
Federated Search Developer Guide

Version 61.0, Summer '24



CONTENTS

- Chapter 1:** Federated Search Developer Guide 1
- Chapter 2:** Constraints 2
- Chapter 3:** Extensions 3
- Chapter 4:** Request: URL Template Parameters 6
- Chapter 5:** Response: Elements 9
- Chapter 6:** Error Codes 13
- Chapter 7:** Examples 14
- Index 17

CHAPTER 1 Federated Search Developer Guide

The Federated Search API connects the Salesforce federated search connector to the external search provider. The API enables data from external repositories be searched and returned within Salesforce. External search providers have partnered with Salesforce to provide a search service that conforms to the Salesforce API.

 **Important:** Use this API only if your company doesn't have an existing search provider, such as Docurated, Swiftype, or Squirro search. If your company manages its own external data source, developers use this API to create a compliant external search provider.

This API follows the OpenSearch specification with optional Salesforce extensions. The external providers must conform to this API and remain fully compliant to the OpenSearch specification. As long as the external providers are compliant, any OpenSearch clients can query them at the same URL endpoint.

 **Note:** A Salesforce org trusts the target host only when presented with a certificate signed by a root Certification Authority (CA). For more information, including a list of trusted CAs, see the [SSL Certificates Salesforce Supports Knowledge article](#).

The federated search connector sends an HTTPS GET request to the external search provider URL endpoint. The search request is encoded in UTF-8. The request includes the OAuth token in the request header bearer token in the authorization request header.

This request also sets the values of the URL template parameters, as defined by the OpenSearchDescription. The values include the search terms and the user identity. Other parameters can be part of the URL. The values also set the Salesforce ID, login, and email address of the user who issued the search query.

The external search provider is expected to respond within less than 1 second, up to a maximum of 120 seconds. After the time period expires, a timeout message is displayed. The admin can change the maximum delay when configuring the external data source.

The external search provider returns results in Atom or RSS format encoded in UTF-8, as defined by the OpenSearch and Atom and RSS specifications.

More External Resources

- [Set Up and Manage Federated Search Salesforce Help website](#)
- [OpenSearch website](#)
- [Atom specification website](#)
- [RSS 2.0 specification website](#)
- [Bearer Token specification for the authorization request header field website](#)
- [E.123: Notation for national and international telephone numbers, email addresses, and web addresses website](#)

CHAPTER 2 Constraints

Because this API follows the OpenSearch specification, the API requires the same elements as the OpenSearch specification with additional optional Salesforce extensions. External search providers who conform to this API remain fully compliant to the OpenSearch specification and can be queried by any OpenSearch client at the same URL endpoint. The API supports Atom and RSS results, with UTF-encoding. However, there are some limitations to this API.

Element	Constraint
<code><OpenSearchDescription></code>	Required exactly one time. The Salesforce Federated Search namespace http://salesforce.com/2016/federatedsearch/1.0 is optional if it's used in the <code>OpenSearchDescription</code> .
<code><Url type="application/atom+xml" rel="results"></code> OR <code><Url type="application/rss+xml" rel="results"></code>	Required exactly one time. Other <code><Url></code> elements for <code>type</code> and <code>rel</code> values can be included. You must have exactly one <code><Url></code> with either <code>type="application/atom+xml"</code> or <code>type="application/rss+xml"</code> , and <code>rel="results"</code> . API version 1 supports only the HTTPS request GET method.
<code><InputEncoding></code> and <code><OutputEncoding></code>	You must declare at least UTF-8, which is the default encoding when those elements are omitted.

CHAPTER 3 Extensions

This API follows the OpenSearch specification with more Salesforce extensions declared. The Salesforce extensions support Salesforce-specific search features, and use the Salesforce Federated Search namespace, <http://salesforce.com/2016/federatedsearch/1.0>, denoted by the `sfdc` prefix in attribute names.

