



CMU Leadership Standards Reference Check Questions

Typically, the hiring authority, who has direct knowledge of the position responsibilities, should conduct reference checking. Be sure to give a brief description of the position to the person giving the reference (current/former supervisors are in the best position to address work performance). Verify facts listed on the resume such as; position, responsibilities, years of service, reason for leaving. The same questions may be used for all references; however, make sure all questions are job related. Keep in mind that all information received is **confidential** and should only be shared with Human Resources and if necessary, the search committee.

Listed below are standard reference check questions that can be used for all positions. As a tool to help in the selection of the best candidate, it is encouraged to ask reference check questions focused specifically on CMU's Leadership Standards, in addition to any standard questions that may be asked. Therefore, listed below are sample questions related to each Leadership Standard. For additional information related to Reference Checks, please refer to the Hiring Process for Staff <https://www.cmich.edu/docs/default-source/finance-and-administrative-services-division/human-resources/employment-services/employment-policies--procedures-and-resources/hiring-handbook.pdf>

Standard Questions

1. What is/was your working relationship with the candidate?
2. How long have you known the candidate?
3. How would you describe his/her performance?
4. What do you think are his/her strengths?
5. In what areas do you believe this individual could improve?
6. Describe the candidate's technical skills.
7. Explain his/her supervisory style, if applicable.
8. Have you had to resolve any conflict related to this candidate?
9. Are you aware of any problems related to attendance or punctuality?
10. Describe the candidate's organizational skills including their ability to follow through.
11. Has the candidate demonstrated the ability to work in a high volume/fast paced environment?
12. How would you describe the candidate's interpersonal skills (i.e. positive, enthusiastic energetic, etc.)?
13. Is there anyone else you would recommend we speak with to conduct an additional reference check?
14. Is there anything I haven't asked that you think is important for me to know?
15. Are you aware of any instances of inappropriate behavior including violence?
16. Do you know why he/she is leaving his/her current employment?
17. Would he/she be eligible for re-employment?
18. Would you hire this individual for a position like this?

Team Builder

1. How would you describe the individual's relationships with co-workers, subordinates, and supervisors?
2. Does the individual always conduct his/her dealings with others in a tactful manner? Please explain.
3. Please describe the individual's role and outlook on team/group interactions.
4. Was the individual a valuable member of the team? Why or why not?
5. What strategies would you say this individual used to motivate their team or team members?
6. Can you tell me about a time that this individual was part of a team and the project/initiative they were working on succeeded/failed? How did this individual influence that outcome?
7. Can you share an example when the individual successfully inspired a team?
8. What types of people work well with this individual? What types of people do not?

Thoughtful, Open Communicators

1. How proficient is the individual with delegation and information sharing with his/her supervisor, work group, and/or team?

2. How would you describe the individual's verbal/written communication style? Does the candidate excel in one over the other?
3. Can you provide an example of how the individual communicates internally and externally to the organization?
4. Can you give an example of a time when this individual had to deliver difficult information to a higher level administrator or team?
5. Describe your comfort level with this individual giving presentations to your board, funders, political officials, media, etc.?
6. Can you describe the effectiveness of this individual's communication with customers?

Service-Oriented

1. Can you provide an example of a time the individual went "above and beyond" to assist a customer?
2. Do you know of an instance in which this individual altered/improved a process for the sole benefit of customers?
3. Overall, how would you describe the individual's interactions with customers/clients?
4. Describe this individual's experience and effectiveness in training new employees.
5. Explain what your thoughts are on this individual's ability to be flexible and understanding of other cultures.
6. How comfortable is the individual working in a diverse environment?

Proactive, Responsible and Accountable

1. Can you provide an example of a time when this individual took ownership or blamed others during a particular situation?
2. How does he/she respond to criticism and resolving interpersonal conflicts?
3. How have you observed this individual holding themselves and others accountable?
4. How has this individual responded when communicated to about areas of growth and development (i.e. accepting, defensive, etc.)?
5. Can you explain how this individual works under tight deadlines?
6. Has this individual ever missed a deadline that was critical to the organization/department?
7. Describe this individual's ability to set priorities and follow through.
8. How would you describe this individual's honesty and integrity?
9. What kind of situations/projects have you placed this individual into without hesitation versus ones that would cause you pause or concern?

Courageous and Effective

1. What are the individual's key accomplishments or impact on the organization?
2. In stressful situations, describe how this individual has reacted.
3. How does he/she handle difficult people?
4. How does this individual resolve conflict?
5. Can you explain how this individual has been effective in supporting other's successes?
6. Can you describe a time that this individual needed to seek guidance? Did they take the initiative or did you or another individual need to reach out to lend that additional guidance?
7. Give an example of a time when this individual had to handle a difficult/sensitive issue.
8. How does this individual react to change?
9. How does this individual handle differing opinions when they are very passionate about a topic/policy/etc.?
10. How would you describe this individual's values and ethics?
11. What would you say is his/her most positive/negative characteristic as a leader?

Focused on Students and Passionate about Central Michigan University

1. Why do you believe this candidate is interested in working at Central Michigan University?
2. Have you seen this candidate put the goals/needs of the organization over that of his/her individual unit? Can you provide an example?
3. Describe a time when this individual was passionate about a particular process, project, initiative, etc. What was their reaction like and how did other's respond?
4. Do you believe this individual positively reflects the values of the organization?