

I. Summary

This local procedure is to provide managers and employees information on how to determine when to give an external or internal reference check.

II. Related Policies and References

- A. [PPSM-21: Selection and Appointment](#)
- B. [Local Procedure 21: Selection and Appointment](#)
- C. [PPSM-80: Staff Personnel Records](#)
- D. [Local Procedure 80: Staff Personnel Records](#)
- E. [UC Public Disclosure of Compensation Information](#)
- F. [RMP-9, Guidelines for Access to University Personnel Records by Governmental Agencies](#)

III. General Guidance on Responding to Reference Checks

If a current or former employee in a department has applied for another position, a manager or supervisor may be contacted to give an employment reference. In general, responses should be honest, fair and accurate. Comments on protected information (e.g., protected medical leaves, medical conditions, personal beliefs, protected category status or union activity), or subject matter outside the scope of the employee's qualifications, past performance, or attendance should not be made. Refrain from negative or critical information about the employee unless the information is based on credible evidence and the information has been clearly communicated to the employee (e.g., documented corrective action or progressive discipline).

IV. Reference Check By External Employer

Departments/Shared Service Centers/Managers should direct all external employers to TheWorkNumber to provide automated employment and income verification for former and current employees. Additional information on TheWorkNumber is available on the UCR's Accounting website under Employment and Income Verification through TheWorkNumber.

If there is a request to provide additional information beyond TheWorkNumber employment verification, ask the external employer to provide a copy of a signed release from the employee authorizing the university to share information. A signed release should generally include a statement authorizing the manager/UC to release any and all information (or specific, limited information) relating to the candidate's employment with the university and state that the university will be held harmless from any and all liability that may potentially result from the release and/or use of such information.

A. Provide Reference Checks According to TERMS:

T – Truth. Truth is an absolute defense to an action for defamation.

E – Evidence. Base your opinion on credible evidence.

R – Respond. It is better to answer questions than to volunteer information.

M – Malice, Malice is not allowed.

S – Scope. Keep your comments to matters that you know as an employee.

B. Abide by Personnel Policies for Staff Members (PPSM)-80: Staff Personnel Records, Section II.B.4, when providing the following information*:

- Name
- Date of hire
- Current position title
- Organizational unit assignment
- Date of separation
- Office address and office telephone number
- Current job description, full-time or part-time and appointment type

*Effective January 1, 2018, California Assembly Bill, AB 168 bans employers from inquiring into an individual's salary history.

V. UC Systemwide Reference Checks (internal checks between campuses)

If a manager or supervisor from UCR or another UC location is conducting a reference check on a former or current employee, the manager or supervisor of the employee is authorized to provide responsive information (e.g., work history information and objective feedback on the candidate's qualification, past performance, and attendance).

- A. Full disclosure
- B. Disclosure according to TERMS
- C. Share personnel file (for finalist only)

Upon request, the contents of the employee's personnel file may be reviewed with the manager or supervisor over the phone. The new UC location hiring department is not entitled to take possession of the employee's personnel file until after the hiring is completed and the employee has started employment at that location in the new department.

VI. Public Records Request (Access to Records by the Public)

Requests should be made to the UCR Office of Campus Counsel. Human Resources will coordinate with the office of record to provide copies of staff personnel records in accordance with the Public Records Act and Information Practices Act. For a public record or information practices request(s), send an email to PublicRecords@ucr.edu.