

# Build Your List of References

*Some jobs or internships require candidates to submit a list of professional references as part of their application processes. Your references play an important role in verifying your qualifications and character, so keeping an updated contact list that you can readily share with employers is strongly recommended.*

**Identify** two-three individuals who you want to ask to serve as your professional references. When choosing who to ask, keep in mind that the best professional references are individuals who know you well enough to be able to answer questions about your qualifications, personality, and work ethic.

- ✓ Ask individuals who have directly supervised you in a professional setting, like a manager at work, a clinical or internship supervisor, or volunteer coordinator
- ✓ Current students or recent graduates might also consider asking instructors who they have developed strong professional relationships with at DMACC, either in class or through student clubs and activities
- ✓ Avoid asking family members or friends to serve as references; typically, personal references aren't as valued or trusted as professional references are

Prior to listing someone as a reference, **ask** for their permission to do so. When someone agrees to be a reference...

- ✓ Verify their contact information, including their phone number and email address
- ✓ Offer them an updated copy of your resume so that they have a full picture of your qualifications
- ✓ Check-in with them occasionally so that they are up-to-date on how your search is going
- ✓ Notify them immediately if you think they may be contacted by an employer for a reference check; typically, employers will contact references by phone or email sometime right before or right after interviewing you
- ✓ Thank each of your references for their assistance whenever communicating with them

If someone you ask to be a reference declines your request, accept their response courteously and professionally.

**Create** a document that lists your references' contact information. This document should...

- ✓ Follow similar formatting as your cover letter and resume, including the header, font, and layout; this will ensure your documents visually compliment one another when reviewed together
- ✓ Include the following contact information for each reference: **full name, job title, company/college, phone number, and email address**; you may also include your relationship to each reference and how long you've known them

Finally, **provide** your reference list to the employer when requested. Often times, references are requested as part of an application form, so you may only need to copy-and-paste your reference information online. Other times, you may need to upload the document along with your resume, cover letter, etc. If references aren't requested when you apply, make sure you have them ready for whenever they are requested, likely before, during, or after an interview.



**CAREER  
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**DMACC Career Services is here to help you!**

Office: Student Center Office — Building 5 — Ankeny Campus

Email: [careers@dmacc.edu](mailto:careers@dmacc.edu) | Phone: 515-964-6463

Web: [careers.dmacc.edu](http://careers.dmacc.edu)

For Appointments: [calendly.com/dmacccareers](https://calendly.com/dmacccareers)

## Sample Reference List

**Jane Doe**

1234 Main Street, Somewhere, Iowa 5xxxx | Phone: 555-555-5555 | Email: janedoe@email.com

### PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

**John Smith**

Current Supervisor — 2 years  
Branch Manager  
ABC Bank  
(515) 555-5000  
John.smith@abcbank.com

**Bob Hanson**

Former Supervisor — 1 year  
DEF Bank  
(515) 555-9000  
Hanson.Bob@DEFbank.com

**Betsy Anderson**

Instructor — 2 years  
Business Administration Faculty  
Des Moines Area Community College  
(515) 964-0000  
banderson@email.edu