

Credential Files

CREATE YOUR SELF-MANAGED CREDENTIAL FILE (Tutorial)



What is a credential file?

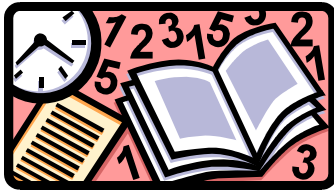
A credential file is a professional packet of materials that you provide to a prospective employer to support your application/resume. The contents of the file attest to your professional training and experience. Credentials are typically expected as a part of the process for individuals seeking employment in education settings.

What is a self-managed credential file?

A self-managed credential file consists documents that are collected, maintained, administered, and sent by you directly to prospective employers.

What is contained in a credential file?

Typically, a credential file contains:



- Resume
- List of references and/or letters of recommendation
- Student Teaching Evaluation
- Copy of your latest background investigation
- Copies of your teacher certifications
- Transcripts

For students who are still completing their last semester, some of the above listed items may not be available. Employers know this and will consider you with the most current information that you can provide in your credential file. So if you do not have your teaching certificate, you can still apply for positions without it. If you have not yet graduated, print out your current transcript and include it in your credential packet with the understanding that you will provide the proper documents when you receive them.

Credential Folders & Envelopes

Professional credential folders with the Missouri Western logo and accompanying envelopes are available for purchase in the Career Development Center for \$2.00 each. It is strongly advised that you purchase these folders to send out your credentials.

Whom should I ask to be a reference or write a letter of recommendation?

You should consider any of the following:

- _ A cooperating teacher (Important for new teachers)
- _ A site supervisor (Important for new teachers)
- _ A field experience teacher
- _ Principal(s) or superintendent(s)
- _ Teachers or administrators who observed you teaching
- _ Mentor teachers

If you cannot get three references from the above list, you may also consider:

- _ Department heads
- _ College faculty or advisor from your subject area
- _ A current or former employer from a related employment experience
- _ A current or former director/supervisor of volunteer experiences
- _ A leadership or community service affiliation

What is better, a list of references or letters of recommendation?

A list of references is sufficient. School districts will call your references to talk about your teaching qualifications even if you have a letter. Letters are recommended when the reference is inaccessible by telephone. For example, if a person retires and moves to another state or takes a job out of the country. Letters have a limited shelf life, so unless you are going to ask that person to write a letter every year or two it is advisable to just have a list of references with current contact information. (See Job Search for Teachers for additional information on references)

What do I need to do to ask someone to be a reference?

Always ask permission to use someone's name as a reference. Provide the references with a current resume. This will give them a broader view of your qualifications. Keep them informed about your job search. Copies of job listings in which you are interested will help them identify the most relevant aspects of your background to highlight with an employer. Be sure to send a thank you to each of your references after you have obtained employment.

What information should I include on the reference sheet?

List the person's full name and title, name of the organization and business address with phone number and e-mail address, if applicable.

What should a letter of recommendation look like?

A letter of recommendation should be typed or computer generated, not handwritten. Writers should limit their comments to one page, using their institution's letterhead or the MWSC Career Center reference form found at: www.mwsc.edu/careerdevelopment. It is important that the writers date the letters and include their signature and contact information. Your references should come from those who can speak directly about your abilities in the classroom and/or experiences working with children. These career-related references, not character references (friends, family, significant others), are most useful to employers.

How many references should I have?

It is suggested that you limit your references to no less than 3 and no more than 5. References should be selected in relation to the position for which you are applying.



How do I obtain letters of recommendation?

You may obtain letters of recommendation by requesting them directly from the writer. The following suggestions are also recommended:

- _ For the writer's convenience, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.
- _ After you have received the letter of recommendation, it is appropriate to send a thank you letter to the writer.
- _ Reference writers may provide a letter of recommendation to the candidate on their organization's letterhead or they may use the form found on the Career Center's website: www.mwsc.edu/careerdevelopment. Reference letters should be no more than 1 page in length.
- _ Candidates should always retain the original letter of recommendation and only send copies to the employer.
- _ It is important that you maintain current letters of recommendation. The MWSC Career Center does not recommend the use of letters more than 3 years old in your job search.

How and when do schools receive my self-managed credential file?

You, as the applicant, are responsible for supplying your credentials when requested by the employer. Typically, this occurs during the application process. In some instances, employers do not request credentials until they have completed their initial screening process. It is very important that you follow whatever process the employer indicates in the job posting. All application materials, including credentials, should be sent in a credential folder, which is available for purchase in the Career Development Center for \$2.00. Keep a record of when and where you have sent your application materials.

What does a complete self-managed file "look" like?

A complete self-managed file would include a resume, a list of references and/or letters of recommendation, your Student Teaching Evaluation, a copy of your latest background investigation, copies of your teacher certifications and your transcripts. Credential folders and envelopes may be purchased in the Career Development Center. ***It is very important that your documents have a polished, professional appearance.***

What does a complete application process "look" like?

The typical education position may require the following:

- _ A cover letter
- _ An application
- _ A set of credentials

Can I mail all of the above in one envelope?

Yes. Nationally, many school districts actually prefer this.



What if the advertisement asks for "official" credentials?

Simply send your self-managed set. If any employer has questions about your self-managed credentials, refer them to the MWSU Career Development Center

'website: www.missouriwestern.edu/careerdevelopment. A detailed information sheet and contact information is available there.

Where can I get a transcript?

Information on obtaining a transcript can be found on the MWSC Registrar's website: www.mwsc.edu/registrar .

Can the Career Center assist me with questions I might have about self-managed credential files or the education job search?

Absolutely! We want you to be successful in your job search. We are pleased to meet with you individually to answer any questions you may have about self-managed credentials, resumes, cover letters, job search strategies, or career information.

For a meeting with a professional staff member, call 816.271.4205 for an appointment. If you are out of town, email us at: garlinger@mwsc.edu . Our office hours are M-F 8-4:30.



Additional Important Information from the Career Center:

- _ MWSU's Education Vacancy bulletin is available free to all students and alumni.
- _ Education Recruiting Fairs are held each fall and spring semester for education candidates. It is free to attend. Candidates should check the Career Center website for details.
- _ The staff of the MWSC Career Center is available to help you with resume critiques, cover letter critiques, job search strategies, mock interviews, and career decision-making strategies.
- _ Links to Missouri REAP and other search engines are available on the career center web site.