

Number: LIB-004E
Title: Employment Reference Checks

1. PURPOSE & INTENT

Employment reference checks are a condition of employment at the University of South Florida. Reference checks are conducted for both external applicants and current employees applying for transfer to another USF area. These guidelines apply to all non-student candidates for employment in the USF Library.

2. STATEMENT OF GUIDELINE

Prior to an offer of employment, the Search Committee Chair (Faculty hires) or hiring supervisor (Admin and Staff hires), in collaboration with Library HR, must contact at least three (3) of the applicant's reference (including the applicant's current or most recent supervisor) to verify work background, performance and credentials. Verifications must be documented using the official Employment Verification form.

Library HR assures compliance with reference check requirements that may vary across employment classifications. Library HR will notify applicants at what stage of the hiring process references will be contacted and will ask them to supply names and contact information for all potential references.

Requests for approval to extend an offer of employment must include a statement signed by the Dean attesting to the completion of satisfactory, current reference checks (including the immediate supervisor of the recommended hire).

These guidelines cover all USF Libraries. Services, equipment, and location may vary.

Attachment #1

From: "Wilcox, Ralph"

Date: Sunday, April 3, 2016 at 12:04 AM

Subject: Reference checks

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, satisfactory reference checks are a condition of employment at the University of South Florida. Reference checks should be conducted for both external applicants and current employees applying for transfer to another USF area.

The hiring supervisor is responsible for verification of the applicant's work background, performance and credentials. Prior to making an offer, the hiring supervisor must contact at least three (3) of the applicant's references, one of whom must be the applicant's current supervisor. If the applicant is not currently employed, then the applicant's most recent supervisor should be contacted.

As a professional courtesy an applicant should be notified at what stage of the hiring process references will be contacted and if the check will extend beyond just the names provided. In some cases an applicant may be concerned about premature notice to the applicant's current employer. In these situations, it is acceptable to hold off on the reference check until an offer is made, but that offer must be contingent upon satisfactory completion of the reference check. Keep in mind that the reference check is in addition to applicable checks of criminal background, credit, sanction lists and academic and professional credentials/licensure when applicable. Any offer of employment should be made following, or contingent on, satisfactory completion of all applicable reference checks.

Some employers may be reluctant to provide details of an applicant's work history. In these situations the hiring supervisor should offer to provide a copy of the certification page from the USF application, which authorizes USF to obtain pertinent information about the applicant while also releasing the referent from liability when providing truthful information. Accordingly, applicants should complete the standard USF application prior to having their references checked.

Most important, and effective immediately, for all recommended new faculty hires I am requiring a signed statement, by the dean of the college, attesting to the completion of satisfactory, current reference checks (including the immediate supervisor of the recommended hire) prior to final review and approval to extend a letter of offer. The statement should include (a) names and current positions/contact information of person(s) providing references (including identification of the current supervisor), (b) the date of the reference check(s), and (c) the USF employee conducting the reference check(s) (including whether in-person, telephone, e-mail, letter, and/or other). Copies of such documentation will remain in the personnel file.

Should you have reservations about completing all reference checks before issuing a letter of offer, then the offer must include the clear statement that "this offer is contingent upon the completion of satisfactory reference checks." In such cases the dean is responsible for ensuring such follow-up and providing the aforementioned documentation to my office.

I thank you for your understanding in continuation and documentation of this best practice.

Ralph C. Wilcox
Provost & Executive Vice President