

Character references

The GCC rules require that the Registrar be satisfied that all applicants for registration are of good character before registration is granted.

One of the ways we achieve this is by requiring applicants for initial registration to provide a personal reference as evidence of their character.

Character references must be written, dated and signed by someone of professional standing who has known the applicant for at least four years and is not a patient, relative or employee. References must also be updated and no more than three months old at the point of registration.

What is a character reference?

A character reference is a short summary of you as a person written by someone you know, which will normally include some information on your strengths and weaknesses, for example, your attitude, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, dependability, etc. it is not the same as a work or academic reference or recommendation.

Who can act as referee?

A reference can only be written by someone who has been well acquainted with you over the past four years.

The person must be of professional standing and not related to you and not someone you have either treated or employed.

We define professional standing as either belonging to a regulated profession, where the integrity of the referee can be verified as far as is possible (such as other health professionals); or someone in good standing within the community by virtue of the office they hold, for example a religious official or police officer.

The following are some examples of who we accept references from, but it is not a definitive list:

- registered chiropractor
- other registered healthcare professional
- company director, where the company it registered with companies house
- teacher or lecturer
- accountant
- bank manager
- solicitor.

Why can't a patient relative or employee write my reference?

We specifically do not allow those who fall into the groups above to provide references as references must be objective and impartial. As an example, it would be inappropriate to ask

someone who you are in a position of authority over, such as an employee, to act as a referee as they may feel intimidated into writing a good reference.

What should the reference include?

We do not specify the content of your reference, other than it must include:

- the referees full name and professional standing, including any professional registration, licensure or membership that conveys this standing
- how they know you
- how long they have known you for – it must have been at least four years
- a summary of your character.

Pro-forma character reference

We have produced a pro-forma character reference, available on our website, that you can ask your referee to complete and which may be simpler than asking him or her to write one from scratch. If your referee prefers to write a letter, then encourage them to use the following wording to avoid any delays in your application:

To the best of my knowledge, [enter your name] has not acted in the past, and is not liable in the future to act:

1. *in such a way that puts at risk the health, safety or well-being of a patient or other members of the public*
2. *in such a way that his/ her registration would undermine public confidence in the profession*
3. *in such a way that indicates an unwillingness to act in accordance with standards of the profession: or*
4. *in a dishonest manner.*

Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions not answered by this guidance note, please contact the registrations team at registrations@gcc-uk.org

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