References & Letters of Recommendation

Who to Ask?
Ask people who have a positive opinion of you and who can describe your work-related qualities and personal characteristics. As early on as your freshmen year, you will want to be thinking of people that can speak on your behalf. A good rule of thumb: **Always have 3-5 people that can serve as a reference for you.** These individuals should not be friends or family and should be able to discuss your:

- Motivation
- Initiative
- Maturity
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership qualities
- Productivity
- Work Ethic
- Reliability and dependability
- Ability to work with others (team player)
- Acceptance of diversity
- Behavior/Classroom Management Style
- Professional Dress
- Oral and written communication skills
- Academic ability
- Skills and abilities

Some people you may want to consider asking to serve as a reference:

- Academic Adviser
- Intern/Student Teaching Supervisor
- Partnership Faculty/Practicum Supervisor
- Past/Present Employer
- Coaches
- A faculty member that has had you in several classes
- Anyone that is familiar with your experience working with children or related field

You will not want to use your academic adviser from your freshmen year to serve as a reference for you if you have not been in contact with them since your freshmen year and you are upon graduation! **Never assume your references are going to remember you, especially if it has been a while since you have been in contact.**

If you have a reference, but can not locate them, do some research to find them or chose an alternative.

**How to Ask for a Recommendation Letter or Reference**
Never assume some one is agreeable to serving as a reference. Always ask references if you have their permission to use them as a reference BEFORE including their contact information on your Reference Page or on applications. Do not catch them off guard and unprepared!

Some things you will need from them:

- Correct spelling of their name
- Prefix (Dr., Mr., Ms.)
INDIVIDUALS MAY PREFER YOU DO NOT GIVE OUT CERTAIN INFORMATION. PLEASE BE CONSIDERATE OF THEIR WISHES. ALWAYS USE WORK INFORMATION UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE.

ADDITIONALLY, YOU WILL WANT TO PROVIDE YOUR REFERENCES WITH A COPY OF YOUR RESUME AND DESCRIPTION(S) OF JOBS YOU ARE APPLYING FOR. PROVIDING THE INFORMATION AHEAD OF TIME WILL HELP PREPARE THEM TO SPEAK ON YOUR BEHALF, GIVING YOU A BETTER RECOMMENDATION.

KEEP YOUR REFERENCES UP TO DATE AND INFORMED. BE CERTAIN THEY ARE AWARE OF YOUR INTERESTS AND FUTURE GOALS. KEEP THEM POSTED ON ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS. TELL YOUR REFERENCES THE NAMES OF PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHOM YOU'VE GIVEN THEIR NAMES.

YOU MAY WANT TO ASK YOUR REFERENCES TO PROOF READ YOUR COVER LETTER AND/OR RESUME IN ADDITION TO HELPING YOU PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW. THESE INDIVIDUALS WILL REMEMBER CERTAIN THINGS ABOUT YOU OR SPECIFIC JOB DUTIES THAT YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER.

IF YOU HAVE COMPLETED REFERENCE INFORMATION ON AN APPLICATION, THERE IS NO NEED TO ATTACH A REFERENCE PAGE WITH YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER. OTHERWISE, YOU WILL NEED TO INCLUDE REFERENCES ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER (USING THE SAME KIND OF PAPER YOU USED FOR YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER).

REFERENCE ETIQUETTE
IF YOU ARE REQUESTING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION BE WRITTEN, ALLOW AT LEAST 2 WEEKS. BE SURE TO PROVIDE THOSE WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION ON YOUR BEHALF WITH TYPED (RETURN) MAILING ADDRESSES AND STAMPED ENVELOPE(S), DUE DATES, SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS.

AS A COMMON COURTESY, ALWAYS FOLLOW UP BY SENDING A THANK YOU NOTE AND INFORMING YOUR REFERENCES OF YOUR STATUS.

WHEN TO GIVE YOUR REFERENCE LIST TO EMPLOYERS
IF ASKED TO PROVIDE IT, BE SURE TO INCLUDE REFERENCES. PROVIDE REFERENCE INFORMATION WITH YOUR COVER LETTER AND RESUME. AT THE INTERVIEW, PROVIDE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FROM INDIVIDUALS DIFFERENT FROM THOSE LISTED AS REFERENCES.

IF YOU REACH THE INTERVIEW STAGE AND HAVE NOT BEEN ASKED FOR REFERENCE INFORMATION, YOU MAY WANT TO OFFER IT.

IT IS UNNECESSARY TO STATE “REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST” AND IS OFTEN A WASTE OF VALUABLE SPACE. INCLUDE REFERENCES ON A SEPARATE PAGE.

HOW SHOULD MY REFERENCE PAGE LOOK?
ATTACHED IS A SAMPLE OF HOW YOUR REFERENCE PAGE SHOULD LOOK. THE SAME FORMAT AND FONT FROM THE RESUME AND COVER LETTER IS USED. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU ITALICIZE YOUR TITLES IN YOUR RESUME, YOU WILL WANT TO DO THE SAME FOR YOUR REFERENCES TITLES/RELATIONSHIPS TO YOU ON YOUR REFERENCE PAGE. ADDITIONALLY, IF YOU USE PERIODS/DASHES/PARENTHESES/ETC. IN PHONE NUMBERS ON YOUR RESUME, YOU WILL WANT TO DO THE SAME ON YOUR REFERENCE PAGE.

WHAT SHOULD REFERENCES SAY?
ENCourage YOUR references to mention the capacity in which they know/knew you, the time frame of the relationship, and positive qualities demonstrated in the position.
REFERENCES (use the same header from your resume and cover letter)

Ms. Ellen L. Masters  
*Director, Career Education & Vocational Reflection*  
Hampden-Sydney College  
Box 607/Bagby 210  
Hampden Sydney, VA 23943  
434.223.6325  
emasters@hsc.edu

Dr. Joe Broadway  
*Intern Supervisor*  
Price Elementary School  
5723 Price Drive  
Roanoke, VA 24018  
434.333.1111  
jbroadway@price.k12.va.us.edu

Mr. Brian Abramowitz  
*Former Employer*  
Daisy Duke Medical Center  
10 Shorts Drive  
Lancaster, VA 99901  
757.625.7997  
Abro@daisyduke.med