

# Credential Files

## A Service Of The Career Placement Services Office

The Career Center • Suite A4100 • The University Center • Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2490  
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### *The Advantages of Establishing a Credentials File*

Florida State University students and graduates may establish a credentials file at The Career Center's Career Placement Services Office in the University Center. Typically, credential files are used:

- When applying to a graduate or professional school;
- When seeking a professional position at an educational institution;
- When seeking a position in the fields of nursing, social work, or information studies.

Commonly used to inform people of your professional and academic records, credentials files contain letters of recommendation and other documents that are used to support your candidacy for a particular job or graduate school. At your request, copies of your files are mailed to various employers or educational institutions. Some employers and schools require credentials files in their application process. Establishing a credentials file at the Career Placement Services Office is an easy, systematic way for you to manage your employment search or graduate school application process.

In addition, establishing a credentials file saves a great deal of time and effort for you and the recommender. By requesting a general letter of recommendation, the recommender is required to prepare only one letter that is then photocopied and submitted to various educational institutions and/or employers.

Three letters of recommendation are the norm for a formal graduate school application or professional position. If making application to graduate school, professors with whom you have studied would write these letters. When making application for employment, professors, former employers, or internship supervisors would write these letters.

### *How to Establish a Credentials File at Florida State University*

To establish your credentials file, complete and return the attached Registration Form. The initial registration fee of \$20 will be billed to you by Student Financial Services within a month or you can pay online at [www.fees.fsu.edu](http://www.fees.fsu.edu) for your convenience. For any billing inquiries please contact us at (850) 644-3459. All registration materials must be typed for your protection to ensure legibility and accuracy.

The first five (5) sets of credentials are prepared and mailed without charge. Additional requests are sent at a cost of \$3.00 per set. **Note: if your credential requests are billed by the Career Center, you must enclose a check for the appropriate amount payable to Florida State University to Student Financial Services before any other transactions by the university will be processed.** However, if you do not have money towards your account and need to make some transactions such as transcript requests, contact us. The Career Placement Services Office reserves the right to discontinue credentials services for non-payment of fees or abuse of the services rendered.

You may have up to seven (7) sheets of paper sent from your credentials file. You have the option to send up to fifteen (15) pieces of paper from your file for an additional fee of \$.50 per set. Materials in a credentials file typically consist of the following types of items:

- Letters of Recommendation
- A Research Summary (optional)
- A Program of Study (optional)
- Waiver of Right to Access Faculty Evaluations (optional)

We do not recommend that you include official transcripts in your credentials file. Transcripts sent from The Career

Center Placement Services Office are not considered official by most institutions and employers. Please contact the Registrar's Office at (850) 644-1050 to request official transcripts.

### ***Legal Considerations & Regulations Governing Credentials Files***

It is important that you are aware of the rules and regulations concerning your credentials file. For example, your credentials file is open for your inspection at all times. Current law allows you to review and copy all materials in your file. The exceptions to this law are candidate appraisals and letters marked "**confidential**" which are dated prior to December 31, 1973.

A "Waiver of Right to Access Faculty Evaluations" is provided and is optional. This waiver is provided to protect confidentiality and privacy. You may choose to waive access rights to any or all evaluations written on your behalf. Should you choose to waive your rights of access, you will not be able to view the specified documents/evaluations. The completed waiver form will remain in the your credential file permanently. In addition, a copy of the waiver form will be attached and mailed with each evaluation to which you have waived your right of access. Selection, search, and admissions committees find waiver information useful in their appraisal process.

Files will be maintained at The Career Placement Services Office for three (3) years from the date of establishment. However, due to storage constraints, your credentials file will be sent to State Archives when one of the following occurs:

- You do not request a set of credentials be sent for a period of three (3) years.
- No materials are added to your file for a period of three (3) years.

There will be a \$5.00 fee to have your credentials file removed from State Archives. After ten (10) years, State Archives will destroy your files.

### ***Helpful Hints for Establishing an Effective Credentials File***

Always ask your intended references if they are willing to write a letter of recommendation or complete a candidate appraisal form. Be sure to spend some time talking with them about your career goals, your education, and your work experience. Additionally, it would be beneficial for you to provide your recommenders with a copy of your vita or resume. This will give your recommenders additional information needed to write an effective recommendation. As a convenience, you may want to provide them with a stamped envelope addressed to our office. Not only is this a polite gesture, it may also speed up delivery of the letter of recommendation. Remember, when requesting a letter of recommendation, courtesy and consideration will make a favorable impression upon your recommender.

It is your responsibility to make sure that we receive all requested materials for your credentials file. Feel free to contact our office to ascertain whether or not your file is complete. If items are missing from the file, you must contact the recommender concerning the missing material. It is your responsibility to do whatever is needed to obtain the missing materials.

When submitting a request, remember to review your file. We do not wait until your file is "**complete**" before mailing it. The file is sent "as is" on the day you make the request. For example, if you have transcript and two letters of recommendation in your file on the day you make a request, we will send only those items. If additional materials are received the following day, we will not mail those materials unless a new request is made and an additional fee of \$3.00 is paid.

In addition, keep an accurate record of where you send your credentials file. We retain only a general listing of the places where your file has been sent. We do not retain the complete address or the name of the specific individuals to whom the file was sent for more than twelve (12) months. Also, please advise us of any change in your name, address, telephone number, or other important contact information. This will assist us in keeping in contact with you.

Best wishes with your continuing career development. If we can assist you in any way, please feel free to contact us at (850) 644-3459.

*This Information Is Available In Alternative Format Upon Request*

A "Waiver of Right to Access Faculty Evaluations" is provided and is optional. This waiver is provided to protect confidentiality and privacy. You may choose to waive access rights to any or all evaluations written on your behalf. Should you choose to waive your rights of access, you will not be able to view the specified documents/evaluations. The completed waiver form will remain in the your credential file permanently. In addition, a copy of the waiver form will be attached and mailed with each evaluation to which you have waived your right of access. Selection, search, and admissions committees find waiver information useful in their appraisal process.