared with the Division Head and signed by the President, prior to sharing the letter with the new Senior Officer. The appointment letter should be signed by the new Senior Officer accepting the terms and conditions of employment and returned to HR for the personnel file. Human Resources will provide a copy of the appointment letter to the applicable supervisor, and when the appointment is in the Academic Division, also to Faculty Personnel Services. Human Resources is responsible for entering the applicable information into SAP for all Senior Officers.

NOTIFICATION TO UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

After an offer of employment has been accepted, Human Resources, the Division Head or the search firm will personally contact those who were interviewed but not selected. It is recommended that the system generated notifications be used to notify applicants not interviewed that the position has been filled.

ORIENTATION

The Associate Vice President of Human Resources will meet with newly appointed Senior Officers for general orientation purposes. The supervisor will provide other appropriate orientation to new Senior Officers.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines related to this subject.

Related Policies and Laws (Add Number & Name of Significantly Related Policy(ies))	
Appendices (Optional)	
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ATTACHMENT A – SEARCH COMMITTEE CHARGE (EXAMPLE)**Search Committee Charge**
Position Title

Optional statements related to search firms are included in italics

The search committee will actively seek nominations and applications from qualified candidates for the position of title of Central Michigan University. *The search committee will be assisted by, (name of search firm), an executive search firm.*

The search committee and *search firm* will use a job description developed by (*title of the supervisor*) and reviewed by the committee and the search firm and approved by the Division Head/President as the basis for vacancy notices and advertisements.

The search committee is asked to meet with the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee, *including a representative of the search firm*, to review the elements of an equal opportunity and non-discrimination search and the role of the Office of Civil Rights and Institutional Equity (OCRIE).

The search firm representative will meet with the search committee to present and discuss likely candidates. Search committee members may present other candidates for further consideration.

Advertising may not always be effective in attracting a mix of qualified applicants. Therefore, the search committee is encouraged to use other recruitment methods aggressively, such as making personal contacts and sending vacancy notices to various universities, businesses, organizations, professional associations, alumni groups, listservs and trade journals.

Using the approved job description, the search committee will assess all candidates and, after the approval of the Equal Opportunity Officer or designee, conduct confidential interviews with select candidates. The search committee will then develop an unranked list of up to four finalists to invite to campus to meet with the President and representative members of the university community.

The President is very interested in the search committee's assessment of the most likely candidates. Responsibility and authority to select and appoint the final candidate rests with the President.

All applications and nominations are confidential until the final stage. Confidentiality for nominees and applicants, except any final candidates who may be invited to campus to meet with representative members of the university community, is extremely important. Confidentiality of the names of candidates and information developed about them and their employing institutions is necessary to attract high quality finalists, to avoid putting their current positions in jeopardy, and to protect Central Michigan University's integrity. The search committee will be required to conduct its meetings and deliberations consistent with this commitment. Each member of the search committee will sign an Agreement to Confidentiality and a Code of Ethics.

ATTACHMENT B – CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**Agreement to Confidentiality and Code of Ethics**

The person signing below is a member of the search committee asked to assist in recruiting and assessing candidates for the position of title. Each member of the search committee is asked to execute this agreement to maintain confidentiality and to adhere to a code of ethics.

By my signature below, I pledge to adhere to the following:

1. As a member of the search committee, I understand that the work of the search committee requires that I have access to information developed and received about applicants and their employing institutions. I understand that confidentiality of this information is necessary to attract high quality finalists, to avoid putting their current positions in jeopardy, and to protect Central Michigan University's integrity. I agree that I will not reveal the identity of, or any other information about, applicants either during the search or after the search is complete, unless obligated to reveal such under the law. Discussions or comments with individuals outside of the search committee are not appropriate.
2. I acknowledge that only the chair of the search committee, in consultation with University Communications, is authorized to speak to the news media on behalf of the search committee.
3. I certify that I am not an applicant for the position and that I do not have a predetermined applicant for the position.
4. I agree to disclose promptly to the search committee any appearance of real or potential conflict of interest in a relationship between an applicant and myself.
5. I understand that confidentiality does not preclude me from sharing concerns about the search process with Human Resources and/or the Vice President/President.
6. I will be fair, accurate, honest, and responsible in my management of information germane to the search. I will guard against inaccuracies, carelessness, bias, and distortion made by either emphasis or omission of information. I will strive to treat issues impartially and handle controversial subjects dispassionately. I will give accurate and complete reports on applicants to the search committee chair. I will place the best interests of Central Michigan University ahead of all special and personal interests, and I will use common sense and good judgment in applying ethical principles to screening work.
7. I understand that the chair of the search committee may dismiss me from the search committee if I violate this agreement, and that the President may dismiss the chair of the search committee if he/she violates this agreement.

Committee Member Signature

Date