CREDENTIAL FILE SERVICE

Why Should I Open A Credential File?

- Convenient, organized and confidential way to house your information for graduate schools and employers
- May contain reference letters from professors, former employers or supervisors; anyone who has observed you closely in an academic or work setting
- Allows your reference writers to complete one letter of recommendation, instead of several, if you are applying to multiple places

What Can I Have In My Credential File?

- Letters of reference
- The College of Saint Rose transcript (considered an unofficial copy)
 Please note: You must request your transcript to be sent to the Career Center and it is only as current as the date it is requested from the Registrar's Office
- No other documents will be accepted and will be returned to the sender if received

How Do I Open A Credential File?

- Submit a completed Credential File Registration Form
- Pick up Reference Letter Forms (you will need one for each reference)

How Do I Complete The Reference Letter Form?

- Fill out the top portion of the form **before** giving it to your reference writer
- Type or neatly print your name and graduation date
- Select the status of the reference letter as Non-Confidential or Confidential (see Credential FAQs)

* The status of a reference letter can not be changed

- Sign your name and date in the line shown on the form
- Give the reference letter form to your reference writer to complete
- Have the writer complete your reference letter on our Reference Form or attach his/her letter, written on their letterhead, to the completed Reference Form
- All reference letters should be submitted with a completed Career Center Reference Form, including
 your selection of Non-Confidential or Confidential status, and the writer's signature.

Please note: Any letters received without a non-confidential/confidential status selected or without our Reference Form will be considered Non-Confidential.

How Do I Request My Credential File To Be Sent?

- Mail, fax or personally deliver your request <u>in writing with your signature</u> Phone/E-mail requests cannot be accepted
- Use the Credential File Request Forms to ensure the accuracy of your mailing
- Include all contact/address information on the Credential File Request Form
- Specify the last names of each of your references ("ALL" will not be accepted)
- Indicate which materials you would like to send (transcripts cannot be sent as an individual item)

How Long Does It Take To Have My File Sent?

- Requests are processed within (3) three working business days from the date they are received, on a first-come, first-serve basis
- Fax requests REQUIRE an accurate fax number in order to be processed
- Pay close attention to deadlines, plan ahead and consider the timing of when the file needs to be received once the file leaves our office, we no longer have control as to when it arrives at its destination
- Check on the status of your file and account before submitting a request

What Are The Costs Associated With A Credential File?

- No cost to open a Credential File
- Maximum of 20 requests will be processed at no cost
- Subsequent requests will be processed at a cost of \$10.00 each (money will <u>not</u> be kept on account so please pay the exact amount needed for each request)
- Payment can be made with cash, check or money order; checks payable to "The College of Saint Rose"
 We are not able to accept credit card payments- payments must be received before request is processed

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CREDENTIAL FILE SERVICE

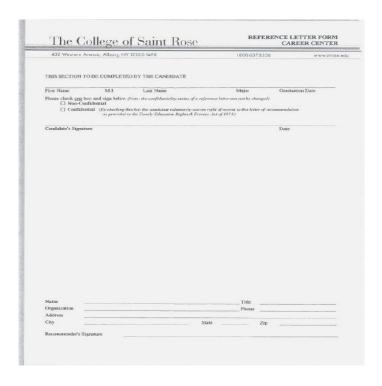
I. REFERENCE LETTERS

Who should I ask to write a letter of reference for me?

Faculty members and former employers/supervisors who can attest to your academic and professional competence are most appropriate. Character references, such as your clergy or family doctor, are not recommended. **Choose your reference letter writers carefully**. Prospective employers and admission committees review reference letters to gain insight into your academic performance, work related skills and personal characteristics. These letters should support your resume and "fill out the picture" of who you are.

What steps should I follow when I ask someone to complete a reference letter for me?

Arrange a meeting with your reference writer to share your goals, employment objectives, and/or educational plans. If you cannot meet with your reference letter writer, put your request in writing. Provide the reference letter writer with a copy of your resume, our reference letter form (see below), with the top portion completed by you and a stamped envelope addressed to the Career Center. Give reference letter writers ample time to compose their letter. Send a brief thank you letter when the reference letter is completed.

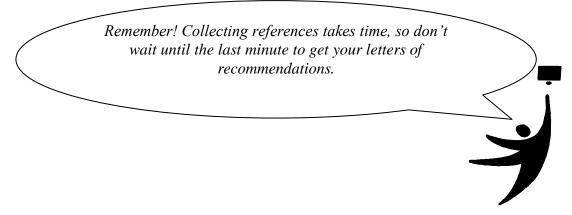


When should I ask someone to write a reference letter for me?

We advise requesting references immediately upon completion of a course or a job/internship experience. Any later, the recommender may not be available or recall the quality or extent of your contribution. Do not wait until graduation to obtain appropriate letters of reference. A decision to hire or accept you may be delayed if your references are not readily available for the employer or graduate school.

