

# “What should I do about references?”

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Whether you're dealing with a recruitment agency or with a potential employer directly, you will be required to provide references. These references are especially important since they allow the recruiter, or potential employer, the opportunity to confirm what they've learned in the interview.

## **Personal References & Educational References**

Personal referees are usually friends, family or a revered community member, like your religious leader. Personal references are used to attest to your character, personality and how you relate to others outside the work place.

Educational referees are usually a teacher or lecturer. Most often, graduates or school leavers, who've had no work experience, give these references. These can be used to confirm your qualifications, your results and to determine how you performed as a student.

## **Work References**

These are by far the most important references because they allow the recruitment consultant or potential employer the opportunity to learn how you perform in the work place. In most cases the work reference will be the one used.

*Who should be used as a referee?*

In all instances you should try to provide a reference with your manager/supervisor. It is always better to have a superior than a colleague act as a referee. You should ensure that you ask your referee if they would have a problem being listed as a reference and which contact number they would prefer you to use on your CV, it is only polite.

*What happens if I've only had one job and I don't want to jeopardize my current position?*

No recruiter will put your current position in jeopardy and in these instances they would inform their clients that a reference can only be taken once a formal offer of employment is on the table. Ideally though, it would be best if you could provide the recruiter with some form of reference. For example, have you received any letters of commendation or thanks? These speak volumes and could be used in place of reference. Perhaps one of your managers or supervisors has left the company and wouldn't mind acting as a reference on your behalf? Remember to always ensure that you have the referees express permission before including them on your CV.

## **Written references vs. Telephonic References**

In most cases recruiters will always take at least one telephonic reference in order to ensure that you have represented the facts clearly during the course of the interview. Also, telephonic references give the recruiter the opportunity to find out more about you as an individual, for example, the kind of relationships you had with others in your office, your reliability, timekeeping & attendance and to confirm your reason for leaving. Written references definitely have their place and provide confirmation of your employment and duties and should be provided to a recruiter at the interview.

## **Honesty is the ONLY policy!**

All good recruiters will do a proper reference and any skeletons will certainly come tumbling out the closet. Don't lie and always provide truthful information to your recruiter. During the interview the recruiter will check the designation of the referee and your reason for leaving and if they find out that you've lied or been dismissed and you didn't tell them then you're likely to be regretted immediately. Recruiters need to have all the information, good or bad, in order to properly assess you against the client's requirements and to represent you truthfully. Remember that honesty really is the only policy because the truth will always come out!