Perrett Laver is a leading global executive search firm with one of the largest global higher education practices of any search firm in the world. Perrett Laver’s Global Chairs and Professors Practice offers highly specialised global search services for research leadership appointments in higher education.

We work on the appointment of full, tenured Professors (many of them to named and endowed Chairs), Research Centre Directors, and other research leaders for world-leading academic institutions, covering all academic disciplines and including industry-engaged, business and professional practice-oriented, and clinical research positions.

Geographical Spread of Search Candidates in our Recent Work

- 37% United Kingdom
- 20% Europe
- 17% North America
- 20% Asia-Pacific
- 6% Others

Perrett Laver has conducted full Professor searches for 27% of the world’s top 100 Universities.

Senior Academics and Administrators well known to Perrett Laver

Appointees relocated internationally to take up their appointment

180,000
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The world’s leading universities recognise that the worldwide search for exceptional research talent is extremely competitive and that identifying, engaging and securing such talent represents a major strategic challenge.

**The Challenge of Recruiting World Class Professors – Is There a Better Way?**

Any research-led institution wishing to join or to remain in the ranks of leading global universities faces this clear imperative: to secure and support the world’s very best academic talent.

Whereas in the past it would have been sufficient simply to advertise, or use existing networks and knowledge, this is no longer the case. At times to use this limited approach can even result in poor appointments as a result of expediency in the face of weak applicant fields.

As the university sector grows globally and as international faculty mobility increases, the demand for world-leading research capability intensifies. Universities have to test their assumptions when appointing Professors.
We have powerful networks but can we be sure that we can identify all of the potentially relevant candidates for a given role? Are we sure that the knowledge and networks of our current faculty are globally exhaustive?

We are strongly committed to securing academic leaders but do we have the professional resource proactively to approach and interact with many scores (often hundreds) of potential candidates around the world?

We know our institution’s needs inside out but are we really best-placed to engage and have candid conversations with academics situated in other universities? Do we even ask them the right questions when trying to explore if they will genuinely move institution?

We have a firm resolve to attract leading academics but do we have the professional experience and detachment to run appropriately candidate-centric processes and to raise and attend to detailed candidate concerns early enough in those processes?

We are well-equipped to evaluate candidates for academic leadership roles but do we know and do all that could be done to increase the proportion of offers to acceptances?

We rightly resist any lowering of standards when academic colleagues fail to secure an appointment themselves but have we calculated and considered the high (and multiple) costs of a prolonged vacancy against alternative recruitment approaches?

We recognise the impact of attracting ‘big hitters’ to our institutions but does being too focused on that mean that we miss out on next generation Professors – the rising stars?

In the face of these challenges, the critical advantage rests with those institutions that have the edge in professionally conceived and executed recruitment of the world’s best academic leaders.

Having built the largest dedicated and expert team focused on Professorial appointments, Perrett Laver has been privileged to give that edge to our university clients around the world by providing them with the ingredients of success in this key strategic area; namely, our global knowledge and professional expertise.
Research Impact

Transformative research is not measured exclusively by the conventional metrics applied to publications, but also by the ability to tackle the global challenges of our age. Water, security, energy, climate change, governance, transport, sustainable cities, intercultural interaction, human rights and health are just some of the interconnected and transnational issues facing society, and top researchers enable a university to speak with authority into these wider debates.

Income Generating Power

The current trend in research grant allocation is towards ‘rewarding excellence’ and favours international and multi-institutional research projects. Along with this, an increasingly important component of universities’ income comes from industrial engagement and professional/practitioner interaction. For these reasons, research academics, who themselves are both recognised leaders within their discipline and internationally networked, are especially effective at raising research and enterprise revenue.

Standing

Attracting and developing elite intellectual talent brings with it the opportunity to enhance an institution’s external standing. Whether measured by league table positioning or international ‘brand’, the research accomplishments achieved by world leading faculty have a powerful impact on how a given university is regarded.
Student Attraction

Domestic attention to league tables combined with rapid growth of the international student population (currently standing at around 2.5 million and set to triple in the next ten years) means that attracting the right number of high-calibre students is a top priority for leading universities. In view of their effect upon a university’s ethos, standing and research impact, recruiting world leading research academics in turn gives a university significant advantage in this fiercely competitive global student ‘market’.

