

Reference Checking

Reference checking can help to substantiate or nullify facts and impressions that have been gathered at an interview. It may even bring new facts or experience to light, depending on the thoroughness of the reference check.

The person who conducted the original employment interview should also conduct the reference check since that individual is most familiar with the applicant's background. When calling a reference, identify yourself and explain your position and why you are calling about the applicant. Be sure to give the reference a thorough explanation of the position for which the applicant is being considered. The evaluation will be better if made in relation to a specific job. It is important to plan the questions you will ask all candidates' references for the same job. Also include specific questions that will help clarify any possible problems you perceive with each of the different candidates.

- Seek reference information from individuals with personal knowledge of the applicant's work performance and behavior (the applicant's former immediate supervisor). Contact references provided. If applicant requests that some references not be checked, advise applicant that they may no longer be considered.
- Use a pre-set list of questions or the Sample Reference Check Form.
- As always, avoid questions that could be discriminatory such as marital status, medical conditions, etc.
- *Treat Personal References in the same Manner as Professional References.*

Sample Reference Check Form

Date of Reference Check: _____ Checked By: _____

Applicants Name: _____

Organization Contacted: _____

Person Contacted: _____ Title: _____

Phone Number: _____

Ask employer to verify information applicant has provided:

- Dates of Employment (From/To):
- Position(s) Held:
- Reason for Leaving (if applicable):

Describe the duties/responsibilities of the position and the skills/abilities that are required to successfully perform the position:

Sample Questions:

1. What were the candidate's responsibilities in his/her job?
2. What are the candidate's strengths? Weaknesses?
3. How would you characterize the relationship between the candidate and his/her staff/co-workers?
4. As his/her supervisor, what did you find was the most effective to motivate the candidate?
5. To what degree did the candidate require supervision?
6. This position requires (refer to job description or minimum qualifications). How would you describe the candidate's ability to perform these requirements?
7. What other information do you have that would help to develop a more complete picture of this candidate's work performance?
8. Are you aware of anything in this candidate's background, which if we employed this person, would pose a threat to the safety or well-being of our students (including young children) or employees?
9. Would you rehire this candidate?