

CHOOSING YOUR REFERENCES

SIUE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Career
Development
Center

Most employers will request either a list of references or recommendation letters. Therefore, it is important to choose your references wisely. A wrong choice could spell disaster for the likelihood of getting the opportunity you are seeking.

CHOOSING YOUR REFERENCES

- Pick people who know your work as a student, employee, or a volunteer
 - Examples: Supervisors, professors, co-workers
- Ask individuals that have first hand knowledge of your experience, skills, and accomplishments
- Make sure they will be able to say nice things about you and can attest to your qualifications
- Make sure to keep your references informed of opportunities you are seeking
- Give each reference a copy of your resume so that they are up-to-date on your school and work history
- Never give the names of references without asking them beforehand

DRAFTING THE LIST

- List should include 3-5 people who can be contacted by phone or in writing, to speak on your behalf
- Type up the list with your name, address (optional), telephone number and email at the top
- Following your contact information, include a heading entitled "References"
- List the following information for each reference: name (including credentials, if applicable), job title, employer name, employer address, phone number, email
- If the connection to your references is not obvious, add a line briefly stating the relationship, i.e., former supervisor
- Print the list on high-quality resume paper and take it with you on your interviews

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

- In some instances, recommendation letters from your references stating your achievements and qualifications can be used in lieu of a list of references
- Try to have a reference sheet and recommendation letters in place when going on an interview
- Remind your letter writers of ways in which you distinguished yourself as an employee or a student, along with personal qualifications or skills you would like addressed in the letter
- Inform the writer of the purpose of the letter (i.e., job search, grad school app, etc.), so that the document will reflect the goals you are attempting to achieve

DONT'S

- DO NOT state "References Available Upon Request" on your resume
- DO NOT use personal friends or family members as references
- DO NOT wait until the last minute to ask someone to be your reference or to request letters of recommendation