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# Employment Verification and Professional Reference Policy

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### I. REASON FOR THIS POLICY

This policy addresses the release of employee information to outside entities to ensure confidentiality of employee information.

### II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The University of South Dakota regularly receives requests from verification sources requesting information on current and previous employees' employment information. The South Dakota Board of Regents has contracted with Experian to provide employment verification on employees. If Experian cannot provide the requested information, it is the responsibility of the Human Resources office to provide this information to verification sources.

Supervisors, hiring managers, human resources professionals, or other employees at the University of South Dakota may be asked to provide a "professional" reference to a prospective employer on behalf of the employee who is applying for a job. This is allowed following the procedures below.

Hiring managers and human resource professionals seeking to hire employees for open positions may obtain references to make hiring decisions, following the procedures below.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Verification sources – outside entities including mortgage companies, financial institutions, lenders, pre-employment screenings, government/social service agencies, etc. requesting verification of employment and income data on current and previous employees of the University of South Dakota.**

**Reference- a person who can provide a recommendation or confirm the qualifications of a prospective employee regarding their experience, work habits, character traits and skills.**

### IV. PROCEDURES

#### **Employment Verification Policy**

1. All requests from verification sources, other than prospective employers, shall be directed to Experian Verify.
2. If Experian Verify cannot complete the verification request, Human Resources will be notified and will release employee's name, title, salary, and dates of employment. The released information shall not include whether or not a former employee is eligible to be rehired.
3. Additional information will only be released upon written permission signed by the employee or if traditionally released or required by management needs of the state higher education system.

#### **Professional Reference Policy**

- A. Giving professional references to prospective employers:
  1. Individuals giving a professional reference must have a reasonable basis to believe that the person making the request has authority to obtain a reference on behalf of a prospective employer, granting agency or other entity that may properly seek such information.
  2. Individuals giving a professional reference must have a reasonable basis to believe that the reference shall be used for a legitimate end, related to employment, education, funding or other customary academic purpose.
  3. Individuals giving a professional reference must make a written memorandum noting the identity of the party making the request, the basis under items 1 and 2 above for giving the reference, and the date and means used to give the reference. This memorandum should be retained in departmental files for three years.

4. Individuals providing professional reference information are liable for what they say.
- B. Obtaining references when making a hiring decision:
1. Reference checking is the responsibility of the hiring unit and should be used as a method of verifying information on applicants prior to making a hiring decision.
  2. It is permissible to contact individuals who may have knowledge about the applicant's work performance even if those individuals are not listed as references on the application/resume provided the applicant has been informed and given an opportunity to indicate if there is anyone who should not be contacted.
  3. In situations where the hiring unit wishes to employ an individual who has been terminated from another Board of Regents institution, or allowed to resign in lieu of termination, the Human Resources office or academic affairs office must obtain information surrounding the separation from the previous institution. Before proceeding with an appointment, the information and justification for appointment must be shared through the appropriate supervisory levels to the Vice President and President for approval.
  4. If the hiring unit wishes to hire a current USD employee, the hiring unit must contact the employee's current supervisor. No other reference check is required.

## V. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

[Board of Regents Policy 4:3 Personnel Records](#)

[Procedures for Employment and Income Verification](#)