Ethos

At the heart of a world-leading university is its research activity. The community of scholars that lead this and the outputs they produce together drive the culture of an institution. By attracting the brightest academic talent, universities foster a culture and set of behaviours which result in a more vibrant academic community committed to the creation and application of new knowledge.

Teaching

The virtuous circle and the feedback loop of excellence in teaching and research has long been understood. Research-informed teaching is fresh and authoritative and inculcates in students the skills and attitudes of authentic academic endeavour. In turn, the questions, insights, and challenges of the classroom provide a stimulus and a steer in the development of the very best research.
Identify, Engage, Secure

Perrett Laver’s three-fold strategy for sourcing outstanding academic leaders for your university.
It is our view that more often than not it is exciting, thoughtful and exhaustive research strategy which yields the most compelling fields of candidates able to meet the complex sector challenges. This, of course, is the very foundation of proper executive search: that we find people.

Perrett Laver’s global outlook, market intelligence and extensive experience in finding talent enable us to map the global landscape thus ensuring that the best individuals are identified and approached.

Our experience of global searches for senior appointments has yielded a relationship with over 180,000 Professors and senior academics currently serving in the world’s leading universities across a range of academic and person-specific information serves as a starting point for a given search.

However, the use of this existing knowledge is a very small part of candidate identification. Our researchers conduct original, intensive, and global search on each assignment, identifying both authoritative sources and potential candidates and directly approaching them leading to a very large number of conversations with relevant academics.

In addition to a comprehensive and sophisticated analysis of publication data and citation indices, we investigate and speak with the editorial boards of world leading journals, with those who are identified as major research grant-holders, with members of research assessment panels, learned societies and academies in various countries, and keynote speakers at international academic conferences in order to ensure that we have thorough coverage (which includes, where relevant, individuals with the requisite academic accomplishment and capability currently serving outside of academia).

In what becomes a highly iterative process researchers are able to cover the relevant ‘candidate universe’ thus identifying outstanding academic leaders for your university.
The strongest candidates for a particular position are rarely aware of the opportunity since they are unlikely to be actively seeking new employment. Even when they become aware, they will have a variety of professional and personal questions and concerns which are best addressed by multiple conversations with a trusted intermediary. Often these concerns are ignored in early interactions, and faculty are led (by engaging conversations about ‘research fit’, for example) into assuming that someone is interested in a role when in fact, once other factors are taken into account, they are not.
Perrett Laver gains the attention of the high-calibre individuals that we have identified through nuanced and well-informed advocacy combined with subtle persistence. The very fact of being personally approached and of speaking with a professional third-party can be decisive in prompting a candidate to engage with a particular appointment process.

This engagement deepens as Perrett Laver provides potential candidates with an accurate, comprehensive, candid, responsive, and compelling presentation of the university, the academic unit and the position in question.

Multiple conversations with these individuals enable a relationship to develop in which candidates’ concerns and questions can be addressed with attentiveness and precision.

In these ways Perrett Laver’s work is powerful in engaging outstanding academic leaders for your university.

The resource and professional experience we bring ensures that without exception the proactive head-hunting exercise we lead results in strong candidates, who would otherwise not have engaged with the appointment, showing a willingness to explore it seriously and positively.
Actually securing the hire of a Professor is an extremely complicated matter and often requires close attention to numerous questions of detail. There is a long journey to travel between an individual indicating his or her willingness to be considered as a candidate and that individual actually signing with the university. A thorough and equitable appointment process must be put in place, often complex logistical challenges must be met, detailed contractual negotiations must be concluded and alongside all of these, the developing relationship with the individual must be sensitively handled.
Perrett Laver’s deep experience of the challenges of this phase of making senior appointments, combined with our purposeful attentiveness both to people and to process, enables us to offer thorough support to our university clients in these matters.

