

LEGAL REFERENCES

A reference list is an essential part of your application materials. References are typically on a page separate from your resume with a heading that is the same as your cover letter and resume. **Do not** head it your paper “References.”

When compiling your reference list, keep the following in mind:

You should provide three or four references. In selecting references, choose people who know you well and can knowledgeably discuss your work habits and abilities. Past employers, especially attorneys are excellent references. Law school and undergraduate professors are also good references as long as they can honestly comment on your work. For first-year students, your legal research and writing professor may be a good choice.

You may be tempted to use a distant acquaintance who is a judge or prominent attorney, but who can say little about your professional abilities. A more useful choice is someone who doesn't have a big name but is very familiar with your work.

ALWAYS check with your references before giving their names to prospective employers. As a courtesy, send a copy of your resume with a short thank-you note to each reference. You will benefit if your references have a copy of your resume in front of them when a prospective employer calls. As your circumstances change, keep your references informed so they can make informed recommendations.

It is no longer important to include the statement “References provided upon request” at the bottom of your resume. Of course you will provide references if they are requested, so there is no need to state the obvious. However, this statement provides good filler if needed at the end of a short resume.

When listing your references, include their name, title, employment, address, phone number and email address. Also, make sure that your references are on the same type of paper as your cover letter and resume. See the sample references page.

JOHN SMITH
4507 Pine Street
Spokane, WA 99204
(509) 555-5555
jsmith@lawschool.gonzaga.edu

James Williamson
Professor of Law
Gonzaga University School of Law
P.O. Box 3528
Spokane, WA 99220-3528
(509) 323-0000
jwilliamson@lawschool.gonzaga.edu

Brian Taylor
Assistant County Prosecutor
Office of the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney
1100 W. Mallon
Spokane, WA 99260
(509) 456-1234
btaylor@spokanecounty.org

Hermione Granger
Development Director
The Nature Conservancy
2222 S. Wiscomb
Portland, OR 97219
(503) 555-5555
hgranger@comcast.com