

# JOB VACANCIES AND REFERENCE FILES

Career Planning • 206 Sisson Hall • SUNY Potsdam • 315/267-2344

[www.potsdam.edu/offices/career](http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/career)

## Job Vacancy Lists

- **Career Planning Website.** Visit our website at [www.potsdam.edu/offices/career](http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/career). You will find links to many different job servers with thousands of job listings. Job web sites are also listed by major.
- **BearTracker Job Search Database.** This software includes job vacancy notices sent directly to the Career Planning Office. A link can be found on the Career Planning Webpage ([www.potsdam.edu/offices/career](http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/career)) or through BearPaws. This database includes full-time, part-time, and summer positions, internships and volunteer opportunities across many career fields.
- **MonsterTrak** The MonsterTrak Job Stream Feature through BearTracker allows students to view jobs posted on MonsterTrak that match selected local job search criteria. When a student searches for local jobs in BearTracker, a second tab will be presented in the job search results that will show the applicable jobs from MonsterTrak allowing the student to view and/or apply to these jobs also.
- **NACELink** The NACELink Network connects you to thousands of jobs around the country every day. You can also research employers, read career articles and find tips to assist you with the job search process. A link can be found on the Career Planning Webpage ([www.potsdam.edu/offices/career](http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/career)).

## Your Reference File (REFERENCE FILES ARE MAINTAINED FOR 6 YEARS)

- **Starting a Reference File.** You must start the file yourself in your junior or senior year (education majors may start their file immediately). Note: prior to your junior or senior year, it is a good idea to get employer references but keep them yourself. You must complete the reference file release form and return it to the Career Planning Office to establish your file. **Forms are available in the office or online.**
- **Number of Letters.** Your file should contain a maximum of 10 pages (3 to 5 letters are usually sufficient). These include reference letters from faculty, sponsor teachers, employers, and advisors (or student leaders) for campus activities. For on-campus references, we have forms for you to give the SUNY faculty or staff member writing your reference. One form is a confidential form and the other one preserves your right to access. These forms are available in the office or on the Career Planning web site. For off-campus employers, ask for a "To Whom It May Concern" letter on their own letterhead.
- **Resumes and Transcripts.** Resumes and transcripts are NOT included in your Career Planning file. You send resumes to employers yourself, and only the Registrar maintains transcripts. You may want to get a transcript and make copies, which you may use if the employer does not ask for an "official transcript".
- **Sending/Requesting your File.** When you want your file sent to yourself, an employer or graduate school, **we require a written request with your name, address, phone, class year and the name and address of the person to whom you want the file sent** or you may print the request form available on our web site, complete it and mail it to Career Planning. Print or write carefully. Enclose \$4.00 for each mailing of your file, (or \$15.00 for 5 mailings) for up to 10 pages and \$8.00 for 11 pages or more. Make checks payable to *SUNY Potsdam*. Also, you can request that we fax your file to the employer. The cost to fax a file is \$5.00 for up to 10 pages and \$10.00 for 11 or more pages.

**ALL REQUESTS MUST BE MADE IN WRITING. WE CANNOT RESPOND TO REQUESTS MADE OVER THE PHONE.**

**(OVER)**

- **File Requested by an Employer.** When an employer asks us to send your file, we will send it right away and send you a bill with the name of the employer receiving your file. If the references don't arrive in time for your interview, phone our office and we'll fax the references to the interview site, or read them over the phone to the interviewer, if necessary.

- **Married students and Alumni.** Some, or all, of your references may be in your birth name. Advise us of both your married and birth name so we can locate your file when it is requested. Beyond that, it is a good idea to put your maiden name on your resume in parentheses so the employer will also make the connection. For example, Mary Westville would have Mary (Smithers) Westville on her resume.

### Asking Faculty for References

- Faculty have hundreds of students in different courses at different times. Writing references is something they expect to do, but it is *not* a simple task. You can help.

- Don't assume that a person will write a reference for you. They may not have enough exposure to your work to write a reference. Ask if they feel they have observed you enough to feel comfortable writing a reference. If they agree to do it, be sure to thank them. It is a good idea to also send them a thank you note when you receive the letter and keep them updated on your progress. You should also ask if you might use their name and phone number if you are asked to do so by a potential employer.

- Make your request in person. It is a good idea to give the professor a resume, a brief written statement of the courses you took from him/her, any special projects or other accomplishments involved and your career goals. If you are asking for a reference from a professor who hasn't taught you since your freshman or sophomore years, this information is important. If your goals are unclear or varied (many students have a number of different but equally important goals), mention characteristics you know will be a part of whatever career you choose. Let the Career Planning staff assist you with this. We can provide you with reference forms for faculty and staff. **Forms are also available on our web site.**

- If you are planning to go to graduate school, you will usually have reference forms supplied by each school. Alert the professor to this and ask if he/she would be willing to write a duplicate one on the Career Planning form. This is good insurance. Your plans may be delayed for some reason and you apply to another grad school several years from now. When you need the reference the professor may not be available, due to sabbatical leave or other reasons. With the Career Planning form on file, just advise the graduate school of the situation and ask if you can have your file sent from the Career Planning Office.

### Asking Employers for References

- The best person to ask is usually your immediate supervisor, the person who can support her/his observations with credible examples. You may also want to *add* someone in higher authority at your place of employment.

- Some large corporations will not give written references. In that case, see if your supervisor will agree to be a telephone reference for you. If he or she agrees put a sheet of paper in your Career Planning references file with a message similar to this:

"Company policy at Zumwak Corporation does not allow written references for summer employees. My supervisor, Ms. Joan Jones, has agreed to be telephoned as a reference."

(Give the work or home phone number or both, according to the supervisor's preference.)

- Experience is experience, whether it was paid or volunteer. Treat volunteer work as a job for reference purposes.