

What to keep in mind when offering references to an employer



References are personal recommendations from people who are familiar with your work, character, and/or academics to attest you are suitable for a particular employment or education opportunity. Do not include “References available upon request” on your resume. Instead, have a list of references available on a separate document and bring a copy to the interview with you. Here are a few more tips to get you started with putting together your references.

Choose the appropriate reference

- Your references should be current and relevant. A supervisor from 10 years ago may provide a top notch reference, but an employer will likely wonder why you don't have someone more recent who can provide a similar reference.
- Select people who know you well enough to be able to positively attest to your skills, character, education and/or experiences. Select people you are sure will say positive things about you.
- ALWAYS ASK FIRST. Never provide anyone as a reference without first asking and receiving their permission.
- Be prepared with alternative references should your first choices be unable or unwilling to provide the reference.

Time frame

- Communicate your time frame to your reference. Will a recruiter be calling them in the next couple of days? Will they receive an e-mail?
- If you are requesting a written letter, provide enough time for the reference to complete your request (be prepared for at least 3-4 weeks).
- Be mindful of application deadlines, busy times, and holiday break periods when considering your time frame.

Requesting a written reference

- When requesting a written letter, include the following information:
 - Your contact information including name, email address, and phone number
 - Reason for requesting a reference/recommendation letter
 - Highlights and points for the reference to mention
 - Consider including a copy of your resume to provide framework for your request
 - Any specific skills that you would like highlighted that are particularly relevant
 - Contact and mailing information for where the letter is to be sent
 - Type of letter requested (electronic or print)
 - Completed waiver form (if requesting reference from a Brandman faculty or staff)

Follow-up

- Send a thank you letter to let your reference know you appreciate their time in providing you with a reference letter.
- Provide an update once you know the status of the education or employment opportunity.

Waiver for Brandman students

Brandman University has a Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Release and Waiver of Student Information Form for Recommendations and References waiver for students to complete who are requesting recommendation/reference letters from Brandman University faculty and staff. A form must be completed for each individual faculty and staff member you are seeking a reference from. Include this completed and signed waiver form with your request. If you are requesting a recommendation from faculty or staff from another school, check with that institution's FERPA policy.