

**SECTION 10:                   VENDOR INTERACTIONS**

**SUBJECT:                     CONTRACTOR REQUESTS FOR REFERENCES**

**POLICY:** University of Washington contractors may request a reference from the University of Washington. The University declines to provide general references to avoid endorsing a particular company's products or services. However, the University can verify certain information regarding the contractor for other prospective customers.

**PROCEDURE:**

The University frequently requests that bidders provide the University with references, including references from other similarly-sized Institutions of Higher Education. These references give the University additional insight into the contractor's capacity and ability to perform the services or provide the products needed by the University. Conversely, other Institutions of Higher Education or large companies may request references from a University of Washington contractor, and the contractor may list the University as a reference without the University's knowledge.

Procurement Services is not required to provide references to contractors. Procurement Services staff may decline to provide a reference for a contractor for any reason. If declining a request to provide a reference, inform the contractor that the University cannot provide references for all contractors, and only provides references for contractors with which Procurement Services has had significant interactions.

In the event that another Institution of Higher Education contacts the University of Washington regarding a current vendor, Procurement Services staff may respond by providing the following information:

- 1) Contract status
- 2) Length of contract with University
- 3) Specific contractor capabilities
  - a. eProcurement catalog supplier, ability to offer custom quotes, etc.

If a contractor requests a reference letter, verify that the letter will be used internally or as a requested reference by a potential customer, and not published externally. The University is not prohibited from verifying the contractual relationship between the University and the contractor, but publicly posted verifications of a contractual relationship may be construed as an endorsement. The University does not provide endorsements for contractors, except in very specific situations, and for particular purposes.<sup>1</sup> The template reference letter may be used for any requested references.

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<sup>1</sup> Typically, any endorsement of a Contractor will be handled as a sponsorship or marketing agreement by University of Washington Marketing