

## REFERENCE SHEETS

“References available upon request” is a standard ending line of a resume. Here’s what it means and what you need to do about it...

“References” are people who can tell prospective employers about your work or academic performance. It is your job to select appropriate people to serve as references. You must ask a person if he or she would be willing to provide you with a good reference. When you consider whom to ask, you need to bear in mind that the prospective employer will be interested in talking with your reference to find out things about you and your performance; Was he reliable?, Was she thorough?, Did he perform the duties of the job in the time allotted?, How would you rate her interpersonal skill?, and so on.

You need only choose between two and five people to serve as references. Three is sufficient, but there is a compelling reason to have additional references, you may go as high as five references.

After you have contacted and found your references, you need to prepare a simple sheet listing their names and address information. Be sure to have a simple heading at the top of the page, such as “Reference for and your name.” You should include “Work” information only for your references, not “Home” information unless there is a compelling reason, such as the professor retired and will only be available at home. Use e-mail addresses only if you are sure the person checks it daily. Be sure to use the person’s correct title with his or her name, such as; Col., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., Professor, etc... As the second information line, use his or her job or position title, such as; vice President, Director, Manager, Division Head, Men’s Hockey Coach, etc... Sometimes this information gives the reader some insight into how you know this person, as would be the case if you list the hockey coach as a reference and your resume indicates you were on the hockey team. As on your resume and cover letter, be sure everything is spelled correctly; names, titles, company names, etc...

At the end of an interview, if you are asked for your references, this is the sheet you will give the prospective employer. You **DO NOT** mail this list of people in with your cover letter and resume. At the end of the interview, if you are not asked about references, do not bring up the subject. If an employer does not ask for references, it does not mean anything negative. He or she may have forgotten, there may be a second interview at which time you will be asked to provide references, and so on. Further, nearly 80% of companies do not even check your references. Of course, this statistic varies by industry. Certain industries are much more stringent about reference checks, such as Criminal Justice, Education, and Nursing.

If you were asked for your reference sheet at the end of an interview, there is one more thing you should do. After you leave the interview site, find a nearby telephone and call all your references yourself. Tell them you just interviewed with XYZ Company and are very interested in the position and provide a few details if necessary. Tell your reference that you did leave his or her name with the interviewer and they may be called in the next several days. This serves as a heads-up call to your references. This way, if they receive a call from XYZ Company, they will not be fumbling around trying to remember you and your academic or work performance. You will be on the tip of their tongue and will appear more memorable and therefore qualified. When all is said and done and you have landed the great job you've been dreaming about, be sure to send a thank you note to your references and tell them about your new position. Not only will this keep them informed, it will make it easier to ask them for another reference in the future, should the need arise.

Your Reference Sheet should be printed on the same type of paper as your resume and cover letter so when they are all filed together, they will make a neat and professional looking package.

## Sample Reference Sheet

References for  
John Doe  
123 Main Street  
Anytown, Vermont 00000  
(802) 123-4567

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Col. John Jones, US Army (Ret)  
Director of Acquisitions  
Maverick International  
51 Main Street  
Anytown, MA 00000  
(781) 123-4567  
[jjones@maverick.com](mailto:jjones@maverick.com)

Ms. Anna Smith  
Dean of Students  
Norwich University  
158 Harmon Drive  
Northfield, VT 05663  
(802) 123-4567

Dr. James Smith  
Professor of mechanical Engineering  
Norwich University  
158 Harmon Drive  
Northfield, VT 05663  
(802) 123-4567  
[jsmith@norwich.edu](mailto:jsmith@norwich.edu)

Following the name of your reference, be sure to make any special notes, such as if the person is retired or home for the summer and should be contacted at the home phone number. Also, be sure to note on the bottom of the page if you have changed your name recently (gotten married, for example), and the reference may remember you better by a different name.