



## REFERENCES AND LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Before creating a professional reference list, remember that the most important thing is first to **ASK** those you would like to list if they would be willing to provide a strong recommendation for you at least two weeks in advance. Every time you are asked to submit your list of references, make sure to inform those on your list and to provide them with a recent copy of your resume, a position description for the job and possibly the qualities or experiences you hope they will highlight when speaking about you. A list of references is only submitted when requested; it is usually not sent to a prospective employer initially.

### Sample List of References

#### Megan McCarthy

200 Pitch Road, Drexel Hill, PA 19026 | 610-111-6666 | [mgmccarthy@gmail.com](mailto:mgmccarthy@gmail.com)

First name Last name

Title

Name of Company or Organization

Address

City, ST zip

Daytime phone number

Email

First name Last name

Title

Name of Company or Organization

Address

City, ST zip

Daytime phone number

Email

First name Last name

Title

Name of Company or Organization

Address

City, ST zip

Daytime phone number

Email

## Letters of Recommendation

Advancement in your professional career (such as obtaining a job or admission to graduate school) often requires that you obtain letters of recommendation from previous colleagues, supervisors, etc. In general, letters tend to be more important in academic jobs than for industrial ones. You should not feel that you are imposing when you ask for such letters: the letter-writers recognize that it is part of their professional responsibility. However, you should also do everything in your power to ease the burden on your references.

### Choose carefully

- The letter writer should be knowledgeable about you so that s/he can cite specific examples and anecdotes.
- The letter writer should be knowledgeable about the place you are applying to so that the letter can specifically play up your strengths and qualifications.
- The letter writer should be knowledgeable about the norms of letter-writing to prevent the letter from being ignored because it is completely inappropriate.
- When requesting a letter, ask if the person feels that he knows you well enough to write you a strong letter of recommendation. This provides an “out” for the person who may not be comfortable writing you a letter.
- Ask for letters from faculty members, college administrators, employers and coaches.

### Start early

- Give letter-writers a minimum of two weeks, and preferably a month or more, to write letters. The letter-writers have other responsibilities and deadlines, and you don't want them to do a shoddy rush job or to resent a demand for immediate gratification.

### Provide your recommender with:

- your résumé
- copies of some of your best work in her/his class
- any specific details that might be helpful
- a description of the opportunity you are applying for
- the essay you are writing for the application
- all the relevant forms
- stamped addressed envelopes and a page with the relevant addresses and due dates
- anything else the recommender asks for (such as a copy of your transcript)

### Follow up

- Close to the due date, email your recommender to ask whether s/he needs any further information from you (this serves as a polite reminder of up-coming due dates).
- Letters sometimes get lost. You should double-check that the letter has arrived, and if not, ask the writer to send another copy.
- Thank your recommenders and inform them of the outcomes of your applications.