

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

INVITATION TO BID
THIS IS NOT AN
ORDER

1. The university is an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is exempt from any State tax or Federal excise tax
2. Unless otherwise stated, the unit price shall be the net price. Separate unit and total prices must be shown if applicable.
3. Unless otherwise stated, all quoted prices shall be FOB university address inside delivery.

Responses must be received on or before Friday, July 19, 2019 by 3:00 P.M. at ewilson@salemstate.edu. We prefer electronic submissions.

4. Salem State University reserves the right to waive informalities and to reject all bids; or to accept the bid deemed best for the Commonwealth
5. For additional information or questions:

Evelyn Wilson, Senior Director of Purchasing & Vendor Relations
Purchasing Department
352 Lafayette Street, Administration Building, 2nd Floor, Salem MA 01970
Phone: 978-542-7321

6. Reference: **RFP 2020-02 Diplomas, Diploma Covers and Diploma Mailings**

SPECIFICATIONS	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
See Attached Specifications		

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The contractor agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, sex, color, religious creed, national origin, and/or ancestry. The contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places notices to be provided by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination with respect to the Fair Employment Practice laws of the Commonwealth which are herein made of this contract reference.

Vendor Information

COMPANY

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

TELEPHONE

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

NAME TITLE

FEDERAL EMPLOYER'S ID CODE 9 DIGITS



SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
352 Lafayette Street
Salem, MA 01970

DIPLOMAS, DIPLOMA COVERS, AND DIPLOMA MAILING

Salem State University is requesting written proposals from qualified vendors to provide diplomas, diploma covers, and direct mailing of diplomas to degree recipients. This is a request for proposals (RFP) for a five-year contract. It is expected that this agreement will commence on or about July 1, 2019, and be in effect for five years until July 31, 2024, and may be renewable thereafter for three (3) one-year terms.

The successful vendor should be able to fill all orders for diplomas and diploma covers as needed, not only for the initial orders, but also for replacement requests as needed and directed throughout the life of the contract. In addition, the vendor should be able to directly mail diplomas to degree recipients according to established timelines. Prices quoted will remain in effect until the renewal date. The vendor must be able to supply technical expertise and make recommendations when needed. The vendor must assign a customer service representative to the university and have a strong history of good customer service and sufficient staffing to ensure the provision of the services outlined in this RFP throughout the life of this contract. The representative's name and direct phone number must be provided. The vendor must be able to supply design services for possible modifications to the diploma and diploma cover design as necessary. The vendor must be able to package and ship in quantities specified. The vendor must guarantee that packaging and shipping shall provide adequate protection against damage and/or deterioration. All quotations must be F.O.B. destination, freight prepaid. Inside delivery is required. The preferred vendor must not only be able to deliver at the specified time and date, but according to the turn around time specified below.

- A. Procurement Purpose: Provision of high-quality diplomas and diploma covers and direct mailing of diplomas to graduates of Salem State University.
- B. Evaluation Criteria: The university will select a vendor on the basis of information provided in the RFP and award of this contract shall be made to the bidder offering the best value response to the goals and performance requirements outlined in the RFP. Evaluation of the response will include, but not be limited to, the following criteria:
 - 1. quality of samples and mailers;
 - 2. the total, fixed price for the services and products outlined in the RFP;
 - 3. the bidder's past experience with providing similar diplomas and diploma covers to institutions of higher education similar in size and nature to Salem State University;
 - 4. the bidder's past experience in mailing diplomas directly to students in higher education institutions similar in size and nature to Salem State University;
 - 5. the bidder's ability to begin the specified work described in the RFP for the production and delivery of said diplomas and diploma covers within the required scheduled time;
 - 6. quality of the references from the bidder's existing customers, including but not limited to the quality of the product, the timeliness of service and production, and the level of customer service provided;
 - 7. the turnaround time on providing services outlined in this RFP;
 - 8. the bidder's responsiveness to and understanding of the requirements of the RFP.
 - 9. Bidder must specify its diploma error rate and describe the procedures in place to ensure the stated accuracy.

