

Effective Reference Check Questions

Establishing the Context

- How long and in what capacity have you known the individual?
- What were the job functions and did he/she perform them effectively?
- What were the beginning and ending employment dates for this individual?
- What was this individual's beginning and ending salary?
- What position(s) did the individual hold?
- What was it like to work in the organization? What were the unique dynamics?

Questions to Ask Managers/Supervisors

- How did this individual's performance compare to other employees with similar job duties?
- How much direction/oversight did the individual need?
- What is your view on his/her ability to work independently?
- Did he/she know when to seek guidance?
- Did this individual present clear data from the research?
- Has this individual shared authorship of any of your research? If not, why not?
- What motivates the individual?
- How does [candidate's name] handle conflict?
- Did you evaluate [candidate's name] performance? If so, what were his/her strong and weak points? What was noted as needing improvement and what did this individual excel at?
- What would you consider [candidate's name] biggest accomplishment while working for your company?
- I would like to describe to you the position we are hiring for. Please describe how good of a fit you think [candidate's name] would be for the position? What are his/her principal strengths for this position?
- Did the individual make sound and timely decisions regarding research protocols?
- What was the individual's experience working as a member of a team?
- Is there any additional information that you would like to share with me?
- Why did [candidate's name] leave the company?
- Does the individual communicate well orally and in writing?
- Would you feel comfortable having this candidate make presentations?
- Would you consider this individual eligible for rehire? Why or why not?

Illegal or Unethical Questions

- Does the individual have any disabilities or health problems?
- Is the individual married or does he/she have children?
- Has the individual made child care arrangement?
- Would you describe the individual's home life as stable?
- Does the individual care for elderly parents?
- Does the individual require time off from work to practice his/her religion?