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How to decline a reference request if you don't know the person well enough

You can respond to this person's reference request with something like the following example:

I appreciate you asking to use me as a reference, but I don't feel I know you well enough to be a strong reference. You deserve to receive a thorough reference from someone who is more familiar with your work than I am. Ultimately, it will be more helpful for you to ask someone else to be a reference for you as you seek new employment.

How to decline a reference request if you know the person well

In this case, the following example can help you respond to the reference request:

Thank you for asking me to act as a job reference. While I do appreciate your request to use me as a reference, I ultimately do not feel that I would be the best person to do so. I also feel that you deserve a recommendation from someone who can better speak to your professional capabilities, so I am sorry, but I do have to decline your request.

Reference letter template when declining a reference request

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Company name]

[Company address]

[Your work phone number]

[Your work email address]

Dear [recipient's name],

Thank you for reaching out to me to be a reference. While I appreciate your request, I do not feel that I would be an appropriate reference for you.



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I believe that you deserve to receive a reference from the person best positioned to help you in your future endeavors. I suggest you instead ask someone who has closer knowledge of your work and can better speak to your qualifications.

I wish you nothing but the best of luck in your future ventures.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]

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