

Guide to Completing Appropriate Phone Reference Checks

It is best to be friendly and professional when conducting a Phone Reference Check. Begin the telephone reference check with basic questions. Tested techniques indicate that the referent is more responsive if the conversation starts with simple questions like:

1. How long has Dr. Jones been employed at your institution?
2. How long have you known Dr. Jones?
3. What courses does Dr. Jones usually teach?
4. Does Dr. Jones have tenure?

Do not hesitate to probe, refine, or rephrase questions. Establishing a basis for one's assessment or judgment and requesting examples of personal accomplishments can be very revealing. Be wary of responses that do not address the question directly. Changing the subject is frequently used as a way to avoid responding.

Before closing the conversation, be certain you know the opinion of the person you have called. A technique for accomplishing this objective when the reference has been ambiguous is to say either: "I take it that you recommend Dr. Jones very highly for this position" or "I take it that you do not recommend Dr. Jones very highly for this position." These statements, with slight modification, can also be useful for summarizing or concluding the conversation

1. Reference checks are conducted by telephone. If you are not getting a response from the referent, please send the questions via email.
2. Reference checks are conducted by the department chair or the hiring authority.
3. In some cases, the department chair or hiring authority may find it necessary to verify important information that was not provided by one of the listed references. Department chair or hiring authority may contact individuals who are not on reference list for this purpose.

- a. During the online application process, the candidate authorizes the University to proceed as follows in the "Applicant Agreement":

"I understand that California State University, Dominguez Hills will verify the statements I have made regarding my academic background and employment history. I authorize my past employers and schools to give California State University, Dominguez Hills, pertinent work-related information about me. I also understand that all offers of appointment are contingent upon receipt of satisfactory verification of information. I certify that the answers given in my application are true and correct and that I have not knowingly withheld any factors of circumstances. I understand that all answers given on my application for employment are subject to verification and that should I be employed at California State University, Dominguez Hills, any misrepresentation or omission of the facts on this application may be sufficient reason for dismissal."

4. It is the University's practice to contact a minimum of three (3) references for tenured and tenure-track searches and one (1) for non-tenure-track searches.
5. As a **courtesy** to the candidate, obtain the candidate's consent before speaking with representatives of their current employer.
6. Telephone reference checks are compliant with the CSU's Background Check policy. Follow-up questions, in addition to the core questions, are permitted and encouraged when needed to clarify responses by candidates. When you ask for a reference, the person you are calling is assisting you with the search process.