

## Applicant Guide – Selecting Referees

August 2018

### Applicant Guide - Selecting Appropriate Referees

#### What is the purpose of reference checks?

Reference checks are conducted to seek validation or confirmation of the claims that you have made over the course of the recruitment process. This could include your application and resume, interview, and related assessments. These checks could relate to your work performance, attitude, experience, qualifications, skillsets and relevant work related qualities.

#### How many referees will I need to nominate?

In most instances the AFP will request you to provide the names and contact information of two referees. These referees should:

- be current or former supervisors or someone who is in a position to establish your suitability for the vacancy
- have had the opportunity to observe you in the workplace (ideally)
- have evidenced how you respond in a range of work/relevant situations
- be able to confidently and honestly respond to questioning or be prepared to provide comments in writing about your suitability for the vacancy
- understand that any comments they give may be given to you as part of feedback processes or other mechanisms
- not be a spouse, partner, immediate family member or close associate.

#### Can a referee other than people I nominate be contacted?

If your nominated referee is unable to be contacted in a reasonable time or additional information is required, a member of the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) will make contact with you to discuss the issues and seek your consent to contact alternative referees.

#### When will my referees be contacted?

Reference checks may be conducted after the finalisation of an interview process or alternative selection method (e.g. assessment centre).

The SAC may make a secondary contact with the referee if they have additional questions they would like to clarify or where information may have been overlooked in the initial discussion. Regardless all questions asked of referees must align to the selection criteria or work level standards.

#### Can I have a Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) member as my referee?

Yes, a SAC members can be your referee but they are required to submit a written referee report to the SAC Chair prior to commencement of the selection process.

**Can I obtain a copy of the reference check obtained from my referee?**

Yes. In most instances you will receive information provided by referees (if sought) as part of your feedback process. Alternatively you may request reference check information via request to the SAC Chair or through other mechanisms.

**Can an adverse reference check affect my overall suitability for the vacancy?**

The SAC is required to use all information obtained through the selection process in making an overall assessment of your suitability. There may be instances where the SAC might seek to undertake an additional reference check if an adverse reference check is provided and this is contrary to all other assessment information received at that time.

**Tips in managing your referees?**

- Ask your referee if they are willing to be contacted and provide commentary on your suitability for the vacancy. Don't assume that just because an individual is your manager they will or should be your referee.
- Ideally provide your referee with the job description and discuss why you/your referee believe you could be suitable. You may also wish to provide your referee with a copy of your resume and supporting pitch.
- Have your referee advise if they expect to be absent for an extended period or unable to be contacted by phone or email. Determine an alternative referee if timing is going to be an issue.
- Try to take a strategic approach to managing your referees. Think ahead and develop relationships with a wide range of people who can confidently speak on your behalf eg. more senior managers, clients or key stakeholders, community organisation leaders.
- Maintain contact with your referees. They too move to different roles in different organisations and you may never know when you need to call on these people as referees.
- At the conclusion of the process, thank your referees. You never know when they may need to be contacted in the future.

Further resources: [How to write and talk to Selection Criteria: Dr Ann Villiers](#)