

June 18, 2025

Chancellor's Cabinet
Council of Deans

Re: EVCP pre-approval of hiring of independent consultants and consulting firms

Dear Colleagues,

As we look to ways to economize in the face of our budget challenges, one area of expense that has engendered concern is the engagement of external consultants. While there can, of course, be benefit to be had from engaging outside consultants, their use has not been without some controversy, insofar as there have been a number of engagements for which the benefit to cost ratio has been lower than ideal. As a consequence, **the campus will pilot a program requiring EVCP pre-approval of independent consultant contracts representing \$100,000 or more in total cost, effective July 1, 2025.**

An independent consultant is an individual not employed by the University of proven professional or technical competence who provides primarily professional or technical advice to the University and the University does not control either the manner of performance or the result of the service.

As of July 1, 2025, any unit wishing to engage an [independent consultant or consulting firm](#) for a new contract or purchase order (PO) valued at \$100,000 annually must first obtain approval from the Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost (EVCP) or designate. EVCP approval must be obtained before any agreement is signed, work begins, or a BearBuy requisition is submitted. This step is in addition to all of the campus's other [standard procurement procedures](#).

Requests for approval should be limited to one page and include:

- A description of the anticipated impact — including potential benefits and risks — on the quality and effectiveness of the core University functions of teaching, research, service;
- Expected cost reductions and/or revenue enhancements;
- Explanation of why the services cannot be provided in-house; and
- A scope of the work, including the desired approach to the problem, specific limitations, questions requiring answers, and the extent to which assistance, resources, and cooperation from the University will be available to the consultant;
- An estimated time schedule including dates for commencement of performance, submission of progress reports, and for completion of the service;
- The terms under which progress payments will be allowed.

Additional documentation can be included as attachments. The request should be endorsed by the department head and list a contact person in case of questions.

The following are not covered by this program:

- Employment of outside legal counsel;
- Outside mediators employed for dispute/grievance resolution;

- Consultant services on contracts and grants funds;
- Consultants from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL);
- Appointments of architects and engineers for *approved* projects;
- Renewals of contracts existing prior to July 1, 2025; and
- Professional services agreements.

In advance of July 1st, the EVCP immediate office team will share guidance for how to submit requests. We hope that this additional review can be done in 3–5 business days. Please plan for adequate lead time for additional downstream reviews and processing (including competitive bidding) through the relevant campus offices.

This is a one-year pilot. Our office in collaboration with Supply Chain Management will develop metrics and criteria to determine success and will also track volume, approval rate, and total spend and solicit unit feedback to help inform the 2026 decision on extending the program. The Chancellor's Cabinet and the Council of Deans will discuss the benefits of the program in spring 2026 and decide whether to extend it beyond June 30, 2026.

Questions about this pilot program, including whether any particular engagement falls under it, should be sent to evcp@berkeley.edu. Andrea Lambert-Tan and Jules Freedman in my office can also be of assistance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Regards,



Benjamin Hermalin
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

cc: Associate Cabinet
Chief Administrative Officers
Associate Vice Chancellors and Associate Vice Provosts
Divisional Finance Leaders
Jules Friedman, Finance Director, Office of the EVCP
Tim O'Connor, Director, Finance and Business Services, Office Of The Chancellor
Grace Ho, Financial Analyst, Office of the EVCP

