There are occasions upon which current or former employees request that confirmation regarding their employment at Coastal Carolina University be provided to another entity or business. Often, these requests occur when an individual is seeking other employment, applying for a loan/mortgage, renting an apartment or making a significant purchase. The University’s protocol and procedure regarding verification of University employment is described below.

I. Professional References for Current/Former Employees, including Student Employees

A. Verbal inquiries regarding current or former employment at CCU are to be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources and Equal Opportunity (HREO). This protocol applies to all employment categories, including student employees. HREO will verify the following via telephone:
   1. dates of employment,
   2. position held and
   3. the accuracy of the current/former employee’s salary/pay rate, if the requestor provides the information for confirmation.

B. Written verifications, including letters of recommendation/reference:
   1. Applications and other forms requested by credit, government and other agencies are to be submitted to HREO for completion. HREO will confirm dates of employment, position held, salary/wage history and other information (if deemed appropriate) with a signed release from the current or former employee.
   2. Examples of applications and other forms include loan/mortgage applications, apartment/house leasing forms, automobile loan applications, social services wage verifications, student loan forgiveness and state service/teaching verifications.
   3. If appropriate, a letter of recommendation/reference may be provided by a supervisor for a current or former employee, including a student employee, who reports or reported to him/her. Such references may be placed on University letterhead.

C. An internal job candidate is a University employee who applies and is a candidate for a different position within the University. A hiring official may not contact the employee’s current supervisor until the official receives consent from the candidate. For the purpose of employment verification, the hiring official should be either the prospective supervisor or an individual who falls within the administrative channel for the open position. This protocol is intended to maintain the integrity of the search process and to protect candidates from being negatively impacted in their current positions if they are not selected for the new jobs or if they decline job offers.
D. **A representative or an investigator from a federal agency** (or from a contractor of a federal agency) may visit the University to verify current or former employment of an individual. Such visits are often unannounced. As a matter of practice, representatives and investigators must be directed to the Office of Human Resources and Equal Opportunity.

1. HREO will verbally verify:
   a. dates of employment,
   b. position held and
   c. salary/pay rate.

2. Additional factual information may be provided as requested and as deemed appropriate, if a signed consent permits. Such information may include verification of the individual’s reason for leaving CCU, general performance information, and confirmation of any conduct and/or disciplinary issue information as provided by the representative or investigator. Any information released should be appropriate and supported by documentation existing in the official personnel file located in HREO.

3. As part of the vetting process, representatives and investigators from federal agencies are often required to verify additional information with individuals on campus (e.g., supervisors and colleagues). Whenever feasible, HREO will facilitate referrals to the appropriate parties. Employees who are asked to participate in the verification of employment process should only provide information that is factual and can be substantiated. When information is to be released, the representative/investigator must visually show his/her credentials and provide the University with his/her business card along with a copy of a consent form signed by the prospective employee. The University individual verifying employment information must document and retain the badge number and business card of the representative/investigator and a copy of the consent form.

4. Employees must understand that any information they provide may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and public dissemination.

II. **Personal References for Current/Former Employees, including Student Employees**

A. Verbal and/or written personal references are permissible if a CCU employee chooses to provide them. University employees who serve as personal references should clearly state that they are serving as personal references and are not representing the University. These references should not be furnished utilizing University systems (e.g., email/telephone) and must not be provided on University letterhead.

III. **Personal References for Current/Former Students**

A. Employees may provide verbal and/or written personal references for students of Coastal Carolina University. These references may be furnished utilizing University systems (e.g., email/telephone) and may be provided on University letterhead.
B. References should be related to observations regarding the student’s academic performance and campus involvement, and based on the personal knowledge of the person providing the reference information. Employees should provide only information that is factual and that can be substantiated. Information that is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) cannot be released without signed prior consent from the student. Employees must understand that any information they provide may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and public dissemination.

III. **General Information**

A. If verification of employment is done in a written form, a copy should be retained in the department.

B. If individuals are unsure of how to respond to reference requests, they should contact HREO for guidance.

C. Providing inflammatory, inaccurate or other information deemed inappropriate may result in disciplinary action and/or personal liability. Failure to adhere to this protocol may result in institutional liability as well.

D. Providing references is not a right or a privilege. The University reserves the right to make determinations on a case-by-case basis based on the circumstances presented.

HREO 5/9/2016