

Tips for Checking References in a Candidate Search

Talk to an operations manager or direct supervisor.

- Verify basic duties and responsibilities, job title and dates of employment

Do not bother with personal references

- They will not be able to give an impartial response

Ask essay questions, not multiple choice.

- Be consistent and ask the same questions about all the final candidates and weigh the information equally

Remember all questions should relate directly to the position being filled, and the same discrimination laws that apply to interviewing also apply to reference checking.

Sample Questions to Ask Your Candidate's References.

- Verify the candidate's dates of employment, title, and duties/responsibilities.
- How independently did the candidate work?
- What was it like to supervise the candidate?
- What kind of duties and responsibilities were assigned to the candidate? Did he or she complete them satisfactorily? Did they go above and beyond what was required without being asked?
- What was his or her reason for leaving?
- Additionally, how does s/he handle difficult people? What is his/her conflict resolution protocol?
- Determine the candidate's advancement in the company; did he or she receive any promotions or demotions, or did she remain in the same role throughout her tenure?
- What were the candidate's strengths as an employee? Would you describe him or her a hard worker?
- Was the employee punctual? Were there any issues with tardiness or absenteeism?
- Did the employee get along well with her peers? With managers? With customers?
- Is there anything else I should take into consideration before I hire this candidate?