

Self-Managed Credentials

What are credentials?

A credential is a letter of recommendation that attests to your professional training and experience. Credentials are expected as a part of the process for individuals seeking employment in education settings. A credential file is a collection of those letters, along with a cover sheet containing your current address and certification information. An academic transcript may also be included in the file if desired.

What are self-managed credentials?

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

How are credentials different from a resume?

A resume is a concise summary of your qualifications and experience designed to introduce you and to apply for a specific job. You send a cover letter and resume to initiate contact with an employer. Credentials are supportive documentation, letters of reference, and if desired, an academic transcript.

Credentials – transcripts – are they the same thing?

No. A transcript is your academic record only and originates with the Registrar's Office. Contact the school to see if they require an official or unofficial copy of your transcript.

An official transcript is a record of your Graceland coursework and grades, generated by the Registrar's Office on security paper that contains an official seal of the university. It is sent directly to an employer from the Registrar's Office in a sealed envelope. The transcript includes both Graceland and transfer credits.

Obtain an unofficial transcript by:

1. going to the Registrar's Office in person and requesting a copy.
2. requesting that an official transcript be sent to you, which you then make copies of.
3. printing your Academic Record from the My Graceland screen.

How do I request an official transcript from Graceland?

The cost for an official transcript is \$10.00. Go to the Student tab in My Graceland and choose the *Verify Enrollment or Order Transcripts Online* link in the left column. You will be directed to the National Student Clearinghouse. For help or more information about transcripts, contact the Registrar's Office.

Who should write references? How many should I get?

Professors in your major, field experience supervisors, coaches, and past employers are good choices. Your student teaching cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor(s) are considered essential. Three to five is sufficient. Keep your recommendation letters current. As you continue in your profession and jobs, letters older than two or three years need to be discarded and replaced with new ones from professionals who are familiar with your current level of skill.

How do I obtain reference letters?

Request them directly from the writer. For the writer's convenience, give them a self-addressed stamped envelope. After you have received the letter, send them a thank you note. References written on letterhead are preferred over an email copy. Always retain the original reference letter and send only photocopies to employers.

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

You, as applicant, are responsible for supplying your credentials when requested by the employer. Typically this occurs during the application process. It is important to follow whatever process the employer indicates in the job posting. When in doubt as to what they want and when, call them.

All application materials should be placed together and sent in a 9x12 mailing envelope. Address labels should be typed. Keep a record of where and when you have sent your application materials.

What does a complete application look like?

A typical education position will require the following:

- A cover letter or letter of application
- A resume
- An application (if required by the school)
- A copy of your transcript (usually unofficial)
- Cover page data sheet
- A set of credentials or recommendation letters

Additional materials that may be requested include:

- A philosophy statement
- A copy of your teaching license or certifications
- Student teaching evaluations

What if the advertisement asks for “official credentials”?

You send your self-managed set. If any employer has questions or concerns about self-managed credentials, or is unfamiliar with the term, refer them to the Graceland Career Services website (www.graceland.edu/careers). A detailed information sheet and contact information are available on the Education Careers link. School administrators can sometimes confuse the term credentials and transcripts. If in doubt about what they are asking for, contact the school for clarification.

How do I get help with my self-managed files?

Contact the CAP Center if you have any questions about credentials, resumes, cover letters, job search strategies, or career information. Contact careerservices@graceland.edu for an appointment or call (641) 784-5200.