

List of References

Many employers request references as part of the required application materials for a position. The names of three to five carefully selected persons who can speak specifically about the skills and personal qualities you possess deemed important to the success of a young legal practitioner would be sufficient. A reference from someone who knows your work well is more effective than the “big name” who cannot speak knowledgeably about your work.

The skills emphasized by your references might change, depending on the types of positions you have targeted in the job search, but common examples would be: legal analysis, research and scholarship, writing, problem solving, client contact, rainmaking ability, computer savvy, integrity, tact, interpersonal skills and organizational abilities. Since each job varies and utilizes different skill sets, you may want different references for each job.

Who to Choose

Choose former and current employers, professors, advisors and mentors who know you well and can speak about your range of skills to employers. Prior to listing someone as a reference, you must obtain their permission to do so. Assist your references to be more effective in promoting you as a candidate by providing them with a copy of your resume and by discussing your career aspirations and goals with them. Contact your references periodically to inform them of new positions for which you have applied.

Questions to Ask a Potential Reference

Ask your potential reference if he/she would provide a positive reference for you. A professor who gave an excellent grade might be unwilling to provide a good reference. A lukewarm or irrelevant reference can harm you. In addition, ask if your reference will be

available during the critical application time period. If not, select another reference.

Information to Include/Format

When compiling a reference list, include the following information about each reference: name, professional title, employer name, work address, work phone, email, and a phrase or word describing their relationship to you (e.g. former employer). The list should be printed on the same paper as your resume, utilizing the same name/contact information block heading and typeface as on your resume. *To view a sample reference page, refer to the back side of this handout.*

Follow-up with References & Law School

Finally, once you have accepted a position, remember to send a thank you note or email to each of your references, informing them of your new job title and location, with gracious recognition of their assistance during your job search process. In addition, remember to complete *or update* your Mitchell Hamline NALP Graduate Placement Survey online (if you are a new graduate). You can find out how to do that on the Mitchell Hamline website’s career page. (This is a requirement for graduation and will be extremely helpful in Mitchell Hamline’s overall national rankings!)

Symplicity Online System & Legal Experiences

If you are not graduating, but have obtained a legal experience/placement of some kind, go to our online recruiting system, Symplicity, to include your information under the “Placement” tab of the system. This will assist you later in your professional job search process.

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REFERENCES

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