

Writing a Reference List



When applying for jobs and internships, you will typically be asked to provide professional references: individuals who can vouch for your qualifications. Your references could include a current or former supervisor, colleague, instructor, coach, or advisor from an extracurricular activity. Select individuals who can positively speak to your work ethic, work style, skills, strengths, and accomplishments.

Prepare Your References

- Contact potential references in advance to ask whether they are willing to serve as a professional reference for you. Never assume that they will do this; you want to make sure that they are willing to give you a positive reference.
- Once someone has agreed to be a professional reference, provide them with updated information about yourself, such as a current resume, the URL to an e-portfolio, or the URL for your LinkedIn profile.
- Inform the reference which positions and companies you will be applying to, and what qualifications are required. Providing specific job postings will assist your reference to effectively target their comments to support your candidacy.
- Identify specific experience that makes you a good match for the position(s) you seek. Cite relevant achievements in which you have demonstrated the skills and knowledge relevant to the position.
- Remember: the more information you give to the reference, the stronger and more relevant their endorsement will be for the position you're seeking.

Document Your References

- Create a document separate from your resume on which to list a minimum of three references.
- Use the same header (name and contact information) from your resume, to create a cohesive look among your internship/job search documents.
- When listing your references, include: name, job title, employer, phone number, email address, and a brief description of your relationship (e.g. "Direct supervisor at <insert employer> for <x> years").

Maintain Positive Contact with Your References

- Give your references enough notice. Last minute requests are not professional, so ask them well before you begin applying for internships and jobs.
- Thank your references for the time they have spent talking with employers, on your behalf. Saying "thank you" is not only courteous, but it also makes your references feel valued.
- Stay in touch with your references during the time that you are actively internship or job searching.
- Send a thank you note or call your reference when you learn the outcome of your search.
- Do not lose contact with your references. Maintaining relationships with them is good professional etiquette. Occasionally send a note or email updating them on your new career-related experiences.

Sample Reference List

**Header from Your Resume
(with Name and Contact Info)**

REFERENCES

Name

Job Title

Employer

Phone

Email

Relationship: "Direct supervisor at <insert organization name> for <x> years" or "Faculty Advisor/Instructor in the <insert discipline> at Alverno College for <x> years."

Name

Job Title

Employer

Phone

Email

Relationship: "Direct supervisor at <insert organization name> for <x> years" or "Faculty Advisor/Instructor in the <insert discipline> at Alverno College for <x> years."

Name

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