

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTERReference Basics

GETTING STARTED

- 1. Brainstorm a list of 5-10 people who you believe would be able to speak on your professional performance, skills, and abilities. You may also want to include people who can attest to your interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, communication style, conflict resolution capacity, decision-making, and knowledge within your field.
- Remember that the best references are people you have worked for or professors who are aware of your strengths and performance.
- 3. For each job application, narrow your initial list down to the top 3-5 people who can give you the best recommendation for the **particular position** for which you are applying.
- 4. List their contact information on a separate sheet of paper.

PROFESSIONAL VS. PERSONAL

References should be people who have worked with you in some capacity. References should **NOT** be friends or family members. These are typically not seen as reliable. A traditional professional reference will usually be a former supervisor or a professor you have worked with recently. If you want to include a personal reference, it should be a former colleague, mentor, or former teacher. This type of reference is still professional since they are familiar with your work ethic and skills, but they can also shed light on some of your other attributes like character and ability to work with others. Always utilize people who know you personally. Don't select a reference based on their title alone.

PREPARING YOUR REFERENCES

Verify

Verify their contact information before listing it. Typically, you will list the contact information for their place of employment, but it is possible they may be easier to reach at a personal email or cell phone number. Ensure you verify with your reference whether they want their professional or personal contact information used.

Give them a copy of your resume and let them know the type of job you are seeking.

Keep them posted on job search efforts - if you think they may be called, contact them and let them know the name of the company and tell them a little about the job.

Thank

Send them a thank you note for serving as a reference after you have been hired.

Inform



All References Must Have

Always ask permission

before listing someone as a

reference to ensure they are

willing to positively speak on

your behalf and will be

available during the time

frame of your job search.

- Name
- Address
- Phone
- Email
- Company & Title (if applicable)

Fonts & Formatting

- · Keep body text to 10-12 pt
- · Use one standard font like Arial or Tahoma
- 1" margins
- Don't use special characters
- Use the same heading as your resume



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Title, Department Include their current job title and specific department, if applicable Include their company name Include their company name This is typically their company address, but always verify with the reference which address they prefer City, State, Zip

FORMAT

Relationship

Include the capacity in which you knew the reference. If they have changed positions since you worked for them, indicate their former title, department, and company here.

REFERENCE SUGGESTIONS

· Former or current supervisors

Phone

Email

- Former or current employees you supervised
- · Former or current mentors
- Former or current professors

· Former or current colleagues

Verify which number they prefer

Verify which email they prefer

- Internship/volunteer coordinators
- Academic advisors
- Customers, clients, or vendors you have worked with