



The University of Oklahoma College of Law

Career Development Office

GUIDE TO REFERENCES

While references should not be identified directly on your resume, you should be prepared to provide a prospective employer with the names of at least two or three people who can speak positively about your substantive academic or work performance.

1. Guidelines for Selecting References

When deciding whom to include as a reference, consider a variety of individuals from different settings (i.e., employment, school, volunteer work). Prospective employers seek specific information about candidates – work habits, reliability, work ethic, and work product; ability to work autonomously as well as part of a team; creativity and so forth – so list individuals who can speak to those qualities. **Most importantly, do not include a person as a reference unless he/she has agreed to act as a reference.** Provide each of your references with the latest copy of your resume and some information about the employers who may be contacting them so they can speak knowledgeably and persuasively about you. If possible, discuss the skills your references should highlight if contacted. You may want to choose different references for different employers.

While it is certainly desirable to have an academic reference, it is not imperative that you have a law school faculty reference unless you apply for a post-graduate judicial clerkship. Seek references from faculty members with whom you have established a sufficient working relationship so that your writing skills, diligence, and attention to detail can be adequately described. Some of the best ways to cultivate academic references include working closely with one or more faculty members on scholarly research and writing projects or standing out in small seminar experiences.

2. Drafting the Reference List

Provide your reference list on a separate sheet of paper from your resume. Your reference list should include a header with your contact information (identical to the contact information header provided on your resume) and a references section. Each reference entry should include the reference's name, title, address, phone number, and email address. If, for some reason, your connection with a particular reference is unclear, include in parentheses a brief explanation of your relationship to the individual. For example, you might need to explain when your reference no longer works at one of the organizations listed on your resume. A sample reference sheet is provided on the following page.

(Be sure the contact information matches your resume)

SALLY SMITH

1000 University Way, Unit 123 • Norman, OK 73072 • (405) 555-5555 sally.smith@ou.edu

REFERENCES

Professor Lady Lawyer

University of Oklahoma College of Law
300 Timberdell Rd.
Norman, OK 73019
(405) 325-4001
llawyer@ou.edu

Professor John Smith

University of Oklahoma College of Law
300 Timberdell Rd.
Norman, OK 73019
(405) 325-4002
jsmith@ou.edu

United States Senator Jane Doe

205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510 -3603
(213) 555-1234

***PLEASE NOTE:** If your reference no longer works at the organization listed on your resume, be sure to include in parenthesis or as a footnote a brief explanation letting the employer know in what capacity the individual knew you. For example:*

Michael White

General Counsel
ABC Corporation
1000 West Main Street
Denver, Colorado 80201
(202) 454-1001

*Former Director of the Office of Legal Policy in Washington, D.C.