

GETTING STARTED

1. Create a list of 5-10 people who you feel are able to speak on your professional performance, skills, and abilities. You may also want to include people who can speak on your interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, communication style, conflict resolution capacity, decision-making, and knowledge within your field.
2. Remember that the best references are people you have worked for and professors who are aware of your strengths and performance.
3. For every job application, narrow down your list to the top 3-5 people who can give you the best recommendation for that position you are applying to.
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, not be friends or family members- as they are typically not seen as reliable. Traditionally, a 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 share some of your other qualities, like character and ability to work with others. Always prioritize people who know you personally. Don't select a reference based on their title alone.

PREPARING YOUR REFERENCES

Ask

Always ask permission before listing someone as a reference. This will ensure they are willing to speak positively about you and will be available during the time of your job search.

Verify

Verify their contact information before listing it. List the contact information for their place of employment, unless it is easier to reach them at a personal email or cell phone number. Check with your reference on if they want their professional or personal contact information to be used.

Inform

Provide a copy of your resume and let them know the type of job you are seeking. Keep them updated 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 about the job

Thank

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

All References Must Have

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

Fonts & Formatting

- 10-12 pt. body text
- Standard font like Arial or Tahoma
- 1" margins
- No special characters
- Same heading as your resume

FORMAT

Name

First and last name. Include and title earned.

Title, Department

Include their current job title and specific department, if applicable

Company

Include their company name

Address

This is typically their company address, but they may want you to use a different one.

City, State, Zip

Include their location.

Phone

Verify which number they prefer

Email

Verify which email they prefer

Relationship

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

REFERENCE SUGGESTIONS

- Former or current supervisors
- Former or current employees you supervised
- Former or current mentors
- Former or current professors
- Former or current colleagues
- Internship/volunteer coordinators
- Academic advisors
- Customers, clients, or vendors you have worked with