REFERENCES

The purpose of a reference sheet is to provide potential employers with a list of credible professionals who can verify and elaborate on your professional experience and/or academic performance. Include 3-5 references and be sure to bring a reference sheet to an interview (even if you’ve already included them in your application) to provide to the hiring manager.

WHAT IS A REFERENCE?

A reference is a person who is willing to talk to potential employers about your job skills, abilities, background, and general character—hopefully in a positive light. Potential employers usually contact references by phone or email.

WHO SHOULD I LIST AS MY REFERENCES?

Use professional and/or academic references, such as supervisors from your current or past jobs, volunteer coordinators from your volunteer work, supervisors from internship sites, professors you’ve taken classes with, and even CalArts faculty and mentors you have worked closely with. Do not use personal references (such as family members and friends). Before you put anyone on your reference list, be sure to ask each individual if they are willing to give you a strong reference.

SHOULD I NOTIFY MY REFERENCES BEFORE I APPLY?

Yes, always notify your references before you apply to make them aware of what you’re applying for. When references are unaware, they may hesitate in their initial recommendations of you due to the fact that they received a reference call they didn’t expect. Be sure to thank them even if you don’t get the job, by either sending a handwritten or emailed thank you note.

IS THERE ANY INFORMATION I SHOULD PROVIDE TO MY REFERENCES?

You want to remind your references of your work and accomplishments by sending them a recent resume as well as a brief note reminding them when you worked for them or what classes you took with them. Include areas of your outstanding performance, such as quality paper, projects, or responsibilities in which you excelled. Include the description of the position(s) you’re applying for and information about the organization as well.

WHERE DO I LIST MY REFERENCES?

Do not list your references on your resume. Make a separate reference sheet to submit with your resume and cover letter. There is no need to list “References upon request” on your resume. When drafting your references use the same heading as your resume. Remember to use the same paper you used for your cover letter and resume if you are sending a hard copy. Otherwise, you would email this as a separate attachment when specifically asked for your references.
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