

References & Qualifications

Why honesty about formal credentials matters more than you think, and how to handle it correctly.

A position appears in the CV, but the **reference letter is missing**. A degree appears in the CV, without a graduation date, without any mention that it was not completed. The employer notices immediately: why is this not being communicated clearly and openly?

THE PROBLEM

Missing Reference Letter

In rare cases none is issued; more often it is absent because of unfavourable wording, or because it was never requested.

The employer thinks: What does it say? Why is it being concealed?

Incomplete Qualification Without Disclosure

A degree appears in the CV without a graduation date, or with no mention that it was discontinued.

The employer thinks: Why is this being withheld? What happened?

A missing reference letter raises **more questions than a negative one**. You are entitled to a reference, always. Even retrospectively. Request it.

IMPORTANT

People are allowed to make mistakes. But those who choose to conceal or omit things make it far worse. There is nothing more powerful than the truth.

→ **No reference is worse than a poor reference.**

If the Reference Contains Unfavourable Wording

Add a note in your CV: **"Some passages in my reference letter require context; I am happy to address these in a personal conversation."** Concise, factual, no drama.

HOW TO DO IT CORRECTLY

WEAK

BSc Computer Science, University of Zurich
 2018 - 2020
 [No indication of incomplete status]

STRONG

BSc Computer Science, University of Zurich
 2018 - 2020 (not completed)
 · Focused on practical experience:
 Transitioned into a technical Security role

You explain why. You provide context. It was a decision, not a failure.

REVIEW YOUR CV

- 1 Are any reference letters missing? If so, why?
- 2 Have I discontinued any qualifications without noting this?
- 3 Are there ongoing qualifications not marked as "in progress"?
- 4 Have I omitted qualifications and thereby created gaps?

References and qualifications are **verifiable, at any time**. Those who are not transparent here will be found out, at the latest during a background check or interview. It is not only the interview that is lost. **It is your credibility.**