



Reference Checks

A Workbook from GVSU Human Resources

Candidate Name: _____

Position Title: _____

Requisition #: _____

GV Position #: _____

Reference Check Best Practices

Why Conduct a Reference Check?

Contacting a job candidate's references will give you a better idea of what it's like to manage and interact with your potential new employee. It'll also help you determine how well they'll fit within the culture and fulfill their job duties. But remember that to get the most out of reference checks – and uncover information you need most – you must ask the right reference check questions when conducting reference checks. (Indeed)

In all, there are three primary reasons to check a candidate's references. First, a reference can verify whether the candidate has the job experience and skills they claim. Conducting a reference check can also give you a glimpse into the candidate's character, such as their work ethic and willingness to meet and overcome challenges. Additionally, a reference might share unique skills and abilities the candidate may not have shared, or further validate those they did share. (Indeed)

Tips for a Successful Reference Check

1

Receive consent before reaching out to references.

2

Let the references know that the reference check conversation will be confidential. This allows for an open and honest conversation – references may be hesitant to provide insight if they fear their answers being shared with the candidate.

3

Avoid questions about the candidate's personal life: this may include information on age, familial status, religion, country of origin, disability, etc. These questions may be perceived as discriminatory.

4

A social media check is not a substitute for a reference check.

5

Avoid "backdoor references."

Some references may recommend additional contacts. While this may seem tempting, it is critical to receive explicit consent from the applicant before contacting any and all references.

Questions? Contact Your Human Resources Business Partner.



Reference Check Conversation #1

Reference Name: _____

Relationship to Candidate: _____

Contact Information: _____

Length of Relationship: _____

Check One: Professional Reference Personal Reference

1. Could you tell me how you knew/worked with (NAME)?

2. What is (NAME)'s biggest strength? Is there an area where (NAME) would excel from the beginning?

3. Is there any area where (NAME) may need additional support in their first 90 days?

4. How does (NAME) handle challenges, whether stress with a tough goal, pressure to meet a deadline, or conflict with colleagues?
5. Tell me something about this candidate that might not be listed on their resume.
6. What advice can you give me to successfully manage or work with this candidate?
7. Has the candidate ever been disciplined for engaging in serious and substantiated misconduct?
8. If given the opportunity, would you hire or work with (NAME) again? Why or why not?



Reference Check Conversation #2

Reference Name: _____

Relationship to Candidate: _____

Contact Information: _____

Length of Relationship: _____

Check One: Professional Reference Personal Reference

1. Could you tell me how you knew/worked with (NAME)?

2. What is (NAME)'s biggest strength? Is there an area where (NAME) would excel from the beginning?

3. Is there any area where (NAME) may need additional support in their first 90 days?

4. How does (NAME) handle challenges, whether stress with a tough goal, pressure to meet a deadline, or conflict with colleagues?
5. Tell me something about this candidate that might not be listed on their resume.
6. What advice can you give me to successfully manage or work with this candidate?
7. Has the candidate ever been disciplined for engaging in serious and substantiated misconduct?
8. If given the opportunity, would you hire or work with (NAME) again? Why or why not?

Reference Check Conversation #3

Reference Name: _____

Relationship to Candidate: _____

Contact Information: _____

Length of Relationship: _____

Check One: Professional Reference Personal Reference

1. Could you tell me how you knew/worked with (NAME)?

2. What is (NAME)'s biggest strength? Is there an area where (NAME) would excel from the beginning?

3. Is there any area where (NAME) may need additional support in their first 90 days?

4. How does (NAME) handle challenges, whether stress with a tough goal, pressure to meet a deadline, or conflict with colleagues?

5. Tell me something about this candidate that might not be listed on their resume.

6. What advice can you give me to successfully manage or work with this candidate?

7. Has the candidate ever been disciplined for engaging in serious and substantiated misconduct?

8. If given the opportunity, would you hire or work with (NAME) again? Why or why not?