



Introduction

It is your decision to serve (or not) as a reference for a current or former University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point or University of Wisconsin System Faculty or Staff member. If you are a supervisor of the individual, direct or indirectly (Chair, Supervisor/Manager, Director, Dean, and above), you are required to follow [UW System Administrative Policy 1275: Recruitment Policies \(SYS 1275\)](#) **regardless** of whether or not you serve as a reference. The guidelines set forth here are in alignment with this policy.

Requirements for Supervisors (Supervisor, Chair, Director, Dean, and above)

If you are contacted by anyone to provide a reference on an employee who reports/reported to you (directly or indirectly), whether or not you agreed to be a reference, you **must** state the following disclaimer:

“All questions related to employee misconduct including sexual misconduct are addressed only by our human resources department, which can be contacted by email: Sierra Thomas, Employee Policies Specialist, stthomas@uwsp.edu, or Nora Boomer, HR Manager, nboomer@uwsp.edu. This isn’t meant to imply that this candidate committed any misconduct but is something we are required by UW System policy to tell all potential employers.”

If a Faculty or Staff member left on not-so-good terms and/or were disciplined (including involuntary termination) for any type of misconduct or performance, consult UWSP Human Resources prior to responding to a reference request. Through consultation, it may be determined to not provide a reference. However, you **must** provide the disclaimer provided within this document.

After January 1, 2019, Human Resources will provide guidance to supervisors (direct and indirect) upon a formal sexual misconduct investigation and the final decision regarding serving as a reference. Again, if contacted, regardless of whether or not the supervisor provides a reference, if contacted for information, they **must** provide the disclaimer provided within this document.

Reminder: Employment verifications are not the same as providing a reference. Employment verifications are completed through the Work Number or by UW-Stevens Point Human Resources in accordance with the [UWS Verification of Employment and/or Income procedures](#).

Best Practices



- UW-Stevens Point does not require a release for UW-Stevens Point individuals to provide a reference. If you are asked to be a reference, a best practice is to ask the person to provide their reference request in writing.
- Provide accurate job-related information. Per [SYS 1275](#): *The potential employer should receive an objective evaluation of the candidate's training, experience, skills, abilities, and job performance as they relate to the duties and responsibilities of the job for which the candidate is being considered.*
- When you are asked to be a reference by a Faculty or Staff member, ask the individual to provide you the position announcement, job description, and the materials they use to apply (resume/CV and cover letter) for positions to support you in providing your reference.
- When providing a reference, do not provide a generic reference letter. Over time, a reference letter can become ineffective or inaccurate.

Prefer Not to Serve as a Reference?

If you are asked by a current or previous UW-Stevens Point Faculty or Staff member to be a reference and prefer not to serve as a reference, tell them the reason(s). While this may be a difficult conversation, it is important to be honest and caring to support their job search.

If you were not proactively asked to be a reference for a current or previous UW-Stevens Point Faculty or Staff member, you may decline to respond to reference questions. If you were/are the individual's supervisor (direct or indirect), you **must** provide the required disclaimer provided within this document.

Contact Us

UW-Stevens Point Human Resources will support you in deciding to be and/or providing a reference check. If you have questions or need guidance, contact us at 715-346-2606 or hr@uwsp.edu to be connected with an HR representative.

References

Doyle, A. (2018). Learn about professional references. *The Balance Careers* [Online]. Retrieved: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-a-professional-reference-2062823>

Heathfield, S. M. (2018). How to respond to a reference check request: responding when prospective employers ask for references. *The Balance Careers* [Online]. Retrieved: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-respond-to-a-reference-check-request-1919346>

Totaljobs. (n.d.). Job reference advice. *Totaljobs* [Online]. Retrieved: <https://www.totaljobs.com/careers-advice/money-and-legal/references-faq>