

Reference Lists

Preparing a reference list is a key step in a job search and preparing it well before you need it is especially recommended. This is because it can take time to contact potential references and to talk to them about being a reference for you. Related to this, some individuals who you contact may have any number of questions as to what type of position or positions you will be seeking and how they should respond if contacted by an employer. Again, it can take time to have these conversations in properly working through their questions and discussion points.

Regarding the actual document itself, it is best to be consistent and to use the same banner style with your reference sheet as you are using with your resume and cover letter. Also, be sure to note the nature of your relationship with each individual listed (whether each one is a co-worker, a supervisor, etc.). Concerning phone numbers, it is a good idea to note the type of number—whether it is a work phone, home phone or a cell number, as employers will appreciate knowing the type of number they are calling.

By preparing your reference list ahead of time, you will feel more confident about presenting it to a potential employer because you will have had the necessary time to contact and speak with each reference listed. An individual who has been notified in advance and who has had an opportunity to discuss being a reference for you will almost always be able to speak more convincingly about you. Finally, keep in mind that it is good to stay in touch with your references so that you can comfortably use them again related to any future opportunities that you may decide to pursue.