

Tulane University

Office of Academic Affairs & Provost

Search Waiver Policy for Faculty Appointments

Overview

As a leading research institution, we know that the way we recruit, hire, and support faculty shapes the strength and future of our university. A successful faculty search – one that results in the hire of the most exciting, impactful scholar – rests on two foundational pillars: building a strong and broad pool of applicants and conducting a fair, well-structured process for evaluating candidates that allows the strongest candidates to come to the fore. Our success depends upon our ability to grow and strengthen our community by attracting talented and ambitious individuals from all backgrounds and experiences and providing each Tulanian with the opportunity to pursue their goals and aspirations and reach their fullest potential. This commitment to fair hiring is integrated into our recruitment operations and memorialized in our policies and practices. As stated in our Faculty Handbook, at a minimum, a national search is required for all full-time Tulane faculty appointments.

Full and open national searches are also required by law. This helps ensure that employment opportunities are accessible to all applicants and that the hiring process complies with equal opportunity requirements. As an employer and federal contractor, Tulane University is required to provide equal employment opportunities. Tulane University is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, shared ancestry, or any other status or classification protected by federal, state, or local law. Faculty candidates may hold a range of scholarly interests, lived experiences, and viewpoints. To uphold our commitment to academic excellence and fairness, committees should evaluate candidates on the basis of their qualifications, experience, teaching and research contributions, and potential to contribute to our academic community, and not on the basis of their demographic characteristics (such as race, age, national origin, shared ancestry, sex, disability, veteran status, religion, Immigration status, etc.). Conducting full and open searches for academic employment positions supports Tulane University in fulfilling these requirements under federal and state laws.

When to Request to Waive the Normal Search Process

In rare circumstances and on a case-by-case basis, the requirement of conducting an open search prior to review for appointment may be waived. Although compliance with employment and other federal laws determines the boundaries of search waivers, the content is driven by the University's dedication to recruiting a high-quality academic workforce. At a minimum, individuals under consideration must meet the high expectations for employment at Tulane University.

The following are broad guidelines for circumstances when a waiver for an open search may be considered. To emphasize, these are examples of factors that may be considered when assessing a request for a search waiver, but the presence of such circumstances does not guarantee the approval of the request.

1. **Spousal/Partner Hire:** Tulane University recognizes that addressing the needs of dual career couples is an essential part of recruiting and retaining the highest quality faculty. A search waiver may be considered if the successful recruitment or retention of a faculty member is ultimately dependent on an academic appointment for the faculty's spouse/partner.
2. **Target of Excellence Hire:** for cases where there is an unusual opportunity to hire an individual whose distinctive qualifications and extraordinary promise or accomplishments will contribute significantly to the university's mission of academic excellence. In all cases, the individual would be on the short list of top candidates if an open search were conducted, would be highly sought after by peer institutions, and may be on the market for a very limited time period.
3. **Individual Named in Grant or Offer letter:** when a candidate is either specifically named in a contract or grant or has unique qualifications for a position funded by the contract/grant.
4. **Specialist:** very difficult or rare specialty for which there are few people who fit the need.
5. **Emergency Hire:** For example, a provider leaves with little or no notice, and there is an urgent need, such as patient care or legal client responsibilities.
6. **Research Team:** When a candidate is part of an existing research team of a new faculty member.
7. **Other:**
 - a. **Search Firm or Training Grant Hires:** A search waiver may be considered when the unit plans to hire a search firm to fill a faculty vacancy or is recruiting post-doctoral hires through a training grant (this must be indicated on the justification)
 - b. **National or Field-Specific Hiring Association:** A search waiver may be considered when the candidate pool is found exclusively through recognized national associations that collect prospective applicant credentials for the purpose of connecting them with potential employers or vice versa. (For example: some faculty searches in the Law School.)

Requesting a Search Waiver

Faculty Hiring – including search waivers – is processed through Interfolio. To request a search waiver, the unit must have a valid reason based on the situations outlined above, justification for that reason, and necessary supporting documentation. To get started, please read the instructions on the Provost Office website.

When is an Open Search Unnecessary or not Applicable?

An open, national search is not necessary for the following:

1. **Adjunct Hires:** No searches are required for Adjunct Hires, which are not full-time faculty positions.
2. **Internal Promotion:** when someone receives a promotion, recognizing growth and development in professional knowledge, and the responsibility of the potential appointee, because it is not a new full-time faculty hire. (Please note – an earlier full-time faculty appointment must have been the result of an open search or an approved search waiver.)
3. **Change in Organizational Structure:** when there is a change in someone's title required or resulting from an organizational restructure. (Please note – an earlier full-time faculty appointment must have been the result of an open search or an approved search waiver.)
4. **Visiting Scholar or Researcher:** As per the faculty handbook, these are not faculty titles.

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Guidelines Owner:	Office of Academic Affairs & Provost
Coordinating Unit(s):	Office of Academic Excellence & Opportunity (AEO)
Contact Name:	Kady Lamb
Contact Title:	Assistant Provost for Finance & Operations, Chief of Staff
Contact Email:	aapops@tulane.edu
Contact Phone:	(504) 865-5261