|  |
| --- |
| SAMPLE REFERENCE CHECK QUESTIONS |

*These questions may be used in your reference checks but are not intended to be a full and complete list of the questions you might want to ask. Refer to your interview notes and panel feedback to plan candidate specific reference questions.*

## **Sample Reference Check Questions**

* In what capacity did you work with the candidate (e.g., peer, colleague, supervisor)?
* Could you give me a brief description of the duties the candidate performed?
* What were the candidate’s strengths in their role? How do you think those strengths would translate to this role?
* If the candidate were to ask you what they could do to improve their performance, what would you tell them?
* How well did the candidate know the work? How well did the candidate perform on the job?
* How well did the candidate manage the workload? What did they do if/when the workload was too much for them to complete within the given deadlines?
* How would you describe the candidate’s relationships with co-workers, subordinates, and supervisors?
* Is there anything else you can tell me about the candidate’s ability to perform their job?
* What kind of work-related training, certificates, education, or other qualifications does the candidate have that you think would be valuable to this position?
* Is the candidate eligible for re-hire in your organization?

## **Principles to Remember**

### Do

* Get feedback from the people who interviewed the candidate and focus on one or two concerns you’d like to check out
* Ask specific questions related to the role you’re trying to fill and its challenges. Avoid broad questions such as, “What can you tell me about \_\_\_\_\_\_?”
* Listen to what the person is saying and don’t interrupt or supply the answer you want to hear

### Don’t

* Show any skepticism or negativity toward the candidate—the reference may go silent out of loyalty.
* Read anything into the person’s inflection. You don’t have enough context to judge a stranger’s tone of voice.
* Be stymied by HR policies that disallow reference checks. Seek out other sources of information such as professional associations, past employees, and LinkedIn to see if there’s anyone in your professional network who can enlarge your understanding of the candidate.
* Ask any questions or discuss topics you would avoid in an interview.