Suggestions for Obtaining References

1. Your reference people are doing you a valuable, voluntary service. Treat them with the same professional consideration you would employ with all of your job-related contacts. This includes talking personally with them, which will prove to be more successful than sending a form through the mail or slipping it under an office door. Provide them with an updated copy of your resume.

2. Choose your references carefully based on your career objectives and the qualities and abilities you wish to demonstrate to prospective employers and internship coordinators. Professors, work supervisors, internship supervisors, coaches, and club advisors are possible sources.

3. Give your references the option of writing a form recommendation or being contacted by employers on a case-by-case basis. Some professionals feel that they can help you best by tailoring their recommendation to the particular employer/position, while others appreciate the convenience of writing one standard recommendation letter.

4. Provide your references with a framework to help them write the recommendation, but do not tell them what to write. You might say something like, "I'm applying for these types of positions … (be specific), and I believe employers will be interested in qualities and abilities such as..." Giving them a copy of your resume will help in this area.

5. Write a short note thanking your references for their help. Keep them informed of how your job search is progressing, and let them know when you land that perfect job!