What are references?

Your references are **people who have agreed to speak positively on your behalf** to prospective employers or graduate schools. The best people to ask to serve as references are those who can speak eloquently about your professional or educational skills and accomplishments. This includes professors, employers, co-workers, advisors, internship supervisors, and coaches. Social acquaintances such as friends, relatives, or pastors should not be used as references, unless specified.

Your references should be listed on a **reference sheet**. This sheet should **not** be sent with your cover letter and resume, unless it is specifically requested. However, it is a good idea to create your reference sheet at the same time you are crafting your resume and cover letter, so that you will be prepared to provide it to any employer who may request a copy. Additionally, you should always bring multiple copies of your reference sheet along to any interview, along with copies of your resume.

Be sure to **always contact your references before listing them on your reference sheet**. Ask them if they feel comfortable serving as a reference for you. Remember to verify all contact information for each of your references, including the proper spelling of name, title, address, phone number and email. It is also a good idea to give each of your references a copy of your resume as well as brief information about what you applying to, that way they know how to best represent you to potential employers or graduate schools.

Your reference sheet should be typed on the same professional paper as your resume and cover letter. Include your header, which should be centered on the top of the page, and then list 3-4 references and their contact information along the left hand margin. For a sample reference page, please click [here](#).

Always keep your references updated on your progress, and inform them when you have made a decision about your future career path. Be sure to **thank them** with a handwritten note for their assistance.
What are recommendations?

A recommendation is a one-page letter which speaks to your skills and qualifications. Most graduate schools require recommendation letters, as well as some employers.

Faculty members, administrators, internship supervisors, and current employers are all good resources to ask to write a recommendation letter for you. Aim for a set a people that can cover a variety of your experiences (educational, research, internships, volunteer experience, etc). Do not ask social acquaintances such as family or friends.

The people you ask should know you well, and for a long enough time period to be able to write with validity. They should have a high opinion of you, be able to craft a well-written letter, and have the ability to positively describe your work, educational accomplishments, and/or past experiences. Be sure to provide the people you ask to write recommendations with plenty of time to write the letter (three to four weeks at a minimum). Also supply information about what you are applying to, and a copy of your resume, cover letter, transcript, or any other pertinent information.

Don’t forget to send a handwritten thank you to each person who wrote a recommendation letter for you.

If your sources would like more information about crafting recommendation letters, you can refer them to the following links from the Career Center’s website:

http://www.naceweb.org/public/reftips.htm?referal=


http://www.quintcareers.com/recommendation_letters.html
Suzy Jobseeker
200 Unemployed Lane
Hireme, PA
555-555-5555
givemeajob@zzz.com

References

Dr. Winnie Pooh
Assistant Professor of Honeymaking
1000 Hundred Acre Wood
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555-555-5555
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