

REFERENCE CHECKING

Checking references is an important part of the hiring process – it is a source of information you can use to confirm your impression of the candidate.

We recommend that the chair of the selection committee check 3 references after the interview. And remember, you must have the candidate's written consent before contacting their references.

Use the same questioning techniques that you used in the interview and cover the same general topics.

Verify what the candidate said in terms of title, length of service, responsibilities, salary and accomplishments.

Press for a 'yes' or 'no' answer to the question of whether or not the previous employer would re-hire. If the response is "no", then probe for reasons. You may need to cross check with other referees to avoid the possibility of personal bias.

To gain as much information as possible, let the person speak without interruption. If the reference pauses in the conversation, it usually means he/she has other information and is hesitant to share this information. Get them to talk about everything that would be helpful, but only ask for information that will be used in your hiring decision.

Occasionally, referees are reluctant to share negative information about candidates. Withholding negative information can result in future action being taken against referees or their organization. If a candidate is hired and fails to perform and the reason for the performance failure was known or expected by the referee at the time of the reference check, the referee can be held liable. It is important to be honest when providing references.

From time to time a candidate may be reluctant to provide a current, or key employer as a reference due to a personal conflict. If this happens, ask the candidate what they believe the referee would say, and why. You may be able to ascertain where the real problem is – with the candidate, or the supervisor. Ensure you have several alternate credible references with positive feedback in this situation. Candidates who refuse to give current references, positive, or negative, should be approached with caution. Be certain to discuss these situations with your Human Resources Advisor or Associate.

See **Reference Check Authorization Form** and **Reference Check Form**