Attribute	Description
<code><sfdc:Version></code>	Optional. Zero or 1 occurrence. Declares that the OpenSearch description and the external search provider are compliant to a specific Salesforce Federated Search API version. First version is version 1. If not present, it is considered version 1.
<code><sfdc:RecordTypes></code>	Optional. If not present, the search results are not typed and only the standard OpenSearch fields are supported. Zero or more occurrences. Declares the complete list of record types supported by the external search provider. Each record type is declared in an <code><sfdc:RecordType></code> child element with zero or more occurrences and a case-sensitive name attribute. The attribute name must be unique and can contain only ASCII alphanumeric characters, spaces (" ", U+0020), or hyphens ("-", U+002D). The maximum length is 80 characters. All <code>RecordType</code> names must be distinct. For example, the following declares that the external search provider declares that the external search provider categorizes the records into blog post to <i>Blog Post</i>, <i>Medical Record</i>, or <i>Supervisor</i>. Any distinct value can be declared. These record type values are meant to be passed to the extended parameter <code>{ sfdc:recordType }</code> of the search request URL template. <pre><sfdc:RecordTypes> <sfdc:RecordType name="Blog Post"/> <sfdc:RecordType name="Medical Record"/> <sfdc:RecordType name="Supervisor"/> </sfdc:RecordTypes></pre>
<code><sfdc:Field></code>	Optional. Zero or more occurrences. Declares more custom fields that can be returned as elements of the search results for the record type. These custom fields can have any distinct name and are in addition to the common fields. When no custom field is declared, search results are expected to contain only common fields. Child element of <code><sfdc:RecordType></code>, with a case-sensitive name, type and sortable attributes:

Attribute	Description
	• name—Required. Declares the name of the field. Must contain only ASCII alphanumeric characters, spaces (" ", U+0020), or hyphens ("-", U+002D). The maximum length is 40 characters. All <code>Field</code> names must be distinct for a given record type. Custom fields must not have the same name as common fields for Atom (title, id, link, summary, content, updated, published) and RSS (title, guid, pubDate, link, description). Fields with duplicate names are ignored. However, it is possible to declare a field with a common field name. This action doesn't add a custom field. Rather, it defines whether it is sortable for the parent record type. The type is ignored for a common field. • type—Required. Declares the field type. The attribute value can be <code>string</code>, <code>longstring</code>, <code>number</code>, <code>boolean</code>, <code>percent</code>, <code>currency</code>, <code>email</code>, <code>url</code>, <code>phone</code>, or <code>date</code>. The phone format follows the E.123 standard. For example: +31 42 1123 4567. The date format follows the Atom date format, 2003-12-13T18:30:02.25+01:00, or RSS date format, Sat, 07 Sep 2002 0:00:01 GMT. • sortable—Optional. Declares whether the field can be used to sort search results. The attribute value can be <code>true</code> or <code>false</code>. The default is <code>true</code>, or <code>sortable</code>. If the field is sortable, its name can be passed as the value of the URL template parameter <code>{sfdc:sortField}</code>. For example, the following declares that results of record type <i>Blog Post</i> can have the additional custom fields <i>Author</i>, <i>Agent</i>, and <i>Relevant Tags</i>, which all type <code>string</code>, and all are sortable. It also declares that the standard Atom field <i>link</i> is not sortable for <i>Blog Post</i>. <pre><sfdc:RecordTypes> <sfdc:RecordType name="Blog Post"> <sfdc:Field name="Author" type="string" sortable="true"/> <sfdc:Field name="Agent" type="string" sortable="true"/> <sfdc:Field name="Relevant Tags" type="string" sortable="true"/> <sfdc:Field name="link" type="url" sortable="false"/> </sfdc:RecordType> </sfdc:RecordTypes></pre>
<sfdc:maxCount>	Optional. Integer value greater than or equal to 1. Declares that the external search provider serves up to a specified number of results per page. It defines the maximum value for the count parameter of the URL template. The federated search connector doesn't ask for more results than this limit per page. By default, if this attribute is absent, the count parameter has no declared limit. In all cases, the value of the count parameter might not be honored by the external search

Attribute	Description
	provider, as stated in the OpenSearch specification. It's a parameter of the <code><Url></code> element.
<code><sfdc:maxTotalResult></code>	Optional. Integer value greater than or equal to 1. Declares that the external search provider serves up to a specified number of results per search. It defines the maximum value for the (startIndex + count) parameters of the URL template. The federated search connector doesn't ask for more results than this limit per search. By default, if this attribute is absent, there is no declared limit. It's a parameter of the <code><Url></code> element.

