Dartmouth founded 1769

Reference Check Guidelines

A reference check is an interview of an applicant's former employer or colleague. It is important to be prepared with questions before calling a reference and to listen carefully for what is and isn't said in response to specific questions. If the individual being interviewed provides a vague or ambiguous response, be flexible and explore the issue. Always start by telling the reference:

- Your name
- The name of the organization, the name of the applicant, and the job title of the position the applicant applied for
- The applicant authorized you to inquire about his/her previous employment and to call former supervisors, including this reference
- The conversation will probably take about 10 minutes (if now is not convenient, schedule a time to call back)
- The information will be kept confidential and not shared with the applicant

Questions

1. On his/her application, [Name of Applicant] indicated that he/she worked for your organization. Could you confirm starting and ending dates of employment?

2. What was your understanding of the reason [Name of Applicant] left the organization?

3. Could you confirm [Name of Applicant]'s starting and ending salary?

4. What was [Name of Applicant]'s position at the time he/she left the organization? Can you describe the job duties and responsibilities?

5. If I read the description of the position that [Name of Applicant] included on his/her resume, could you confirm whether the job title and description match your understanding of the position [Name of Applicant] held at [Name of Organization]?

6. What other titles did [Name of Applicant] have during the time he/she was employed by your organization? Was he/she ever promoted, transferred, demoted? If yes, what were the other positions?

Questions (cont.)

7. Did [Name of Applicant] supervise other employees? If yes, how effective was he/she in this supervisory role? How would the employees he/she supervised describe [Name of Applicant]'s management style?

8. Did you evaluate [Name of Applicant]'s job performance? What would you say were his/her strong points and what were the areas that needed improvement?

9. What would you say was [Name of Applicant]'s biggest accomplishment during the time he/she worked for your organization?

10. Would you consider rehiring [Name of Applicant]? Why or why not?

11. How would you rate [Name of Applicant]'s attendance? Did he/she come to work late or miss work often? Did this affect his/her job performance?

12. Did [Name of Applicant] experience working as part of a team? Would you describe [Name of Applicant] as a team leader?

13. Did [Name of Applicant] get along well with managers, supervisors, and co-workers at all levels of the organization?

14. How did [Name of Applicant] handle multiple priorities? Did he/she perform well under pressure?

15. How would you describe [Name of Applicant]'s style in managing conflict at work?

16. If I describe the position we are considering [Name of Applicant] for, could you give me your impression on how good a fit you think he/she would be for the position?

17. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about [Name of Applicant]?