

Employment References

Who should serve as your references?

In selecting people to ask to serve as a reference for you, think about what those individuals know about you and if they can account for your work-related qualities. Past and present employers usually know about such things as your reliability, initiative, and your ability to work with others. This type of information is valuable, even if your employment was not career related. Faculty members may know about your academic ability, productivity, and timeliness. Others, such as advisors and coaches, may also be aware of information about you, which could be relevant to a potential employer. Avoid selecting references who only know you in a social capacity.

Getting Permission

Never give someone's name as a reference without that person's permission. Keep your references informed about your job search-provide them with a current resume and tell them names of persons and organizations to whom you've given their names. For example, your resume gives your background to each reference: a faculty member may know your academic skills and an employer may know your on-the-job characteristics, but each may not be aware of the other facets of your background. Whenever possible, give them a copy of the job description for those positions for which you are applying. Such information helps your references be prepared for phone calls and letters they may receive. Let your references know your interests-abilities and experiences. Keeping your references well-informed will help them serve as better references for you.

When to give your reference list to a prospective employer:

Provide reference information when you are asked to provide it. If you reach the interview stage and have not been asked for reference information, you may want to offer it. Generally do not mail reference information with your resume unless it has been requested. Contacting references is time-consuming, and most employers will do some initial screening of candidates-by reviewing the resume and perhaps conducting interview-before contacting references.

Where to list references:

Some job seekers choose to state "References available upon request" as the last line on their resumes. If you are having difficulty fitting relevant information on your resume, don't list "references available upon request." Most employers assume you can supply references, so it is never essential to include this wording on your resume.

Create a separate reference page to list your references. Include full name, title, organization with which the person is affiliated, complete address, phone number and e-mail address (if available). Make absolutely sure you have spelled the names of your references correctly. Your name should be at the heading of the page-just like it appears on your resume.

What about credential or placement files?

Letters of reference are seldom used for the job search any longer, the exceptions being Health and Education. Reference Forms, both open (readable) and closed (confidential) are available at the front desk at Career Services. Pick up the necessary information and provide forms to your references. These letters will be duplicated, kept in a file, and sent out at your request when you fill out a Credential Request Form.

What should references say?

Many references are not sure what they are to say on the candidate's behalf. Encourage them to mention the:

- ❑ capacity in which they know you (i.e., summer intern and she was the supervisor).
- ❑ the time frame of the relationship (i.e., summer of 2002 or has known the candidate for four years).
- ❑ the positive qualities demonstrated in the position (i.e., visited work sites, designed floor plans on CAD, and presented proposals to clients).

Reference should avoid reporting negative or derogatory statements about the candidate. This is one of the safeguards of approaching a potential reference in advance and getting permission to use his/her name to give a recommendation or endorsement. If an individual has a reservation, it would be best not to include that person on the reference list. Remember, the employer must have your permission to contact a previous supervisor or professor.

Sample Reference List

Lauren S. Johnson
556 Dallum Drive
Newark, Delaware 19711

REFERENCES

Ms. Pauline Smith
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Concord Pet Supplies
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