CHAPTER 4 Request: URL Template Parameters

All URL template parameters are URL-encoded and sent via an HTTPS GET method. This list includes all template parameters used by the Salesforce federated search connector.

OpenSearch Namespace

Parameter	Description
<code>{searchTerms}</code>	Replaced by the search query terms that the user entered in the Salesforce search field. A SOSL clause isn't supported.
<code>{count}</code>	The number of search results per page desired by the search client.
<code>{startIndex}</code>	By default, the index of the first result is 1, unless defined otherwise by the <code>indexOffset</code> attribute of the <code><url></code> element.
<code>{inputEncoding}</code>	If present in the template, this parameter is always set to UTF-8.
<code>{outputEncoding}</code>	If present in the template, this parameter is always set to UTF-8.

Salesforce Federated Search Namespace

Parameter	Description
<code>{sfdc:userId}</code>	The unique ID of the user who triggered the search. Because OAuth authentication is done with the same bearer token for all users, it authorizes, but doesn't identify, the user. This parameter gives the identity of the user. The external search provider doesn't send <code>userId</code> if the connection to the external data source is anonymous and not authenticated with OAuth.
<code>{sfdc:userLogin}</code>	The login name of the user who triggered the search. The external search provider doesn't send <code>userLogin</code> if the connection to the external data source is anonymous and not authenticated with OAuth.

Parameter	Description
<code>{sfdc:userEmail}</code>	The email address of the user who triggered the search. The external search provider doesn't send <code>userEmail</code> if the connection to the external data source is anonymous and not authenticated with OAuth.
<code>{sfdc:orgId}</code>	The org ID of the user who triggered the search.
<code>{sfdc:searchSyntax}</code>	Declares the syntax of the <code>{searchTerms}</code> parameter. Its value is always SOSL (uppercase). The search provider can use the parameter to determine precisely which syntax parser to use.
<code>{sfdc:searchById}</code>	When the value of this boolean parameter is <code>true</code>, it restricts the search to a single record by its ID. The <code>{searchTerms}</code> must be set to the record ID. This parameter is used by the federated search connector to retrieve specific record data. If the OpenSearch description supports this parameter, the federated search connector sets this parameter to <code>true</code> and the search is restricted to the single record corresponding to the ID specified in <code>{searchTerms}</code>. If the OpenSearch description doesn't support this parameter, the federated search connector searches the first few terms of the record titles. From the results, the connector selects only the record with the expected ID. This type of search is referred to as a fallback search, and can be less accurate than searching directly on the record ID.
<code>{sfdc:recordType}</code>	Restricts the scope of the search request to a specific record type. Its value is the name of a declared <code><sfdc:RecordType></code> . The supported record types are declared with the <code><sfdc:RecordTypes></code> element.
<code>{sfdc:sortField}</code>	Defines the name of the field by which search results are sorted. If it's sortable, the field can be one of the common fields of the Atom format (title, id, link, summary, content, updated, published). Otherwise, set a declared sortable custom field by using <code><sfdc:RecordType><sfdc:Field sortable="true"></code> . By default, this parameter isn't present, and the search results are sorted by relevance. The API intentionally doesn't follow the OpenSearch Community extension SRU

Request: URL Template Parameters

Parameter	Description
	because the Salesforce implementation is limited to sorting on a single field, without a sort schema.
<code>{sfdc:sortDirection}</code>	Defines the sort direction with a value of either ascending or descending. The parameter can be added only if the <code>sfdc:sortField</code> parameter is also present. By default, the search results are sorted in ascending order. This parameter isn't used for relevance sorting.

