Employment References

Who should I use as a reference?

Your references can be professional or academic. Include professors, advisors, and current and previous supervisors from volunteer or paid positions, on campus or off. Occasionally, employers will ask for personal references, or those from peers that you’ve worked with in the past. Typically, employers will ask for three references. You should always ask people if they are willing to be a reference, before you give out their name and contact information. Inform your references about the job and what you would like them to emphasize about your background. It might be helpful for you to send your resume to your references, as well a copy of the job description (if you have one).

Select people who will give you enthusiastic references, not just good ones. Employers know that no one lists a reference that won’t speak highly of the candidate, but an outstanding reference will make an even stronger impression.

When should I give a potential employer my references?

Not until you’re asked. Employers will only check references for final candidates. You can include “References Upon Request” at the bottom of your resume, if you have space. Otherwise, it’s assumed that you will provide references if a potential employer would like to check them. Some employers will request references with your resume or application. In this case, it’s best to learn more about the job before selecting the best references.

Next steps

Set up a sheet of references with a header like that on your resume, using the sample on the reverse page as a guide. Be sure to include the person’s name, title, organization, phone number, and email. Also indicate how you know each other; it may not be obvious from your resume, especially if the person has changed jobs since you worked together.

When you have completed it, please upload it to your CareerLINK account, following these steps:

- Include the wording “Informational Interview” in your file name
- Log into CareerLINK
- Click on “My Account” and then “My Documents”
- Next to “ProPath Documents”, click on “Add”
SAMPLE REFERENCE SHEET

John Smith
1122 Fox Fall
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Lowell, MA 01854
(978) 555-5555
john_student@student.uml.edu

REFERENCES

Ben Franklin
Manager, Information Technology
ABC Company
123 Main Street
Anytown, MA 01234
Phone: (123) 456-7890
Email: bfranklin@abccompany.com
I worked for Ben as an intern during the summer of 2013.

Dr. Jane Jones
Professor of Management
UMass Lowell
Phone: (978) 934-1111
Email: jjones@uml.edu
Dr. Jones was my advisor and professor for “Advanced Issues in Information Technology.” The best way to reach her is via email.

Mae Maloney
Help Desk Manager
XYZ Company
808 Sea Street
Anytown, MA 01882
Phone: (978) 444-1200
Email: maem@xyz.com
I worked for Ms. Maloney in a part-time position during my senior year.