



Professional Reference Checks

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Board of Trustees

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Affected Parties:
Employees

Table of Contents:
I Summary
II Guidelines

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I Summary

This policy establishes the guidelines on professional reference screenings for potential employees, volunteers, and affiliates of Lander University.

II Guidelines

A. Professional Reference Checks

As a part of the employee selection and pre-employment process, it is expected that hiring officials will conduct professional reference checks. Professional reference checks are performed to obtain information from a current or former employer about a candidate's job knowledge, work habits (e.g., attendance, dependability/reliability), integrity, ability to work with others, quality and quantity of work, and other factors relevant to specific jobs.

- a. Prior to making an offer of employment, the hiring official is required to conduct professional reference checks for any candidate under consideration. If a candidate asks that his or her current employer not be contacted during the selection process, another professional reference should be provided.
- b. The hiring department should complete at least two professional reference checks. Professional reference checks may be conducted with previous employers up to a 10-year period.
- c. For faculty positions, the department chair (or designee) conducts the professional reference check prior to making any offer of employment. Reference checks are in addition to any written letters of recommendation submitted on behalf of a candidate.
- d. Candidates must consent to the reference checks as part of the terms of the job application.
- e. In conducting professional reference checks, the hiring official may ask only those questions that are related to a candidate's ability to perform the responsibilities of the position. Questions about an individual's race, sex, pregnancy and childbirth



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- (or related medical conditions), color, religion, national origin, age (40+), disability, genetic information, or any other matters not directly related to the position are prohibited.
- f. At the time hiring documents are submitted, the hiring official must certify that professional reference checks have been completed for the individual being hired and that the results of the reference checks were satisfactory. A Telephone Reference Check Form is available for use as part of the employment materials provided by the Office of Human Resources.
 - g. Hiring departments should submit records of professional reference checks to the Office of Human Resources before an offer is made.
 - h. Under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), information collected about the final three candidates for positions, including reference and background screening information, may be considered public information and could be subject to disclosure.