CHAPTER 5 Response: Elements

The external search provider returns results to the federated search connector in Atom or RSS format. Common elements, such as from Salesforce or Dublin Core, are also provided. The federated search connector extracts only the specified elements.

Feed Elements

These fields are defined in the OpenSearch standard. The federated search connector extracts the value from these elements.

- `<opensearch:totalResults>`
- `<opensearch:startIndex>`

Atom Entry Elements

If the external search provider returns results in Atom 1.0 or 1.1 format, the federated search connector extracts only the specified elements for all record types.

Field	Description
<code><title></code>	Required. Title of the search result. Limited to 255 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.
<code><id></code>	Required. External ID of the search result. The ID can be reused to search for the corresponding specific record. Maximum length is 255 characters; if the length is longer, the entry is skipped. See the <code>{sfdc:searchById}</code> parameter in the URL Template request parameters for more details.
<code><link></code>	Optional. Clickable, well-formatted URL link to open the external document. The federated search connector doesn't encode this URL. The external search provider can proxy it to track clicks. Maximum length is 1,000 characters; otherwise, the entry is skipped.
<code><summary></code>	Optional. Snippet for the search result. Can be replaced by <code><content></code> . Maximum length is 500 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.
<code><content></code>	Optional. Snippet for the search result for text. Can be replaced by <code><summary></code> . Maximum length is 500 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.

Field	Description
<updated>	Optional. Date of the last modification of the entry. Follows the Atom date format . For example: 2003-12-13T18:30:02.25+01:00.
<published>	Optional. Date of the creation of the entry. Follows the Atom date format. For example: 2003-12-13T18:30:02.25+01:00.

Dublin Core Entry Elements

For both Atom and RSS formats, the federated search connector also extracts Dublin Core elements if they are present. The following elements are defined in the [Dublin Core specification](#) for the Dublin Core namespace <http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/> (dc).

Field	Description
<dc:abstract>	Optional. Snippet for the search result. Maximum length is 500 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.
<dc:date>	Date of the content. Follows either the Atom or RSS date format.
<dc:description>	Optional. Snippet for the search result. Maximum length is 500 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.
<dc:title>	Optional. Title of the search result. Limited to 255 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.

RSS Entry Elements

If the external search provider returns results in RSS 2.0 format, the federated search connector extracts only the specified elements for all record types.

Field	Description
<description>	Optional. Snippet for the search result. Maximum length is 500 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.
<guid>	Only required if <link> not present. If <guid> is not present, <link> is used as the result URL and result ID as well. External ID of the search result. The ID can be reused to search for the corresponding specific record. Maximum length is 255 characters; if the length is longer, the entry

Field	Description
	is skipped. See the <code>{sfdc:searchById}</code> parameter in the URL Template request parameters for more details.
<code><link></code>	Optional. Clickable, well-formatted URL link to open the external document. The federated search connector doesn't URL-encode this URL. The external search provider can proxy it to track clicks. Maximum length is 1,000 characters; if the length is longer, the entry is skipped.
<code><pubDate></code>	Optional. The publication date for the content. Follows the RSS date format RFC-822 . For example: <code>Sat, 07 Sep 2002 0:00:01 GMT</code> .
<code><title></code>	Required. Title of the search result. Limited to 255 characters, beyond which the text is truncated.

Salesforce Entry Elements

For both Atom and RSS format, the federated search connector also extracts the following elements for all record types.

Field	Description
<code><sfdc:recordType></code>	Required if the external search provider uses Salesforce extensions; otherwise optional. Type of the result document. This element also includes additional fields provided for the result. It must have a single value listed by the <code><sfdc:RecordTypes></code> element of the <code>OpenSearchDescription</code> . Provided as text element, such as <code><sfdc:recordType>BlogPost</sfdc:recordType></code> .
<code><sfdc:link></code>	Required if the external search provider uses the Salesforce extension; otherwise optional. If the external search provider uses Salesforce extensions, the URL should point to the app installed by the admin. This app then renders the external document inside Salesforce. This field represents a clickable link to open the external document within Salesforce. Might not be a well-formed URL. It isn't URL-encoded by the federated search connector. Maximum length is 1,000 characters; if the length is longer, the entry is skipped.

