

GUIDE TO REFERENCES

Frequently Asked Questions

EHC are required to check previous employment history before an unconditional offer of employment is made to a prospective employee. EHC always seeks references in support of applications received for employment.

It is therefore critical that all prospective employees supply details of **appropriate referees** to ensure their applications proceed as quickly as is practical through the recruitment process, and to avoid delays in the appointment process caused by supplying details of inappropriate referees.

The attached list of **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** will help applicants supply appropriate referee details, and for recruiting managers to recognise what is an acceptable reference. **Applicants are encouraged to read this document before completing an application for employment.**

We do appreciate that there are many circumstances in which providing current *employer* details as referees may not be appropriate, for example where the applicant is;

- a student
- on secondment
- currently self employed
- returning to work after a period of absence
- working for or has worked for the armed forces

To clarify any queries regarding references where the above or similar circumstances apply to you, this guide / attached list of **Frequently Asked Questions** is intended to also cover such situations, as well as typical employment reference related questions.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q1 How many references do I need to provide?

A We ask for a minimum of 2 references, but you should supply additional referee details where your first 2 references don't cover the last 3 years of previous employment and/or training. The referee should be your current or most recent line manager. You can add details of additional referees on a separate sheet.

Q2 I've changed jobs several times in the last three years; do I need to supply referee details for all of the jobs I've held?

A Yes, as we need to undertake pre-employment checks based on all relevant recent employment for a minimum of the last 3 years.

Q3 How many years should my references cover?

A Usually at least 3 years' employment and/or training (though 5 years is preferable). Typically, this means you should include your current line manager PLUS any previous line manager(s) for at least the last 3 years. If your references don't quite cover 3 years, please discuss this during your interview, as 2 references may still be sufficient depending on individual circumstances.

Q4 Who can be a referee?

A Referees should always be someone in a position of responsibility, who can comment on your work, voluntary or academic experience etc, and/or on your competence, personal qualifications and suitability for the post. This applies irrespective of your personal circumstances i.e. whether currently in employment, education, on a career break, in self employment etc.

References from family members or friends are not considered appropriate, and will not be accepted.

Q5 My line manager happens to be a close friend; can I still put their name down as a referee?

A Yes, but you must ensure your second referee and any subsequent referees are neither a friend nor relative to ensure objectivity.

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Q6 I've been on career break for 5 years; is my last line manager still relevant?

A Yes, but you should also make sure you provide details of one or more referees who can comment on any *recently* gained or used skills or qualifications and ability to do the job you've applied for.

Q7 I've been on secondment for the last 18 months; who should I put down as my referees?

A Your current line manager where you are seconded, PLUS your line manager from your substantive employer.

Q8 I've been on a training scheme for the last 2 years; whose details should I give as my referees?

A You should provide details of a relevant teacher/tutor/lecturer as appropriate, together with details of an additional referee, which may be another tutor, a part-time employer or other person able to comment on your suitability to do the job you have applied for.

Q9 I've been unemployed for 12 months; should I just provide details of my previous line manager?

A You should provide details of your previous line manager, AND details of a referee from when you were unemployed. This should be someone who can comment on your skills and suitability to do the job, such as have been demonstrated outside the work environment e.g. while doing charity or voluntary work, involvement in youth or play groups, while undertaking training etc.

Q10 I've spent some time abroad; do you need references from my time overseas?

A Yes, we still need references from your time spent overseas (from an employer, academic institution or overseas based UK departments or agencies e.g. from the British Council etc), and particularly so if you have been overseas for a single spell of 3 months or more, or cumulatively for more than 6 months. We will need sufficient references to cover the previous 3 years' employment / education / placement etc as a minimum.

We will also need to see proof of residence for your time spent abroad, and you should be aware that we cross-reference information provided with applicants' passports, work permits and by contacting any relevant overseas employers, agencies or departments etc as appropriate.

Q11 I'm currently in the Armed Forces, who can I list as my referees?

A You should provide us with referee details from the relevant service or department to cover at least the previous 3 years.

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Q12 I'm currently in the Civil Service, who can I list as my referees?

A You should provide us with referee details from the relevant service or department to cover at least the previous 3 years.

Q13 My manager from my former employer has left; whose details can I give for a reference?

A If you cannot obtain a reference from your most recent or previous line manager, you should provide details of the HR Manager at your previous employer, who will as a minimum be able to confirm your attendance record, dates employed, reason for leaving etc.

Q14 I'm applying as a Volunteer; do I still need to supply referee details?

A Yes, we treat volunteers in the same way as prospective employees, and expect you to provide appropriate references.

Q15 I'm applying for an Executive / Senior Appointment; do I need to supply the same number and type of references?

A For the most part, yes. Depending on the position you are applying for, we may also use external agencies to investigate your employment history and reasons for leaving previous posts. A financial security check may also be undertaken, and we may also liaise with the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) to further explore your employment history.

Q16 My previous employer's business has closed down; what should I do for a reference?

A If you can no longer obtain a reference from your most recent or previous line managers in these circumstances, you should provide details of referees from earlier jobs *where still relevant*. Please also provide details of someone who can comment on any *recently* gained or used skills and qualifications, and on your ability to do the job you have applied for.

Q17 I'm in full time education and haven't yet had a job. Who can I put down as my referee?

A Students still at school, college or university should provide details of a relevant teacher / tutor / lecturer as appropriate.

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Q18 I haven't left school yet. Is it OK to put my mum down as a referee?

A No. You need to give us a relevant teacher's details PLUS an alternative referee, which could be another teacher or group leader (hobby, worship, voluntary work etc).

NB We cannot accept references from family members (see Q4 above).

Q19 I don't want you to approach my line manager before the interview; is this OK?

A Yes, just clearly state this on your application form however EHC only requests references for the preferred candidate following the interview process. Your offer of employment is conditional upon the receipt of at least 2 satisfactory references. Your referees will be contacted after you have been informed of your conditional offer of employment with EHC.

Q20 What if my referee does not respond to the request for reference quickly, will this delay my start date with EHC?

A Yes. You will not be permitted to start your employment with EHC until all satisfactory references have been received. We ask that references are returned within 10 days of the initial request. Should the reference still be outstanding after the 10 days, the referee will be chased one more time. Should the reference remain outstanding after this period, we will contact you to discuss this further.

Q21 I am already an employee of EHC and applying internally for a position in EHC. Do you still require references?

Yes, however we require just one reference. This must be from your current Line Manager.