A move from one university to another, often from one country to another, is a life-changing one for any individual. We work intentionally on seventeen separate considerations when helping a candidate to decide upon a move.

Perrett Laver’s ability to identify and discuss these issues in the earlier stages is of benefit to candidates and the university alike, reducing the likelihood that time-consuming, or even deal-breaking, problems (surprises!) will emerge further down the line.

Combined with our administrative attention to detail, the logistical support we provide, and our ongoing candidate relationship management, these approaches can be critical as Perrett Laver assists you in securing outstanding academic leaders for your university.
Perrett Laver has one of the largest Higher Education executive search practices in the world, having assisted on the appointment of over a thousand University Presidents, Vice-Chancellors, Rectors and senior academic administrative leaders. We have the only major and dedicated Global Chairs & Professors practice and advise each year many of the world’s best universities.

As we have developed advisory relationships with many of the world’s premier universities (including one in five of the top 100), their recruitment needs have led us to develop our Global Chairs & Professors practice.

**Exceptional Global Reach**

Repeatedly our clients, themselves located all over the world, remark upon the global spread of our candidate fields. World-leading research academics are mainly to be found in around 800 of the world’s 15,000 higher education institutions but those 800 universities are situated in approaching 50 countries and Perrett Laver engages relevant sources and candidates without reference to national boundaries.

**Bespoke Professional Service**

From high-volume research leadership recruitment campaigns of up to 40 full professors through to single complex and challenging appointments, we provide flexible and tailored service to our clients, offering additional benefits such as salary comparisons, market intelligence, and reputational reports.
Our Experience

Expert Across All Disciplines

As can be seen elsewhere in this brochure, we have conducted searches across the entire range of academic disciplines from Medical and Life Sciences through Engineering and Technology to the Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

Our work by Academic Discipline

- **31%** Medicine and Life Sciences
- **27%** Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- **24%** Business and Law
- **18%** Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Transformational Success Rate

Perrett Laver’s work on Chair and Professorial positions results in **85%** of searches concluding in a successful appointment.

Additional Hires

18% of our searches result in additional hires being made beyond those originally intended.
We ensure diverse fields for every appointment. We believe that a diverse range of perspectives amongst academic research leaders and administrators is essential for institutions to stay at the cutting edge in a competitive global market. Our searches play a very important part in the enhancement of this diversity. In every search campaign we work with clients to ensure balanced fields in terms of candidates’ gender, ethnic background, stage of career, and nationality.

In doing so we are deeply committed to equality of opportunity and are particularly well placed to identify female candidates and those from minority backgrounds and to advance their cause, always providing that the best candidates are put before the selection committee.
Our Commitment to Diversity
Our Invitation

The mission of Perrett Laver’s Global Chairs & Professors practice is to play a part in addressing some of the world’s key medical, social, material and intellectual challenges by identifying, engaging and securing outstanding academic leaders for universities with impact.

As one of the world’s leading executive search firms, Perrett Laver has a depth of relevant experience, a powerful search methodology, rich sector knowledge, and a values-based commitment to the transformative power of higher education which have enabled us to provide outstanding professional service to our university clients. We would be pleased to discuss with you ways in which we can support your university as it recruits the research leaders of tomorrow.

www.perrettlaver.com
Exceptional Global Reach

Perrett Laver’s Global Chairs & Professors practice has been pleased to provide support to universities around the world. For us, ‘global comes as standard’ and our assumption is that relevant candidates may be found in any and every part of the world. Our widespread networks and intensive search methodology provide outstanding global reach and the map below illustrates the international spread of shortlisted candidates in recent professorial searches.

Typically, universities have relied upon advertisements to recruit Chairs and Professors. On average, fewer than 20% of our shortlisted candidates apply as a result of public advertisements. Crucially, over 80% of our candidate fields result from our pro-active “head-hunting” campaigns reaching a rich diversity of global talent largely untapped by the traditional methods of academic recruitment.