

How to Turn Your Campus Job Supervisor into a Professional Reference

WHY?

The reference part of the job search is great because it usually means that you have passed the interview stage!

Prospective employers want to know what makes you a **valuable employee** and professional references demonstrate this by speaking to why hiring you would be a smart move.

Finding references who are willing to take a phone call and say a few positive things about you, or provide a letter of reference can be tricky for most university students, since they do not have many work contacts to draw from.

KEY STEPS:

1. Figure out whom you want to/can ask.
2. Keep your request simple and polite.
3. Follow up with a sincere thank you - this leaves a professional and positive impression.

WHAT?

References can speak to past examples of how you have demonstrated:

- Assuming a leadership role and making a positive contribution in team settings
- Exercising strong communication skills, either oral or written
- The use of technology to complete key tasks efficiently
- An adaptable mindset and willingness to roll up your sleeves to help out in areas that fall outside your immediate scope of responsibility
- Soft-skills, such as being an empathetic provider of customer service when dealing with impatient or difficult personalities

TIPS

- **MAKE IT CONVENIENT:** Even if you think your supervisor/colleague knows you well, give them a detailed recap of how the skills you would like them to highlight shone through in specific situations.
- **JUST ONE JOB?** If you have only had a part-time job or an internship, it is fine to ask for references from more than one person. Beyond your supervisor, you could reach out to another experienced colleague in your department who can speak to something interesting and valuable that you have done over the course of your job.
- **CHARACTER SPEAKS VOLUMES:** Recommendations are not limited to skills, but can also include a person's character, so even if your reference did not manage you directly, they can at least speak to your work ethic.

SAMPLE REFERENCE LETTER REQUEST

PROVIDE THEM WITH A JOB DESCRIPTION, SO THEY CAN SPEAK TO RELEVANT POINTS.

PROVIDE AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE.

MAKE AN "ACTIVE REQUEST" MAKING IT HARDER TO SAY NO DIRECTLY.

"Dear [Name of Former Colleague/Supervisor],

I hope all is well.

*I am seeking **X position** at **X company** and they have asked for my references.*

I can send you the job description for additional context. The recruiter will be making calls towards the end of next week, by September 29th.

*I would be very grateful for your help on this. Based on your knowledge and experience of working with me [in whatever role/capacity], would you be willing to be a reference and speak to my skills and abilities as they relate to this role? If so, may I provide your name, email, and phone number to **X person**?*

Thanks for your consideration,

[Your name]"

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU'RE ASKING FOR HELP

SAMPLE REFERENCE LETTER TEMPLATE

DO AS MUCH OF THE WORK AS POSSIBLE FOR THEM BY PROVIDING A TEMPLATE.

INCLUDE RELEVANT EXAMPLES THAT YOU HAVE DONE OVER THE COURSE OF YOUR JOB.

*“Dear **[Name of Employer]**:*

*This reference letter is provided at the request of **[name of former employee]**. It is my understanding that **[individual's name]** has applied for the position of **[job title]** with your organization.*

***[Individual's name]** has been employed or has participated in an internship, co-op, or work-study program with our organization/department since **[date]** and has held the position of a **[position title]**, where **[he/she]** had responsibility for **[explain the person's main responsibilities]**. **[Individual's name]** interacted well with co-employees, was reliable, and showed good judgement. **[Give examples]**.*

If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

***[Reference's name]**”*