

## Appendix K

### **Sample Questions for Reference Checks:**

Reference checks are an opportunity to verify information the candidate has provided, validate their personal suitability and explore any areas of concern. It's important to talk to references before you make an offer, but do let the candidate know you will be doing this. Be sure to find out if there is anyone the candidate would prefer you not speak to - for example, a current boss or current colleagues.

Ask the reference about information on the candidate's resume and about topics discussed during the interview. Ask for insights into the candidate's work abilities, examples of good work they have done and areas that need development. Be sure to keep the conversation professional throughout.

At the beginning of your conversation, explain to the reference the importance of the position you are hiring for and tell them you appreciate their honesty. At the end, thank them for the time they have spent talking to you and for the great help they have been. Please keep in mind that all questions asked should respect individual privacy.

**Please Note: The following sample questions suggest the types of information you might seek from references about potential job candidates. As a hiring manager, you would need to identify areas and abilities that are critical to the position you are trying to hire for and adapt these questions accordingly.**

#### **Background Questions**

- How long have you known the applicant?
- What was your working relationship with him/her? (Was your working relationship as a supervisor, colleague or subordinate?)
- When did you work with the applicant and for how long?
- (If checking a reference with a supervisor) Can you please confirm the applicant's dates of employment at your organization as given on the resume?

#### **Validating Interview or Resume Information**

- Can you give me a brief description of the job duties and responsibilities of the applicant at your organization?
- What type of projects was he/she involved with?
- How did he/she contribute to the projects?

#### **Focusing on the Candidate's Competencies**

- How did the applicant interact with co-workers?
- Can you give examples of the applicant taking the initiative to help a colleague without first being asked?
- Could you share with me an example of the applicant showing exceptional or good performance at work?
- **Please rank, on a scale of one to ten, the following abilities ( 1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest):**
  - Job Knowledge
  - Quality of work
  - Communication
  - Writing skills – ability to concisely and clearly synthesize and craft complex reports and

- proposals
- Verbal presentations
- Professionalism
- Ability to work in teams
- Leadership qualities
- Adherence to company policies
- Ability to work under pressure or respond to competing deadlines
- Conflict resolution skills
- Can you provide an example of a time that the applicant was required to use strategic thinking skills?
- What are three of the applicant's strengths?
- In what areas do you feel the applicant may need further development?

**Assessing Personal Suitability:**

- What is the ideal career/perfect job for the applicant?
- In what type of work environment would he/she thrive? Where would he/she struggle?
- Are you aware of the reasons for the applicant leaving your organization? Can you share these reasons?
- Is there anything else we should know before we make a hiring decision?

**Key questions:**

- If you had the option would you hire the applicant again? / Would you re-hire this applicant?
- Would you recommend the applicant for this position at UMass Lowell? Yes/ No? If yes, why?

**References/ Acknowledgements:**

[-http://nsbo.ucsc.edu/personnel\\_payroll/staff/recruit/ref\\_check.html](http://nsbo.ucsc.edu/personnel_payroll/staff/recruit/ref_check.html)