

Assessing Candidates

The Interview should be viewed as one component of the overall selection process. Other assessment tools are available to hiring managers and should also be used in conjunction with the interview.

Pre-employment Skills Testing

All skills testing must be approved and/or administered by University Human Resources (HR Consulting Services) to ensure uniform test administration and evaluation standards.

Departments/units are prohibited from administering tests to applicants that have not been previously approved by HR Consulting Services. Questions regarding appropriate testing should be directed to HR Consulting Services.

Reference Checks

It is strongly recommended that the hiring official conduct reference checks prior to an offer of employment being extended. It is imperative that before checking references, an application for employment has been completed by the candidate and is on file with the Office of Human Resources.

Hiring decisions should not be made without diligently making an effort to check references. "Negligent hiring" has become a common legal claim against employers who failed to check references. Making hiring decisions without complete information on candidates could lead to costly mistakes!

Conducting reference checks helps you get the full picture of the candidate's skills, work habits, and personality. Reference checking is all about making sure the candidate is right for the job.

To aid you in the reference checking process we developed a reference check form for you to consider using in this process. We believe that the best way to predict the future performance of the individual is to assess the past performance of the candidate you are looking to hire. Included in the reference check form are basic questions along with more specific questions we developed that focus on the [6 University of Virginia threshold characteristics](#).

Tips for conducting the reference check:

Try to have the candidate provide a minimum of three reference sources. It is helpful to get references from a combination of people who can articulate on candidate's skills and work habits (e.g., prior supervisors, peers and subordinates). Ideally, one of those references should be from the candidate's current or most recent supervisor.

1. You should state during the interview with a job applicant that references will be checked. Also, don't just rely on letters of reference or personal references provided by the job applicant.
2. A telephone reference check takes less time than a written reference check and usually more information is gained. Forms rarely uncover negative information. Employers hesitate to put into writing what they may say in a conversation.
3. The hiring supervisor should make the phone call because he or she is most familiar with the information received from the applicant and the responsibilities of the job. Supervisors should be prepared with a written list of [questions to ask](#).
4. When calling an applicant's reference: identify yourself immediately; tell the reference about the position for which the applicant is being considered.
5. To gain as much information as possible, let the person speak without interrupting. If the reference pauses in the conversation, it usually means he/she has other information and is hesitant to share this information. Get them to talk about everything that would be helpful, but only ask for information that will be used in your hiring decision.
6. Again, ask only job-related questions and document all answers. Avoid questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."
7. The most important question to get answered is whether the previous employer would rehire the applicant you are considering. If you get no other response, try to get this question answered.
8. Avoid questions that screen out minorities, women and persons with disabilities, or will bias the reference in terms of age, gender or religion.

There are many personal questions you must avoid when conducting a reference check. If you have doubts as to whether you should ask a question, don't. Questions you should avoid include:

1. Does the applicant have any disabilities or health problems?
2. Is the applicant married or have children?
3. Has the applicant made child care arrangements?

Internal Candidate Reference Checks

When considering an internal/University employee as a final candidate, the hiring manager should advise the employee prior to contacting the candidate's supervisor to obtain information regarding the employee's present work performance. Hiring managers are also encouraged to contact Human Resources Consulting Services for the purpose of obtaining information regarding the employee's

performance as contained in the personnel file. This information may be reviewed with a representative from the Office of Human Resources upon request.

Pre-Employment Screens

Upon finalizing the hiring decision, your offer of employment to the selected candidate is contingent upon the candidate successfully completing the required pre-employment checks. The required pre-employment checks will be determined by the nature of the position.

1. National Sex Offender Registry Check
2. Criminal Records Verification
3. Pre-Employment Drug Test
4. Pre-Employment Physical Examinations *(Pre-employment Physical Examinations may be required for positions where the nature of the work renders it necessary. However, the University does not generally require pre-employment physicals as a condition of employment.)*
5. Driving Record Verification
6. Credit Check
7. Degree/Educational Verification

Notification of Pre-Employment Test Results

These checks will be conducted through Human Resources Consulting Services and the results communicated to the hiring manager as soon as they become available. The candidate cannot begin employment until the results of all pre-employment checks have been received by Human Resources.