

Using References Effectively in your Job Search

- The strongest references come from previous employers, who can exemplify your knowledge, skills, integrity and enthusiasm toward work.
- Generally speaking, keep your references school or work related, unless the employer specifically asks for personal references.
- Other potential references can include professors, instructors, leaders of organizations or clubs, work study supervisors, clinical or fieldwork supervisors, building principals where you completed students teaching.
- Nearly all employers will request references before extending a job offer.
- Assume your references will be checked. Never include references on your resume.
- Prepare a separate sheet with 3-5 professional references. See the example on the back of this page for guidance on how to set up the page.
- Wait to send your list of references until the employer specifically asks for them. Be prepared to take a copy with you to a job interview.
- The references should be typed on the same paper as your resume and cover letter.
- **Ask permission before listing a reference.** Not only is this standard courtesy, but this would give the contact person the opportunity to say whether or not they feel comfortable being listed as a reference. By asking permission, you will know which references are willing and able to speak on your behalf.
- Make sure your references know if you experience a name change. They may not recognize your new name and could be caught off guard when an employer calls.
- Keep your references informed of how your job search is going. They should be at the center of your networking circle.
- Keep track of your references. Be sure that they are still with the organization you have stated on your reference sheet and their contact information is current and up to date. Also be sure that they are still with the organization that your have stated on your reference sheet.

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