

**MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC**  
**Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs**  
**John Blanchard, Director**



## **Credential File Service**

Establishing a credential file offers many advantages for those of you who plan to apply for competitive college and university teaching positions. One of these advantages is convenience. Leaving the filing, photocopying, and mailing of your career materials to us allows you to concentrate on writing a more convincing cover letter, on revising your résumé, or on preparing your recordings. Another advantage is the degree of authenticity and confidentiality that your reference letters reflect — factors which have a great impact on the way a potential employer will evaluate your application. Using our reference letter forms and guidelines and having them mailed out from The Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs assures the recipient that your reference letters are authentic. The opportunity these forms give you to waive your right of access encourages the reader to assume that the letter is a candid and realistic summary of your qualifications.

### **WHAT TO INCLUDE**

- Your credential file can contain different types of supporting materials: letters of reference, sample programs, reviews, and copies of brief publications may all be included. While you might be tempted to include your résumé, we recommend that you mail it out yourself with your cover letter. This allows you to make last minute changes in your resume that effectively tailor your materials to the specific job for which you are applying. It also allows your potential employer to begin the first stages of the evaluation process immediately.
- Three letters of recommendation are the generally accepted minimum. However, it's a good idea to have a fourth and/or fifth one available to cover the occasional request for more than the usual number of references. Should the employer also call for transcripts, however, you must obtain them directly from the Registrar's Office and pay a separate fee for that service.

### **USING THE START-UP PACKET**

- Contact the Office of Career Development/Alumni Affairs when you have decided to assemble a file. Documents may be lost if they arrive in the Office with no explanation: we do not know if a review was sent to add to a file or as a matter of passing interest. All documents should be sent to the Office of Career Development/Alumni Affairs with some explanation.
- Read the "Agreement" regarding distribution of your file. The Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs will abide by legal regulations and your wishes as you state them on this form. We cannot distribute your file without your permission. Most students check all three options in #5, giving us the greatest freedom to distribute your files. If your résumé states that you have a file with us, it is important to check, "At the prospective employer's request" so that we can send your file as soon as we are contacted by a prospective employer.
- Sign the agreement and return it to the Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs.
- On each copy of the recommendation form, you will check either "I do..." or "I do not... give up the right of access to this reference letter." If you check "I do..." you permanently waive the right to see the letter. At a later date, if you have doubts about its ability to advance your career, the director or assistant director will review the letter and give you a general impression of its content.

(continued)

• Distribute recommendation forms to those who know your work, your long range goals, and your character. Be sure to include a copy of the "Guidelines for Reference Writers" provided in this packet with each form you give out. This will remind the reference writer of many important issues to touch on in his or her letter. Also remember to give the recommenders a copy of your résumé to remind them of your background and to bring them up to date on your accomplishments and current projects. And don't forget common courtesy. Request, don't demand or assume, that a letter of recommendation will be written for you. It's also customary to provide a stamped envelope, addressed in advance to the Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs. Only letters received directly from the reference writer will be added to your file. Two or three weeks after you have asked for a letter of reference, it's a good idea to check with us to see if the letter has arrived. The postal system and human nature often cause delays that could cost you an opportunity. A polite reminder usually brings a quick response from a reference writer.

• Even after you have a job, don't neglect your credential materials: Keep your résumé up-to-date; Continue to ask your colleagues to write recommendations; Let us know of name changes and address changes; Ask us to remove references which are no longer appropriate. Again, planning is important. Your file will be of greatest benefit to you if you can use it at a moment's notice.

## **MAINTENANCE AND MAILING FEES**

The following fees apply to the maintenance and mailing of your credential file:

- One-time Start-up Fee: \$10.00
- Mailing Fee (per address): \$ 4.00

### **REQUESTING YOUR FILE BE MAILED**

To have your established Credential File mailed to a prospective employer:

- 1) send a type-written request via post or e-mail — no requests over the phone
- 2) this request must include the following:
  - a) your full name
  - b) your major at Manhattan School of Music
  - c) your contact information, including phone and email
  - d) the complete address of each recipient
- 3) you must indicate the specific materials from your file you would like sent, ie, which specific letters and/or other materials you wish included in the mailing

The charge for this service (copying, mailing, postage, handling) is \$4.00 per address, payable by check only — no cash. (Make checks payable to "Manhattan School of Music.")

