

8 Guidelines Reference Checks and Employment Verifications

Reference checks and employment verification occurs after the justifications have been submitted to the HR representative **AND** permission to perform the reference check has been granted by the applicant..

Please review the steps below to ensure the correct process is followed for the reference check process:

1. **Release of Information form (ROI) must be completed by the candidate:** This form is sent by moving the status of the candidate in CHRS PageUp to **Candidate Recommended – ROI Form** Request. At this time the candidate may ask to not contact their current supervisor (confidential search –see below).
 - a. References must be work-related references to include **one from a current supervisor and one from a previous supervisor**. The references should be a manager who has supervised the applicant's work.
 - b. Before you begin checking the candidate's professional references, *please ensure that the finalist has informed their employers/reference contacts to expect a call from the hiring department*. It's important that the applicant confirms you are ok to proceed with reference checking.
 - c. **When a candidate applies to a job confidentially**, the committee will conduct all other reference checks with the exception of contacting references from the candidate's current employer. The committee is still responsible to complete the formal reference(s) checks once the candidate is extended a final offer and accepts. It is then safe for the committee to complete their requirements by contacting the current supervisor(s). Unsatisfactory verifications may be sufficient reason for non-consideration and cancellation of offer (check in with HR Partner).
 - d. **Note to Hiring Authority If Confidential:** Should the Hiring Authority select this candidate and extend a conditional offer, one of the conditions of the formal offer is for the candidate to contact the committee once it is safe for the committee to finish their reference checks requirements with the current employer. The committee will then contact the candidate's most current supervisor(s).

2. **NEW Timing.** Reference checks can happen before or after the conditional offer. The hiring authority should work with the HR partner to establish the timing.
3. **NEW Default Reference Check.**
 - a. The HR business partner will initiate an electronic reference check using the applicant reference information and the sample reference check questions. One current supervisor and one previous supervisor will be contacted. Employment will be verified. This process fulfills the reference check requirement. The same questions will be asked of all references.
 - b. An additional reference check will be conducted by Human Resources for current and former CSU employees.
4. **Custom Reference Checks**
 - a. **Reference check question approval**
 - i. View the Sample Reference Check Questions as the electronic reference check will already include these questions. The same discrimination laws that apply to the interview process also apply to checking references. California Department of Fair Employment & Housing (DFEH) fact sheet.
 - ii. Complete the 11 Custom Reference and Employment Questions Approval Form and submit to your HR Partner.
 - iii. The HR Partner will review and approve reference check questions ensuring alignment with the DFEH guidelines.
 - iv. The HR Partner will return an approved list of reference check questions to the committee (11.1 Approved Custom Reference and Employment and Verification Questions).
5. **Committee composition for custom reference checks:** Check with your HR Representative before selecting a reference check method:
 - a. **Tandem. Preferred, best practice–** At least two (2) search committee members will be present during the reference check. This is in alignment with the campus Affirmative Action Plan Action-Oriented Program (AOP) as a best practice for searches.
 - b. **Divide and conquer–** Alternative practice, based on operational need. One committee member conducts the check with references assigned to committee members such that no one committee member calls more than one reference for a particular candidate.
 - c. **Solo–** Alternative practice, based on operational need. One committee member will be assigned the responsibility of checking references of finalists.
6. **Custom Reference Check & Employment Verification Calls:**

- a. **Reference check:** The same questions will be asked of all references. At all times during the reference check, the committee must ensure that the reference check questions and answers are in alignment with the DFEH guidelines. Inappropriate answers should not be recorded. If there is any question about deviation from the DFEH guidelines a consultation with HR should occur.
 - b. **Employment verification (optional if electronic reference conducted):** Employment **relevant** to the position will be verified for the previous five (5) years.
 - i. If the employee has **less than 5 years of employment**, and the position doesn't call for that amount of experience, then you would only verify the experience identified by the candidate.
 - ii. If the candidate has **more than 5 years of experience**, the campus would only need to verify the relevant work for the past 5 years. The campus may elect to check more than 5 years' worth of experience provided, if relevant. Human Resources will perform independent verification of employment for all current and former CSU employees. Campuses shall not include any questions or requests for an applicant's salary history.
 - iii. Committees may elect to verify employment beyond five years at their discretion.
7. **Custom Reference check forms** must be submitted to the recruiter upon completion. The recruitment cannot move forward until these notes are received.