



# MSU Law Career Services Office

## Reference List Guide

### GENERAL TIPS

- How many?
  - Unless otherwise indicated by an employer, it is standard to provide three references
  - Keep a master list of all potential references; select ones who are strongest for each application
  - If an application requires references and letters of recommendation, those submitting letters should not be repeated on your reference list
- Who?
  - Generally, all of your references should be from your time in law school
  - At least one reference should be a law school professor to speak to your academic abilities
  - At least one reference should be a work supervisor or clinical professor to speak to your practical legal skills
- What type of contact information?
  - Provide a professional email address and phone number for each of your references
  - Never list a reference's personal email address or phone number unless the reference specifically directs you to do so

*NOTE: All references should be people with whom you have had contact in the past year. All references should know you well. Meet with the CSO to strategize who to ask.*

### WORK WITH YOUR REFERENCES

- ALWAYS ask permission before you list a person as a reference
- Keep your references informed and updated
  - Notify them when you have an interview for a job, so they are aware they may be contacted
  - Supply them with information to make the reference process as easy as possible:
    - What the job is, why you want it, skills that you have that make you qualified, an updated copy of your resume
  - Let your references know when you have obtained a new position

*NOTE: Check in regularly to update them and confirm that it is okay to continue to list them as references.*

### FORMAT

- Personalized letterhead: Format to match resume, especially same font style and size
- Add a document title to make it easily recognizable
- List your references by importance/strongest reference: employers may only contact one reference, so the first person on the list should be the strongest
- Use formal, proper titles for your references, if applicable (e.g., "The Honorable," "Professor")
- Include the reference's title and employer
- Provide one to two sentences about how you know the reference

*NOTE: Don't forget to proofread your reference list along with the rest of your materials.*