

Conducting Reference Checks

Although most companies ask for references, few follow through on completing reference checks. To ensure you hire the best candidate for a position, checking references with previous Managers/Supervisors is strongly encouraged.

Research shows that up to one-third of applicants embellish their employment history. Checking employment references ensures that you select the most qualified person who is the best match for the position. You are validating the information presented to you on the applicant's resume. You will be provided greater insight into the candidate's skills, knowledge and abilities from someone who has observed the candidate perform.

- Once you have a shortlist of your top 2 – 3 candidates, check a minimum of two professional employment references for each candidate. Ideally, at least one should be from an immediate supervisor or reporting manager.
- Obtain consent from the applicant to contact their references or have them provide you with references if details were not already provided during the application process.
- Advise each candidate that you would ideally like contact details for someone who they reported to and could speak to their recent work or volunteer-related activities

If a previous employer refuses to provide a reference, this should not necessarily be held against a candidate, as it may simply be that Company's policy and not specific to the individual. Some employers may refuse to provide references based on legal ramifications and will only confirm dates of employment and the last position held. These details are still considered important information and should be verified. Consider asking if they would re-hire the candidate in the future? Their response (what they say and how they say it) may provide more insight.

Resource: [Reference Check Form Template](#)