

Selecting Your References

For your professional references, select people who know about your work habits, skills, knowledge, talent and experience. First, you must ask the person if they will serve as a reference for you. Never include people who have not given you permission to use their name as references. If contacted by a prospective employer, you do not want a listed reference to appear surprised or, even worse, to not remember you.

Select people who will give a positive reference in support of your candidacy. A sample dialogue with a professor might be:

"I will be graduating soon and am beginning to prepare for a job search. Would you be willing to serve as a positive reference in support of my job search?"

Appropriate references may include:

- Faculty members or academic advisors;
- Former or current employers, supervisors;

- A co-worker who can vouch for the quality of your work and your level of responsibility;

- Community leaders who are knowledgeable of your volunteer activities and community service.

How Many References to Include?

Keep it simple, 3-5 good references are adequate. Employers often do not contact every reference listed but will use the first they are able to contact by telephone

The Format

Including the phrase References Available on Request at the bottom of the resume is a cliché to avoid. The current trend is to include references with the resume and cover letter when applying for a position or seeking employment. Having references readily available facilitates the hiring process and saves the employer valuable time and effort, both highly prized commodities!

With an internship search, references may be included at the bottom of your resume if space is available. After 4-5 years of college experience, an additional reference page is usually necessary.

Include identifying information, your name, address and telephone number on the reference page. For each reference, include the following:

- The correct spelling of the reference's name

- The reference's position title

- The name and address of the organization where they are employed

- The person's business telephone or day-time telephone number (ask their preference); include an e-mail address if they have one

Keeping In Touch

Send a letter along with a current resume to all of your references expressing your appreciation for their assistance. The resume can be referred to when discussing your qualifications with potential employers. Remember to keep your references up to date on the status of your job search and notify them of any name or address changes.

If there is a job you are particularly interested in, call your references and let them know how they can best support your candidacy. Be sure to let your references know when you get a job and thank them for supporting you! They will appreciate learning about your good news!