



Career Services

USING REFERENCES

References are individuals who provide positive information about your work experiences and skills. They may be present or former employers, internship supervisors, research advisors, faculty members, coworkers, or other members of research projects or volunteer activities. Some employers and graduate schools will request letters of reference, while others will only ask for your references' contact information.

When asking for references, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Be sure to ask the individuals you have in mind if they are willing to serve as a reference for you
- References are listed on a separate sheet of paper, not on the resume or CV itself

For example:

Marcus Matters

178 Green Street ♦ Denver, CO 80225 ♦ (920) 555-5555 ♦ marmat2@hotmail.com

REFERENCES

Robin Jones
Manager
Ultra Cool Shoes
2001 Main Street
Anytown, CO 86000
(970) 379-0000
rojo@aol.com

Jamie Kaleske, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Biology
University of Northern Colorado
Greeley, CO 80639
(970) 351-0000
jskales@unco.edu

- It is not necessary to put the statement, "References available upon request," on your resume or CV – employers presume you can provide references if they request them
- List your references in the order of whom would be the absolute best reference for that in particular job
- Always inform your references when you apply for a position
- Provide your references with a copy of the job description
- Indicate which skills or responsibilities you would like them to emphasize

For example: "Thank you for agreeing to write this reference. According to the advertisement, they are looking for people who are innovative and team players. I have made a list of some of the activities that I think illustrate these qualities, you probably can think of others. Would you be able to write the reference with this in mind? Also, would it be possible to see a draft of your comments / letter before you send it off?"

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LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of recommendation are a form of a reference, but they are more formal and provide more information. It is likely that you will ask the same individuals to both serve as references and to write letters of recommendation.

- A good letter of recommendation will come from someone with strong knowledge of your career field, who understands your professional goals, and who can give examples of your skills and accomplishments
- Provide your recommender(s) with your completed curriculum vita or resume, a stamped, addressed envelope, any forms that you need them to complete, and information about the positions or graduate program(s) to which you are applying
- Give the recommender(s) enough time to write your letter well before the application deadline
- Write and send thank-you letters to the faculty and professional contacts who wrote you letters of recommendation

Allow your references some latitude in developing the letter of recommendation, for those who would like some guidance, suggest the following format:

- How they know you and how long they have known you
- What they think of you (professionally and/or personally)
- Why they think you would make a great _____ (their recommendation)

This letter should always be typed on the letterhead of the company or institution

Want a letter of recommendation? Then you should...

- If the person has time, make an appointment to talk with him/her face-to-face; otherwise make an indirect attempt (through e-mail) then follow up in person
- If the person agrees to write the letter, discuss what you would like them to focus on: your leadership skills, a project you completed, how you would be a success in a particular position, your previous experience, etc.
- Provide a current resume or CV critiqued through Career Services, a copy of the job description, and the cover letter that you've written for that position
- Provide a table with the name of each employer and the deadline for the letter
- Get all the materials to the person well in advance (no less than two weeks) of the deadline date. Explain the materials to him/her and answer any questions/concerns at that time
- Whether or not you get the job, your recommenders are interested in what you are doing. Drop one of them a postcard or thank-you card. Tell them of your plans and your new address, if applicable.
- Have several people read and proofread your application materials before submitting

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