What should I do if my reference letter has not been received by your office?

If the reference letter has not been completed within a **reasonable** amount of time, it is your responsibility to follow-up with the writer to remind him/her of your request. Check periodically with our office to see if we have received it. Be sure to confirm the letter has been received before requesting it to be sent as part of your file. We suggest asking several people to write reference letters for you so you are not relying on any particular individual.



What is the difference between a confidential or non-confidential reference?

Confidential means not subject to your review. Confidential references cannot be reviewed by or released to you, since you have chosen to waive your right of access. You may be told the date a letter has arrived, who wrote it, and if it is confidential. We will not reveal to you the contents of confidential letters or indicate if they are positive or negative. Confidential references must be delivered directly by the recommender, via mail or in person. **Non-confidential** means you may review and obtain a copy of the reference letter since you have chosen not to waive your right of access. *Any letters received without a*

non-confidential/confidential status selected or without a Career Center Reference Form will be considered Non-Confidential. The status of a reference letter cannot be changed.

Should I request a confidential or non-confidential letter from my reference writer?

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 gives you control over the creation and release of your credential file. A potential employer may view a confidential reference as a more "candid" evaluation, in that you trust the person writing the reference to accurately evaluate your abilities. Ultimately, it is your decision whether your letter should be confidential or non-confidential. The status of a reference letter cannot be changed.

II. PROCESSING YOUR CREDENTIAL FILE

Can I make a credential file request over the phone?

No. Since we need your signature in writing, we are unable to take mailing requests by phone or via e-mail.

Can I request for you to process my file, and then take the copies with me?

If letters within your file are indicated as "non-confidential", we can release copies of them to you. All other contents of your credential file are considered confidential. Therefore, we cannot give you copies.

What if I want to upload my letters to the Online Application System (OLAS)?

While OLAS does want a complete application set up on their system, you cannot upload <u>confidential</u> letters from your credential file. In addition to your confidential letters you may want to obtain non-confidential letters so that all information is complete on the OLAS system. Feel free to call the OLAS helpline (800-435-3351) with any other questions.

Why can't I request "ALL" on the mailing request under the contents of my file to be sent?

In order to assist you in confirming that each of your reference letters has been received by our office, you must indicate the *last name* of each of your reference writers on your request. Indicating "ALL" does not necessarily mean each of your reference letter requests are in your file.

Can you "hold" my credential file mailing until all of my materials are received?

Because we have no control over when materials will be received by our office, we <u>cannot</u> "hold" mailing a credential file for missing references, Saint Rose transcripts, or copies of certification. Rather, you must wait until the credential file has the contents you wish to send before making the request.

What happens if I request for materials to be sent and they aren't in my file?

We have you specifically indicate which items you would like to be sent on the mailing request for this reason. In the event that you request an item to be sent that isn't in your file, we will contact you and let you know that we have not yet received the item. It is then your responsibility to follow-up with the appropriate person/office to ensure that the item(s) gets to us. Since we process each credential request within three (3) working business days, if we do not receive the item (s) within the three days in which you made the request, we will send your request without the item, unless you notify us otherwise.

III. MAINTAINING YOUR CREDENTIAL FILE

How many letters can I keep in my credential file?

As many as you would like. Graduate schools and employers are generally satisfied with 3-5 well written letters. If you have more than that, be sure to consider selecting the **most appropriate** letters you feel relate best to a specific position. Letters may be added to your file at any time.

How does my Saint Rose transcript get into my credential file?

You must contact the Registrar's Office and follow their procedure to request your transcript be sent to the Career Center. Once we receive and open the envelope containing your transcript, it is considered an **unofficial copy**. Keep in mind that the information on your transcript is only as current as the date you requested it. Any other questions related to transcripts should be directed to the Registrar's Office.

Why can I only have letters of reference, College of Saint Rose transcripts?

We do not have authorization to maintain transcripts from other colleges/universities; therefore you must submit a request to other institutions indicating that they send your transcripts directly to the place which you are applying. Other materials that you may include with your application are already in your possession and in most cases, are expected to be sent directly from you (i.e. application, certification, evaluations, personal statement, resume and cover letter).

How long will my file stay active?

Your credential file will remain open for 5 years from your date of graduation and/or the last date of activity (i.e. addition of new letters, recent mailing requests, etc.) If there is no activity for 5 years, your file will be destroyed, unless you request in writing that your file be retained. It is extremely important to update your file, as outdated letters of reference may not accurately represent your current experience and/or skills.

What if I no longer want one of my reference letters to be included within my file?

You need to notify us in writing which letter you would like to remove from your file and we will make that letter inactive. Unless the letter is non-confidential, we cannot release a copy of the letter to you.

Can I get the contents in my credential file if it is considered inactive and will be destroyed?

If you have non-confidential letters within your file, you may request a copy before the file is destroyed. Otherwise, since the contents of your file remain confidential, we cannot release them to you.