

## Academic References

### Instructions for a Referee Supporting an Application for Admission to a Postgraduate Course

These instructions should not be used for **Gates Cambridge** references. Please follow the instructions found at <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/how-do-i-apply/supporting-documentation/finance-documentation> for information on how to produce a reference for Gates Cambridge.

#### **(1) General**

Referees will be asked to provide general details, including their name, role, institution, and contact information. The form will also ask the nature of your relationship with the applicant, and how long you have known them for.

#### **(2) Academic Ranking**

Referees will be asked to rate the applicant within their academic cohort. You will be instructed to:

*Select the most appropriate description of the candidate for which you are providing a reference. If you select the first option "best performance you have known in the last 5 years" it will indicate to the internal assessors that the candidate is also the "best performer in their year" and "among the top 5%", therefore only the first option needs to be selected. This also follows for the options below - selecting "best performance in their year" indicates that they are also "among the top 5%".*

This section asks for a description of the size and nature of the cohort against which you are comparing the applicant's performance.

For referees who are not able to provide an academic judgement, there will be a section in which you can further explain the capacity in which you oversaw the applicant's work.

Referees should then select an option describing the applicant's potential for originality/creativity/independence of thought in the work they did for you when you taught them.

The final question in this section regards the applicant's suitability for the course; there will be a text box for 'Other', should their suitability not be covered in the available options.

#### **(3) Reference Letter**

Referees must then upload a reference or recommendation in English on a separate sheet of headed paper to the Reference Portal (Electronic Reference System). This should be in pdf form and no larger than 2MB. Please address references to the 'Postgraduate Admissions Office' and make sure you sign and date the reference.

The Reference Portal will also give referees the option of providing the reference as free text if the pdf upload does not work.

In the reference, please comment on:

- The applicant's academic results to date
- The applicant's academic fitness and general suitability to undertake the proposed course of research or study, in relation to the qualification sought
- A justification of any difference between the applicant's academic ranking and your estimate of their suitability for the course
- If the applicant's native language is not English, their level of fluency and proficiency in English, particularly in the context of their academic work
- If the applicant is intending to study part-time, their ability to manage different responsibilities simultaneously
- Any other information which you think is relevant to the application (e.g. research experience, ability to work independently, key strengths/weaknesses)

#### **(4) Delivery**

We strongly recommend using the online Reference Portal to submit your reference. In exceptional cases where you are unable to use the online system due to technical difficulties, please follow the steps below:

##### **To deliver the reference by email:**

- 1) Email [postgrad.reference@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad.reference@admin.cam.ac.uk) to request a copy of the Academic Reference Form.
- 2) Complete and attach the Academic Reference Form and reference letter to your email. These should be pdf files
- 3) Send to [postgrad.reference@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad.reference@admin.cam.ac.uk) from your institutional email address

#### **(5) Further Guidance**

Should any issues arise, please refer to the Referee FAQ in the first instance:

<https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/referee-faq>.

If your query is not covered, please contact [postgrad.reference@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad.reference@admin.cam.ac.uk) for further assistance.