C. SPECIFICATIONS ON DIPLOMAS:

1. Vendor must be able to produce diplomas printed on diploma parchment with an engraved Salem State University seal in gold, the graduation year to be printed as a faux watermark across the diploma and all other printing and embossing in raised black lettering. Each diploma will have two signatures, that of the President of the University and the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
2. Diploma Size: 11" X 8.5", landscape orientation. Diploma will be embossed with name, degree, major, date, and named college or school, where applicable (e.g. Bertolon School of Business, Maguire Meservey College of Health and Human Services) as well as the standard language of degree conferral and signatures of the conferring officials. Master and Baccalaureate diplomas will be the same size.
3. At least nine degree titles of MASTERS and 7 BACCALAUREATE degree titles will be awarded. Both MASTERS and BACCALAUREATE degrees will also carry the academic program information in addition to the degree conferred.
4. Approximate annual numbers of degrees:

Masters:	500-600
Baccalaureate:	1500-1700
5. Listings for diploma mailings will be available one month after the conferral dates which occur three times annually; diplomas shall be mailed directly to degree recipients by vendor according to schedule outlined in Section E below.
6. Vendor must be able to turn around all diploma orders, no matter the size, in 10 business days or less.
7. Ability to provide special order diplomas outside the regular graduation periods within a turnaround time of 10 business days.
8. Ability to provide 24-hour turnaround time on emergency diploma orders throughout the year.
9. Vendor must be able to demonstrate best practice in credentialing security and meet international standards for diploma credentialing.
10. Given our research of and possible interest in certified electronic diplomas in the future, vendor must have the capability to produce a secure, electronic version of the paper diploma and should include the following features:
 - a. Embedded document security meeting all industry document security standards
 - b. Unique identifier numbering system
 - c. Digital signatures for each diploma.
 - d. Each electronic diploma can be revoked or reinstated by the University through an on-line management system provided by the vendor
 - e. The University would be looking for a fully outsourced service, so the vendor's electronic diploma service must be fully automated.
 - f. Vendor must be able to demonstrate a significant number of successful launches of their electronic diploma among 4-year, higher education institutions. The University reserves the right to ask for vendor's complete client list for this service.
11. Vendor must have a web based, on-line management system for the submittal of paper and electronic diploma orders. A description of its capabilities should be enclosed. This system should be non-proprietary, requiring no special programming and allow the University to submit their orders in Excel. Features to include, but not limited to:
 - a. Status of orders must be available 24 hrs. a day.
 - b. Orders must be searchable by student allowing the school to view all information pertaining to that order, such as, when the Student's diploma (including electronic diploma) was ordered, when it was shipped, where it was shipped, any tracking information, and all degree information.
 - c. Upload and view all signatures on file with bidder.
 - d. Must include complimentary email notification system to students when their document ships

12. Vendor must specify its diploma error rate and describe the procedures that are in place to ensure the stated accuracy.
13. Vendor must describe the policies and procedures in place to ensure accuracy and quality of Direct Mailing Service.

D. SPECIFICATIONS ON DIPLOMA COVERS:

1. 6,000 diploma covers to be ordered per three-year contract cycle, 2,000 to be delivered to Salem State University in the second week of April annually, the balance to be stored by vendor.
2. Style: Flexible. Color: Navy Blue Chevo. Insert size: 11" x 8.5". Hinge: Long Top Inside Bottom Panel: White gloss board with white corner pockets. Foil: Front stamped in gold with the Salem State University seal and school name.
3. Expected delivery date at Salem State University of portion of annual diploma cover order on or before April 15th of each year of the contract.

E. SPECIFICATIONS ON DIPLOMA MAILING

Provide direct mailing three times per year of diplomas and to degree recipients; a mailing list of degree recipients to be provided in electronic format in an Excel or CSV file by the university to the vendor. Diploma mailers must provide the appearance of mailing as if directly from the University, e.g. using the University's return mailing address. Diplomas to be mailed according to the following schedule and approximate numbers:

- (a) May conferral date: approximately 1,350 total diplomas mailed on or before the second week of July;
- (b) August conferral date: approximately 400 total diplomas mailed on or before the second week of October;
- (c) January conferral date: approximately 450 total diplomas mailed on or before the second week of March.

F. RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The respondent recognizes that in selecting a provider of the requested services and/or items, Salem State University will rely, in part on the answers provided in response to this section. Accordingly, respondent warrants to the best of its knowledge that all responses are true, correct and complete. Salem State University reserves the right to confirm the information provided below.

Provide concise, complete answers to each question on a separate page if necessary.

1. Company Profile:

- (a) Number of Years in Business: _____
- (b) Type of Operation: Individual Partnership Corporation Government
- (c) Number of Employees: _____
- (d) Annual Sales Volume: _____
- (e) Is your company currently in default on any loan agreement or financing agreement with any bank, financial institution, or other entity? _____
- (f) Provide a customer reference list of at least (5) references for whom vendor has provided and mailed diplomas for higher education institutions, preferably similar in size and nature to the university. For each reference please include the following information:
- (1) Name of Customer
 - (2) Customer Contact Information
 - (3) Date of work performed and length of business relationship
 - (4) Size and brief description of work performed
 - (5) Principal in charge.

Please note: Salem State University reserves the right to contact references not included on the bidder's reference list.

- (g) Are you a minority, woman-owned or small business?
- (h) Please describe your adherence to data security standards and your ability to issue certified electronic diplomas.

2. Warranty and Ordering Requirements:

- (a) Describe the warranty provided on the products.
- (b) Do you have a minimum order requirement? If so, then what is your minimum order?
- (c) Do you offer a discount if invoices are paid within 10 days?
- (d) Do you accept credit cards?

G. PRICING INFORMATION - DIPLOMAS

Respondent must enter clear pricing information on this proposal and any alternate proposals. Salem State University will not recognize any charges not specifically stated.

Respondent may attach pricing information on respondent's own form, but price proposal must include name of company or entity and signature of authorized person.

Provide charges for the items as specified in section C above:

- 1. Diploma Unit Cost \$ _____
- 2. Shipping and Handling \$ _____
- 3. Artwork set-up charges (if applicable) \$ _____
- 4. Other applicable charges (please specify) \$ _____
- 5. Redesign if needed \$ _____

Enter the price if different for the second and third year of a contract. Escalation charges will be considered in the evaluation of proposals.

2nd year: _____ %

3rd year: _____ %

H. PRICING INFORMATION – DIPLOMA COVERS

Respondent must enter clear pricing information on this proposal and any alternate proposals. Salem State University will not recognize any charges not specifically stated.

Respondent may attach pricing information on respondent’s own form, but price proposal must include name of company/entity and signature of authorized person.

Provide charges for the items as specified in section C above:

- 1. Diploma Cover Unit Cost \$ _____
- 2. Shipping and Handling \$ _____
- 3. Artwork set-up charges (if applicable) \$ _____
- 4. Other applicable charges (please specify) \$ _____
- 5. Redesign if necessary \$ _____

Enter the price escalation, if any, for the second and third year of a contract. Escalation charges will be considered in the evaluation of proposals.

2nd year: _____ %

3rd year: _____ %

I. PRICING INFORMATION – DIPLOMA MAILING

Diploma unit price for mailing: _____

Enter the price escalation, if any, for the second and third year of a contract. Escalation charges will be considered in the evaluation of proposals.

2nd year: _____ %

3rd year: _____ %

Please complete the following:

Company/Entity Name: _____

Authorized Signature

Name

Title

Telephone number

- J. Salem State University reserves the right to award or to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities and omissions if, in its judgment, the best interests of Salem State University will be served;
- K. Salem State University shall use this RFP and the successful response as the basis for the final contract. The winning bidder will be required to sign a Commonwealth of Massachusetts standard contract.
- L. The contract may be renewed upon the same terms and conditions, provided that the parties agree on pricing terms. The vendor shall, no later than thirty (30) days before the expiration of the contract, provide written notice of its intent not to renew the contract or any changes in pricing it may require.