

Receiving a Negative Reference

Receiving a negative reference for a job candidate can be a challenging situation, especially in the final stages of a promising recruitment process. Upon receiving a negative reference, consult with your HR Professional.

Here are some tips on how to navigate this scenario:

- **Assess the Credibility and Relevance:** Consider the source of the reference and the context in which the feedback was given. Assess whether the negative feedback is relevant to the position for which the candidate is being considered. Sometimes, the issues mentioned may not impact the candidate's ability to perform in the new role.
- **Look for Patterns:** Compare the feedback with other references and any patterns of behavior noted during the interview process. Isolated negative feedback may be less concerning than consistent reports of similar issues from multiple sources.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Keep the information confidential. Discussing it only with those directly involved in the hiring decision respects the candidate's privacy and maintains professionalism.
- **Provide an Opportunity for Explanation:** Consider giving the candidate a chance to respond to the feedback, especially if it is being seriously considered as a factor in the hiring decision. There may be extenuating circumstances or valuable context that the candidate can provide.
- **Use Objective Criteria:** Make sure your hiring decision is based on a comprehensive evaluation of the candidate, including their skills, experience, interviews, and the full range of reference checks. Avoid letting a single negative reference disproportionately influence your decision.
- **Document the Process:** Keep detailed notes on the reference checks and the rationale behind hiring decisions. This documentation can be valuable for justifying decisions made during the hiring process and for future reference if questions arise.
- **Confirm Rehire Eligibility:** HR Professionals can communicate directly with VCU HR to confirm if the candidate is eligible for rehire at VCU.

Ultimately, the decision should be based on whether you believe the candidate will perform successfully in the role and can positively contribute to the university's culture and work environment. Use all the information at your disposal to make an informed decision.

Last Updated: 4/9/2024