Common Entry Elements

These fields are custom and have been declared in the `OpenSearchDescription` with the `<sfdc:Field>` child element of `<sfdc:RecordType>`. A custom field value is provided as a text element.

If a custom field has been declared with a name containing spaces, such as *Relevant Tags*, it can be referred to by replacing all spaces with underscores, such as `<sfdc:Relevant_Tags>`.

Custom field maximum lengths depend on the type of field. A custom field is skipped if it exceeds the limit. Here are the limits for field types. The phone field type follows the E.123 standard, and the date field follows the Atom date format.

Field Type	Character Limit
string	255
longstring	500
number	20
boolean	10
percent	20
currency	20
email	500
url	1,000

CHAPTER 6 Error Codes

Codes from the federated search connector.

Error Code	Description
400	Missing or invalid parameter
401	Invalid authentication
403	Unrecognized user login
414	Request-URI too long

Optional Codes

Error Code	Description
480	Unidentified user or unrecognized user login
481	Missing required parameter
482	Invalid parameter value

CHAPTER 7 Examples

The provided example uses a search for blog posts and medical records. A basic understanding of the OpenSearch specification is required.

The OpenSearch protocol is composed of two parts:

- The OpenSearch XML description, which describes how to search the external search engine and which features it supports. The description is provided by the search engine itself at a public URL. The main element of the description is the `<Url>`, in which the template attribute provides the URL to call and the supported parameters with semantics.
- The search results returned by the external search engine, in Atom or RSS format, as the response of the HTTP search request.

OpenSearch Description

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<OpenSearchDescription xmlns="http://a9.com/-/spec/opensearch/1.1/"
xmlns:sfdc="http://salesforce.com/2016/federatedsearch/1.0">
  <ShortName>Document Search</ShortName>
  <Contact>support@example.com</Contact>
  <Url type="application/atom+xml" sfdc:maxTotalResults="500"
template="https://example.com/search?q={searchTerms}&
byId={sfdc:searchById?}&type={sfdc:recordType}&
user={sfdc:userEmail}&start={startIndex?}&num={count?}&
sf={sfdc:sortField?}&sd={sfdc:sortDirection?}"/>
  <sfdc:RecordTypes>
    <sfdc:RecordType name="Blog Post">
      <sfdc:Field name="Author" type="string" sortable="true"/>
      <sfdc:Field name="Expiration date" type="date" sortable="true"/>
    </sfdc:RecordType>
    <sfdc:RecordType name="Medical Record">
      <sfdc:Field name="Main author" type="string" sortable="true"/>
      <sfdc:Field name="Reviewed" type="boolean" sortable="false"/>
    </sfdc:RecordType>
  </sfdc:RecordTypes>
  <Attribution>
    Copyright 2016, All Rights Reserved
  </Attribution>
  <InputEncoding>UTF-8</InputEncoding>
  <OutputEncoding>UTF-8</OutputEncoding>
  <sfdc:Version>1</sfdc:Version>
</OpenSearchDescription>
```

Atom Search Results

```
<?xml version='1.0' encoding='UTF-8'?>
<feed xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2005/Atom"
xmlns:opensearch="http://a9.com/-/spec/opensearch/1.1/"
xmlns:sfdc="http://salesforce.com/2016/federatedsearch/1.0">
  <title>Example Search: test</title>
  <link>https://example.com</link>
  <updated>2016-11-21T10:19:37.644Z</updated>
  <author>
    <name>Example</name>
  </author>
  <id>urn:uuid:6b63a81d-0a77-48e3-8a74-5d5f34b9da98</id>
  <opensearch:totalResults>10</opensearch:totalResults>
  <opensearch:startIndex>0</opensearch:startIndex>
  <opensearch:itemsPerPage>2</opensearch:itemsPerPage>
  <opensearch:Query role="request" searchTerms="test" startIndex="0"
count="2"/>
  <entry>
    <title>Unit testing framework</title>
    <id>https://example.com/id:GhITRcjf5go_JLero45</id>
    <link href="https://www.example.com/library/unittest.html"/>

