



360-Degree (Multisource) Reference Checking

Directions: A 360-degree (multisource) reference check helps form a more objective picture of the possible candidate. Use the best practices outlined below for your reference checks.

Best Practices

✓ **Assess behavioral competencies that are critical to work success.** The following questions, adapted from Bennis and O'Toole (2000),* may be useful.

- Can you provide an example of how the candidate inspired followers to trust him or her?
- In what ways does the candidate energize others? Can you provide an example?
- Can you tell me how you have witnessed the candidate developing others?
- In what ways does the candidate demonstrate respect for followers? Have you witnessed situations where he or she did not?
- In what ways does the candidate demonstrate that he or she listens?
- How does the candidate hold people accountable for their performance and promises?
- Have you seen the candidate delegating important tasks to others? How so?

✓ **Strive for consistency.** Reference calls should be made by one person, either the dean or the search committee chair, so that each reviewer is asked the same questions. Calls by search committee members other than the chair should not be allowed.

✓ **Gather multiple perspectives on the candidate.** Call the references the candidate has provided and go "off list" by calling peers, collaborators, colleagues, and, most importantly, workers who report to the candidate, such as administrative assistants, nurses, students, and residents.

Offer the candidate the opportunity to identify individuals whom they believe would be biased against them. Honoring requests not to contact these people is recommended in the spirit of open communication with the candidates.

✓ **Document your process and results.** Keep a log of individuals you contacted for references, those with whom you spoke, and notes on the conversations. This documentation is not shared with anyone outside the search committee.

* Bennis W, O'Toole J. 2000. Don't hire the wrong CEO. *Harv Bus Rev* 78(3):170-176, 218.