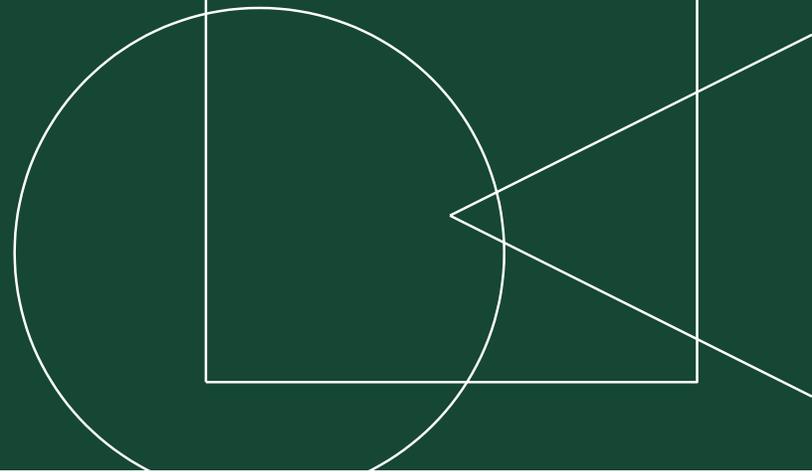


Professional References



Being prepared before a job interview with a well-put-together list of professional references can help you secure the opportunity you are applying to. When choosing the best references to give to a potential employer, you should consider who will provide the most accurate representation of your work ethic, skill, and achievements relevant to the position.

What are professional references?

A professional reference is provided by someone who can give your potential employer positive remarks on your qualities from past roles. This could include previous employers, supervisors, organization/club leaders, professors, colleagues, or anyone else who is able to attest to your work ethic and past accomplishments.

Whom should I ask to be a referee?

The contacts you provide for references can vary depending on which job/position you are applying for. You want references closely related to the position you are applying for, in aspects including relevant skills and qualifications. When deciding on whom to, choose people you believe would speak highly on behalf of your skills, strengths, and work ethic. It may be someone that you worked for, you worked alongside, or someone you considered as a mentor. If possible, include at least one reference who resides in Canada.

How do I ask someone to provide a reference for me?

Once you have decided who your referees will be:

1. Contact them and get their permission.
2. Ask for contact info, current employment details and availability.
3. Create your references list document.
4. Once you have been asked for references, provide your referees with info about the position and remind them of your duties, skills, and achievements.
5. Send your resume and the job posting.
6. Follow up to thank them!

What are academic references?

Academic references are provided by professors or other academic supervisors for proof of scholarly performance. Academic references may be needed when applying to internships, education programs, or other opportunities in the academic or professional field.

How many people should I ask?

Your potential employer may ask you for a certain number of references, but typically it is good to have 3-4 ready.

When should I provide them?

If your potential employer requests references, they should be provided to them on a separate document from your resume, after the interview. Your references will be contacted, so you do not need reference letters unless specified.

Questions that might be asked to a reference

- Please describe your relationship with the candidate, and how long you've known them.
- What are some of the candidate's key strengths?
- How likely would you be to hire this candidate again?
- Please describe with examples how well the candidate receives feedback.
- How does the candidate react in stressful situations?
- What are some accomplishments you've noticed the candidate has reached?

Professional References

Professional reference tips

- Build a list prior to job searching, so that you have your references ready when needed.
- Try to have a variety of references, such as one from a volunteer position, one professional, and one academic.
- Prepare your reference sheet on a different document from your resume and only provide it upon request.
- If you have reference letters, they can be attached to your reference sheet if relevant to the position.
- If you have a reference outside of Canada, it is best to let your potential employer know, and have it noted on your references list.
- Avoid language barriers between your references and potential employer.
- If you are new to Canada, build references by finding volunteer or extracurricular opportunities.

Format Example

MICHAEL PROPHET

michaelp@email.ca | 444-444-4444 | Peterborough, ON, L1L 9M9 | LinkedIn.com/in/michael9098

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Chloe Devlin

Career Resource Assistant
Careerspace, Trent University
careers@trentu.ca
555-555-5555 ext. 214
Best time to contact: Monday to Friday, 9:00-4:00

Note: Chloe was my supervisor during my role as a Career Peer from 2022-2023

Dr. Ali Akhtar

Professor
Trent University, Department of Sociology
email@trentu.ca
555-555-5555 ext. 718
Best time to contact: Monday to Friday, 9:00-4:00

Note: Dr. Akhtar was my professor in the Aging and Society course at Trent University in Fall 2022

Kelsey Fry

Volunteer Coordinator
GreenEarth Youth Centre
email@greenearth.ca
111-222-3344 ext. 613
Best time to contact: Monday to Friday, 10:00-6:00

Note: Kelsey was my supervisor when I volunteered at the GreenEarth Youth Centre in summer 2022

Careerspace Resources

Careerspace is available to support you further. To find workshops and resources, visit the Student Experience Portal at trentu.ca/sep, or book an appointment with an advisor for 1:1 assistance with:

- Critiques of personal statements, résumés, LinkedIn profiles and CVs
- Interview preparation
- Career and further education counselling