

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON
Office of Career Services

CREDENTIAL FILE STATEMENT OF POLICIES

A credential file is a convenient way to maintain letters of recommendation and transcripts in support of your application for education jobs or graduate school admission. It alleviates the need to have your references write several letters of recommendation. **Other career fields typically do not require written recommendations.**

If you would like to set up a credential file in the Office of Career Services, please read and sign the following Statement of Policies.

1. Credential files may be established only for individuals receiving a degree or completing the Teacher Education Program at the University of Mary Washington.
2. To register, the following forms must be completed and returned to Career Services:
 - a. Statement of Policies (**signed**) - retain a copy for your files
 - b. Disclosure Consent Form (**signed**)
3. Your file should contain at least three (3) letters of recommendation, but no more than five. (Authorization to have more than 5 references must be received from the Director of Career Services.) If you are certifying to teach, you may also include a copy of your PRAXIS scores and/or a copy of your SAT scores and a copy of your transcript. It is your responsibility to request that recommendations be sent to your file and to check with the Office of Career Services to verify the contents of your file before requesting that it be mailed out.
4. A fee of \$10.00 is collected when a credential file is opened. This covers the cost of duplicating and mailing the first five (5) credential packets. For each set of credentials in excess of five sent out by the Office of Career Services a fee of \$2.00 will be charged.
5. **Any material sent to the Office of Career Services for placement in your file becomes the property of the University of Mary Washington.** If you have non-confidential letters in your file, you may request copies of these letters for yourself. Copies of the letters would count as one packet.
6. You may request that an unofficial transcript from the Registrar's Office be provided to the Office of Career Services at the end of each semester's course work. We recommend that you request, from the Registrar's Office, that a copy of your **FINAL** transcript be sent to Career Services. **Only a transcript sent directly from the Registrar's Office is considered official**, therefore you may choose to send a photocopy in other correspondence or send an official copy directly to a school system or graduate school.
7. You are responsible for selecting individuals who will write recommendations for you. These individuals should have knowledge of your professional capacity and should be aware of your educational accomplishments and career objectives. For students in the Education program you should include references from your College Supervisor and your cooperating teacher(s). Other recommendations may include Faculty in your subject area as well as teachers, administrators and coaches who can speak to your ability as a teacher. Recommendations for graduate programs should be written specifically for that purpose. Faculty members are usually included among your references. Consider asking a professor from your major, one who has had several classes with you, or your advisor to write a recommendation for you. You could also include summer employers and internship sponsors as references. **If you have done an internship, it is better to have your supervisor write a letter than to use the Agency Evaluation form.** Letters from friends and family members are considerably less valuable as references and are usually recognized as such.
8. **Before distributing the form, you must type or neatly print in all information on the top and indicate whether this recommendation will be confidential or non-confidential and SIGN IT. If the recommendation form is not checked confidential or non-confidential and you have not signed it, it will be considered non-confidential.**

When possible, it is generally a good idea to deliver the form personally and ask references whether or not they feel they know you well enough to write a positive recommendation and whether they are able to do so in a timely fashion. It is also important to indicate that the form should be clear and suitable for copying, preferably **typed**. If this is not feasible, suggest that it at least be printed neatly in **black ink**. Indicate to them that the recommendation must be easy to read. To assist references, it is recommended that you provide a stamped, addressed envelope and some biographical information about yourself including your career goals. For faculty, the Fact Sheet can be helpful; for others, a resume or other summary of performance is suggested. Members of the Office of Career Services are not at liberty to discuss the contents of confidential recommendations with you. If you choose to have non-confidential letters of recommendation, you may review them in the Office of Career Services and copies may be made for you at the regular cost of a mailing

9. It is your responsibility to be sure that your file is complete. Check with the Office to be sure that all of your recommendations have arrived. You will NOT be informed of missing items.
10. When you wish to have your file sent to a prospective employer or graduate school, you must submit your **signed** request **in writing**, not by telephone or email. Telephone, fax, or e-mail requests from prospective employers and graduate schools will be honored if you have signed the Disclosure Consent Form, checked the appropriate sections, and submitted it for your file. If you request that your file be held until specific items have arrived and then mailed, your file will be held indefinitely until those items do arrive. Call and check about the status of your file. If you want your file to be sent before all your recommendations have arrived, please indicate that intention with your request. On your request, signify which materials you would like to be forwarded upon their arrival.
11. If your letters of recommendation are confidential, we cannot give them to you in a sealed envelope. They must be sent directly to the employer/school.
12. Although every effort will be made to mail credential files on the day the request is received; the Office of Career Services can only guarantee that credentials will be mailed within three (3) working days upon receipt of the written request. **When referring to your file, remember to give the name under which you graduated and the year of graduation.** It would be helpful to let us know if you certified to teach. It is your responsibility to check with the school/employer to be sure that your credentials were received. Credentials have infrequently been lost in the mail.
13. Please reply to all communication from the Office of Career Services. It is your responsibility to keep your credential file up-to-date, including notifying Career Services of any change of address and/or phone numbers.
14. **Credential files may be updated at any time, but may be destroyed after five (5) years without any activity, unless you instruct otherwise in writing.**

I, _____,
Name (please print)

agree to accept and abide by the policies as outlined in the foregoing paragraphs.

Signature and Social Security Number (last four numbers only)

Date

Phone number