SkillSurvey Automated Reference Checks

What is SkillSurvey?
SkillSurvey is an online, data-driven, automated reference checking tool that obtains and manages job-specific feedback from a candidate’s former managers and other references.
- SkillSurvey has a growing library of over 400 job-specific surveys to use per position
- Responses are typically gathered in less than 2 days
- Information is obtained confidentially and aggregated
- Scientifically validated to be more predictive than traditional assessments

What is the purpose of this tool?
Telephone reference checks can be an inefficient, time-consuming, biased, and inconsistent process. Using an online automated reference-checking tool sets us up to:
- Improve the efficiency of the hiring process
- Use data to drive decision-making
- Leverage job-specific questions to get impactful feedback

What benefits should we see?
- Ratings have been validated to correlate with reduced first-year turnover for cause and better post-hire performance
- Improved efficiency
- Simplicity
- Reduced bias
- Improved candidate experience
- Improved client satisfaction - by refining the selection of employees to those with sterling customer service as perceived by their peers, overall organization customer service scores increase

How will we use this tool?
There are some areas of the university that are already using SkillSurvey in place of individually calling references and using the “Telephone Reference Check” form with great success. Starting with a larger pilot group, we will continue to leverage SkillSurvey to replace telephone reference checks to work towards the benefits listed above.

FAQs
(Shared from SkillSurvey’s resources)

How is the tool driven by data analysis?
All Pre-Hire 360 workflow surveys are created by our Analytics Team of industrial and organizational (I/O) psychologists. Our Analytics conducts thorough industry research, follows best practices in competency modeling, and uses rigorous statistical validation to create job-specific surveys that include the range of competencies found to be most relevant to success. Our results have been scientifically validated and published in a peer-reviewed science journal.

There are three components that our system meets to prove scientific integrity: Reliability – Does the system provide consistent and reliable results for a given candidate when it’s completed by multiple references, and across different points in time? Validity – Are the surveys job-related, and when the data is leveraged by a company, is it predictive of subsequent work outcomes like lowering turnover, improving hiring manager
satisfaction, and predicting performance ratings? Compliance (EEOC) – Is the system free of bias against all protected classes of candidates? Read more about our science.

**Most references say very little. How does SkillSurvey Reference get actionable feedback from references?**

At least 85% of references complete the survey and offer candid input. They do so because the system generates and sends them an email request from someone they know, the job candidate. The email includes a link to an online survey that consists of a variety of behavioral based job-specific questions (the competencies that really matter for each job). In addition to being a personal request, within the Pre-Hire 360 workflow, references are advised that all of their feedback will remain confidential and will only be provided to the hiring organization in a report that averages all of the references’ ratings.

**How long does the process take to get results on the candidate?**

On average surveys are completed by the 2 required references in less than 2 days.

**How do you obtain insight on soft skills?**

We take the time to translate general competencies such as ‘being a team player’ or ‘adapting to change’ into specific job behaviors in the context of real work situations. The predictors are professionalism; interpersonal skills; problem solving and adaptability; personal value commitment. For those who manage people or projects, there are other predictors such as setting goals; assigning tasks and providing feedback. For executives and leaders, predictors include the ability to provide vision and motivate others. We identify a meaningful set of behaviors or ‘soft skills’ for each job and use detailed and candid feedback from former managers and coworkers to suggest how a candidate performed in these behaviors in a previous position.

**Is it easy for hiring managers to understand reference feedback?**

We make it easy for hiring managers to interpret survey results by providing data-driven reports. In the candidate feedback report, we point out differences of opinions when references disagree, separate manager feedback from co-workers and we also provide job specific behavioral questions that can be used during the interview. There are options available to set your own corporate benchmarks and to see percentile rankings for the thousands of other candidates who have been assessed by SkillSurvey Reference for a similar position.

**Does SkillSurvey Reference allow for ratings of job skills?**

Our Pre-Hire 360 workflow is designed to help understand the “soft skills” a candidate has which include the specific behaviors that are required to be effective in a particular job. For example, for a customer service role, a question asks the references to rate the candidate on their ability to handle customer complaints with patience, listen well and work well with other stakeholders in the organization to resolve issues. Each survey includes approximately 20 behavioral questions.

**What happens if the references don’t respond?**

HRMD will send reminders for the references. If there continues to be no response, we reach out to the candidate to allow them the opportunity to get in touch with the reference, or to provide additional references instead.