

HR WEB - REFERENCE CHECKS

<http://www.hr.ucsb.edu/employment/background-checks/reference-checks>

GENERAL GUIDANCE - CONDUCTING REFERENCE CHECKS

Before extending a job offer to your final candidate, it is critical that you conduct a reference check, even if the finalist is a current UCSB or UC employee. During the reference check, you should obtain work history information and objective feedback on the candidate's qualifications, past performance and attendance. You should not ask questions outside of the scope of appropriate subject matter for a reference check, e.g., protected medical leaves, medical conditions, personal beliefs, protected category status or union activity. You should ask the same questions of all references. You are encouraged to use HR's Reference Check Form as an outline for your conversation with the manager/supervisor. You may also contact the professional or personal references provided by the candidate, but keep in mind that personal references are usually not helpful as these may be relatives or friends who do not have direct experience with the candidate's workplace performance.

Before making reference calls, contact the candidate and advise him/her that you will be conducting the calls. The candidate may wish to give advance notice to their current or former employer and encourage them to be responsive to your call. If the candidate has requested that you not contact a certain reference on their application and still does not agree to you contacting a former employer not that they are a finalist, you should discuss this with your Employment Recruiter before continuing further in the hiring process with this candidate.

Specific guidance on how to conduct a reference check phone call is available in Conducting Reference Check Calls.

REFERENCE CHECK - EXTERNAL EMPLOYER

Hiring managers should always conduct a reference check for new hires to UCSB. A minimum of two former managers/supervisors should be contacted, if possible, in addition to any references listed by the candidate. Where the employee is self-employed, ask for at least two current or former clients to contact as references.

If the external employer asks you for a release or authorization from the employee to talk to you, you can fax or scan and send the employee's application form which includes the release in the final section labeled "Agreement." (You can let the employer know that the employee's signature is provided electronically upon submission of the application.)

If a current or former employer refuses to return your calls or answer your questions, this is a flag that something may be problematic about this candidate's employment history. You are encouraged to follow up with the candidate to discuss your inability to reach a reference and evaluate their explanation. If you continue to have concerns, discuss the possibility of disqualifying this candidate from consideration with your Employment Recruiter.

REFERENCE CHECK - UCSB EMPLOYEE

Hiring managers should always conduct a reference check for a current or former UCSB employee with the employee's home department(s). Even if you know the employee, you should conduct the reference check. As part of the reference check, arrange time to meet with the manager/supervisor and review the employee's personnel file.

REFERENCE CHECK - UC EMPLOYEE

Hiring managers should always conduct a reference check for a current or former UC employee working at another UC location. As part of the reference check call with the manager/supervisor at the other location, you can ask him/her to review the contents of the employee's personnel file with you over the phone, e.g., performance evaluations, awards, training certificates, any corrective or progressive disciplinary actions. If for some reason the manager/supervisor at the other location is unwilling to talk with you or review the personnel file with you, please ask your Employment Recruiter for assistance.

REFERENCE CHECK – USING THE INTERNET

Many of you may consider using the Internet as part of the job applicant screening process. While LinkedIn is considered an appropriate resource for reference checks, there are potential risks in running general searches of an employee by name or looking up information about an applicant on Facebook or other social media sites. In particular, there are potential risks related to discrimination, information reliability and privacy violations when using Internet information to screen applicants. It is critical to understand the risks when you consider whether or not to use Internet information as part of the recruiting process. To avoid allegations of discrimination or bias in the recruitment process, do not run a general internet search to prescreen applicants or learn more about candidates before interviews. After you have completed your recruitment interviews, it may be appropriate to review information on LinkedIn or other relevant web sites, e.g., employee's current employer web site. You are strongly urged to confer with your Employment Recruiter before using Internet information in any way that serves as the basis for selecting or eliminating a candidate.

GENERAL GUIDANCE - RESPONDING TO REFERENCE CHECKS

If a current or former employee in your department has applied for another position, you may be contacted for a reference. In general, your responses should be honest, fair and accurate. You should not comment on subject matter outside the scope of the employee's qualifications, past performance and attendance, e.g., protected medical leaves, medical conditions, personal beliefs, protected category status or union activity. You should also not provide negative or critical information about the employee that is based on credible evidence and has not already been communicated to the employee.

Other types of requests for background information or access to contents of an employee's file, including security clearance requests, should be handled in accordance with "How to Respond to Information Requests." <http://www.policy.ucsb.edu/information/info-pract/requests/responding-to-info-requests.pdf>

REFERENCE CHECK BY EXTERNAL EMPLOYER

Managers should direct all external employers to Business & Financial Services for employment verification ([link to BFS](#)). If you are asked to provide additional information beyond the BFS employment verification, ask the external employer to provide you with a copy of a signed release from the employee authorizing you to share information. You should not provide information to an external employer without this signed release. A signed release should generally include a statement authorizing you/UCSB to release any and all information (or specific, limited information) relating to the candidate's employment with the University and state

that the University will be held harmless from any and all liability that may potentially result from the release and/or use of such information.

An external employer that asks to review the employee's personnel file may only do so if the review of the file is explicitly within the scope of the signed release. In addition, do not provide a copy or scan and send a copy of the personnel file to an external employer unless this is explicitly within the scope of the signed release.

REFERENCE CHECK BY UCSB DEPARTMENT

If you are contacted by another UCSB manager/supervisor conducting a reference check on a current or former employee, you are authorized to provide responsive information, e.g., work history information and objective feedback on the candidate's qualifications, past performance, attendance and eligibility for rehire. Upon request, you should provide the manager/supervisor with an opportunity to review the employee's personnel file. You may not give the file or a copy of the file to the hiring department during the reference check process. The hiring department is not entitled to take possession of the employee's personnel file until after the hiring is completed and the employee has started employment in the new department. More information about transferring Personnel Files to the new home department is available [here](#).

REFERENCE CHECK BY UC CAMPUS OR LAB

If you are contacted by a manager/supervisor from another UC location conducting a reference check on a current or former employee, you are authorized to release the same information as you would to a UCSB campus department, above. Upon request, you can review the contents of employee's personnel file with the manager/supervisor over the phone. You may not mail or scan and send a copy of the file to the other location during the reference check process. The new UC location hiring department is not entitled to take possession of the employee's personnel file until after the hiring is completed and the employee has started employment at that location in the new department. More information about transferring Personnel Files to another UC location is available [here](#).