    <sfdc:link>/apex/ExampleApp_view?id=GhITRcjf5go_JLero45&q=test</sfdc:link>

    <sfdc:recordType>Blog Post</sfdc:recordType>
    <summary>The unit testing framework is ...</summary>
    <updated>2016-07-13T15:24:57.000Z</updated>
    <published>2016-07-13T15:24:57.000Z</published>
    <sfdc:Author>Maker</sfdc:Author>

    <sfdc:Expiration_date>2017-07-13T15:24:57.000Z</sfdc:Expiration_date>

  </entry>
  <entry>
    <title>Cancer tests | Cancer Research</title>
    <id>https://example.com/id:UCAuUUnT6oDeKwE6v1</id>
    <link href="https://www.example.com/library/cancertest.html"/>

    <sfdc:link>/apex/ExampleApp_view?id=UCAuUUnT6oDeKwE6v1&q=test</sfdc:link>

    <sfdc:recordType>Medical Record</sfdc:recordType>
    <summary>A short overview about current cancer research
...</summary>
    <updated>2012-08-15T15:20:54.000Z</updated>
    <published>2012-08-15T15:20:54.000Z</published>
    <sfdc:Main_author>Maker</sfdc:Main_author>
    <sfdc:Reviewed>true</sfdc:Reviewed>
  </entry>
</feed>
```

RSS Search Results

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rss version="2.0"
xmlns:opensearch="http://a9.com/-/spec/opensearch/1.1/"
xmlns:sfdc="http://salesforce.com/2016/federatedsearch/1.0">
  <channel>
    <title>Example Search: test</title>
    <link>https://example.com</link>
    <description>Search results for "test" at
Example.com</description>
    <opensearch:totalResults>10</opensearch:totalResults>
    <opensearch:startIndex>0</opensearch:startIndex>
    <opensearch:itemsPerPage>2</opensearch:itemsPerPage>
    <item>
      <title>Unit testing framework</title>
      <guid>https://example.com/id:GhITRcjf5go_JLero45</guid>
      <link>https://www.example.com/library/unittest.html</link>
      <description>The unit testing framework is ...</description>
      <pubDate>Sat, 07 Sep 2002 0:00:01 GMT</pubDate>

      <sfdc:link>/apex/ExampleApp_view?id=GhITRcjf5go_JLero45&q=test</sfdc:link>

      <sfdc:recordType>Blog Post</sfdc:recordType>
      <sfdc:Author>Maker</sfdc:Author>

      <sfdc:Expiration_date>2017-07-13T15:24:57.000Z</sfdc:Expiration_date>

    </item>
    <item>
      <title>Cancer tests | Cancer Research</title>
      <guid>https://example.com/id:UCAuUUnT6oDeKwE6v1</guid>
      <link>https://www.example.com/library/cancertest.html</link>
      <description>A short overview about current cancer research
...</description>
      <pubDate>Sat, 07 Sep 2002 0:00:01 GMT</pubDate>

      <sfdc:link>/apex/ExampleApp_view?id=UCAuUUnT6oDeKwE6v1&q=test</sfdc:link>

      <sfdc:recordType>Medical Record</sfdc:recordType>
      <sfdc:Main_author>Maker</sfdc:Main_author>
      <sfdc:Reviewed>true</sfdc:Reviewed>
    </item>
  </channel>
</rss>
```

INDEX

A

atom elements [9](#)

C

constraints [2](#)

E

error codes [13](#)

example [14](#)

extensions [3](#)

F

federated search [1–3](#), [6](#), [9](#), [13–14](#)

N

namespace [6](#)

R

request [6](#)

response [9](#)

U

URL template parameter [6](#)