

A GUIDE TO THE REFERENCE PAGE . . .

Prospective employers utilize the process of checking references as a method to validate your skills and abilities for a particular position. The employer's goal when contacting one of your references is to gain some additional insight about your work ethics and capabilities. Your job in obtaining references is to make sure your references present the very best about your attributes and abilities. Employers will vary in their requirements regarding the number and type of references you provide, as well as when they request reference information.

BASIC GUIDELINES . . .

- Identify potential individuals to use as a reference early in your college career. Get to know your professors and advisors and let them get to know you. Impress them!
- Do not offer anyone's name as a reference unless you have that person's explicit permission to do so.
- Your potential list of references should include a balance of academic, employer, and personal references.
- Plan to acquire three to five references. If you are applying for several different positions you may need to select which references best support your abilities for the position you are applying.
- Do not ask someone to serve as a reference for you if you are not confident in their ability to write or respond positively, as well as in a timely manner, about your abilities to a prospective employer.
- Do not list references on your resume. Indicate "References Available Upon Request" at the bottom of your resume, if room allows. Otherwise, this is understood. Only include a reference page if it has been requested.

WHEN ASKING SOMEONE TO SERVE AS A REFERENCE . . .

- Ask for permission. For example, "Would you be willing to serve as a reference for me as I pursue my job search?"
- Tell them why you want them to be one of your references. Emphasize what they know about your skills and abilities.
- Tell them what career path you are pursuing and what information you feel would be valuable for them to share with a prospective employer.
- Tell them when you need the reference. Give them adequate time to write a letter of recommendation, preferably two weeks. You may need letters of recommendation at the time you apply for a position or they may be requested at a later time during the employment process. If you are asking the individual to mail a letter of recommendation, be sure to provide them with a self-addressed envelope or a correct email address.
- When possible, provide your reference contact with a description of the job you are applying for and how you feel you meet or exceed that criteria. Make sure they know what you expect from their recommendation. For example, insight into your professional growth in a certain area.
- Thank them. A definite word of thanks or a written note is the correct follow-up. Keep them posted throughout your employment process. A call from a prospective employer should not be a surprise to any of your references. It should be expected so they are adequately prepared to respond with facts and specific examples about your abilities. Be sure to let them know your final destination or whether you are still active in the job search process.
- Make sure your references know if you have had a name change since your affiliation with them.

References for John B. Jones

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