

A GUIDE TO CREDENTIALS

Your future is now!



ITHACA COLLEGE
Office of Career Services

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CREDENTIAL FILE SERVICE

What is a Credential File?

Career Services offers a recommendation file service so that you may provide graduate schools and/or employers information about your background and qualifications. Most credential files contain written letters of recommendations from professors, former employers, or supervisors who have been able to observe you closely in an educational or work setting. Your file may include other materials which support your candidacy (i.e. Student Teach Evaluations), but the following are **NOT** accepted for your file: Resumes, Transcripts (contact Registrars Office), NTE Scores or Graduate School Examination Scores.

Between three and five letters of recommendation are appropriate for most credential files. Graduate schools and employers are generally satisfied with three or four well written letters.

Fees

The fee to open and use the Credential File service is **\$30.00**. **Make checks payable to Ithaca College.**

How to Establish your Credential File

You will need to complete the **Credential File Registration Form** located in our office or on our website at www.ithaca.edu/careers (click on documents). Submit the completed form with **\$30 cash or check made payable to Ithaca College.**

Career Services provides blank **Recommendation Forms** for your convenience. Be sure to complete the top boxed-in area on each form before providing your reference writers with the forms. If a writer chooses to use their own letterhead, these forms will be considered **non-confidential** unless a signed Recommendation Form is attached indicating your decision of confidentiality.

You may wish to provide an off-campus reference writer with a stamped, addressed envelope to ensure delivery to Career Services. Extra recommendation forms are available through our office or at our web site at www.ithaca.edu/careers (click on documents).

How to Use your Credential File

Once your letters of recommendation are in your file, you may request that they be sent to prospective employers or graduate schools by submitting and signing the **Request Form**. In the special instructions section, specify the specific documents you are requesting to be sent. Additional request forms are available in Career Services or at our web site at www.ithaca.edu/careers (click on documents).

Credentials should be sent when an employer or school expresses an interest in receiving recommendations other than your initial resume. Credentials should not automatically be sent when you are making an initial inquiry.

Occasionally an employer will request an electronic upload of the letters of recommendation to a specific website. We can only do this for non confidential letters; however, if the website is secure (which means that you are unable to view your letters of recommendation), we would be able to upload confidential letters. You will need to provide the website and any other necessary information on the request form.

Confidentiality

Careful consideration must be given to your decision to waive your right to view a recommendation. If a letter is designated confidential, you will never be able to view its contents. You may, however, find out if the letter has been placed in your file and whether or not it is directed toward graduate school or employment.

All non-confidential letters may be viewed in our office during regular hours. **NO** recommendations will be read over the phone, either to you or to a prospective employer or graduate school.

Although most employers will accept both confidential and non-confidential recommendations, some place a higher value on confidential recommendations. Graduate schools often prefer a confidential format, and some letter writers feel more comfortable with the confidential format.

Additional Information

Obtaining Copies of Non-Confidential Material

Upon your written request, a copy of non-confidential material contained in your file can be forwarded to you.

Updating and Deleting Information

If you no longer wish to use a specific recommendation, you may inform us, in writing, to place it in an **inactive** status within your file. As you grow professionally, you should update your file to reflect your professional development. Letters from four or five years ago will probably not represent current levels of responsibility and achievement. You may want to add new letters of recommendation to replace old ones. Blank Recommendation Forms may be obtained from our office or at our web site at www.ithaca.edu/careers (click on documents).

Active Status

Each credential file will be maintained for **ten years**. At the end of this ten year period, all files will be destroyed unless you notify this office, in writing, that you wish to keep your file active.