Mail your request and check to:  
Manhattan School of Music  
Career Development / Alumni Affairs  
120 Claremont Avenue  
New York NY 10027

Email: [careers@msmny.edu](mailto:careers@msmny.edu)

Mailing requests will usually be met within two business days of the day they are received. Payment of fees must be made immediately, either in person or by mail. Subsequent files will not be sent unless the previous fees have been paid.

### **INTERNATIONAL MAILINGS:**

The fee for mailings outside the U.S. and Canada will be \$4.00 plus the postage by weight incurred by the Manhattan School of Music mail room. Once an international mailing is requested and your packet is prepared, you will be notified of the postage amount before mailing.

**MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC**  
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120 Claremont Avenue  
New York, New York 10027



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**CONTRACT OF AGREEMENT**

In establishing a Credential File with the Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs and accepting the services of the Office, I agree to the following:

- 1) I have read and will abide by the procedures and policies outlined by the Office (please make a photocopy of this agreement for your files).
- 2) I understand that it is my responsibility to keep my file up-to-date and to report to the Office: a) changes of address, b) acceptance of a position.
- 3) I must assume the responsibility for confirming that my references are on file.
- 4) I understand that all references written prior to January 1, 1975, remain confidential.
- 5) As Public Law 93-380, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, prohibits the release of materials in a file without the written consent of the candidate, I am authorizing the release of my file to prospective employers who have position vacancies for which I am qualified, as follows (check those applicable):
  - at my request
  - at the prospective employer's request
  - at the request of the Director of Career Development/Alumni Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Major and Degree Program(s) while at Manhattan School of Music

\_\_\_\_\_  
Years of Attendance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Manhattan School of Music does not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, sexual orientation, color or national or ethnic origin, parental or marital status, and age or disability in the recruitment or admission of its students, and in the administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs or other school-administered educational programs and activities.

**To register for this service, return this completed form, along with the \$10 start-up fee to:  
Manhattan School of Music, Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs, 120 Claremont Avenue, New York NY 10027**

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**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON ASKING FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:**

Your full name used while student (please type or print): \_\_\_\_\_

Your current name (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

The family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 mandates that all letters of reference written after January 1, 1975, must be made available to the subject of such letters at their request, unless the subject specifically waives such right. Prior to submitting this form to the reference writer, the candidate must indicate below whether s/he wishes to retain or waive the right of access to this letter.

**CHECK ONE (IMPORTANT: Letters received without this section completed will not be used in files.):**

I do  I do not give up the right of access to this reference letter.

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON GIVING THE RECOMMENDATION:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give a frank statement about the candidate listed above. It will be reproduced and sent out in accordance with the candidate's instructions. Please type or print and feel free to use the back page. You may also choose to use your own or an institution's letterhead; in which case, fill-out the information requested above and staple your letter to this page. **REMINDER:** New York State prohibits disclosure of race, creed, color, national origin or age.

Please return this form to:  
Manhattan School of Music, Office of Career Development / Alumni Affairs, 120 Claremont Avenue, New York NY 10027

#### Guidelines for the Reference Writer

The letter of recommendation that you have been asked to write will become part of an Office of Career Development/Alumni Affairs credential file and will be sent to potential employers and/or the Office of Admission of graduate schools. The following suggested guidelines are provided for your convenience:

- Mention how long and in what capacity you have known the referee.
- If the referee was under your direct supervision, discuss his or her responsibilities, especially as they might pertain to teaching or to further study.
- Discuss, for example, his or her accomplishments, competence, organizational skills, judgment, ability to communicate and work with others, and potential for success and growth.
- Where possible, use specific examples to illustrate his or her character, personality, and professionalism.
- Avoid any comments referring to his/her age, sex, race, color, creed, or national origin.

**(Candidates might wish to provide a copy of the above guidelines to each person asked to write a reference to aid them in the writing of an effective letter.)**