



1. Principles

- 1.1. We know that academic references can be positively linked to securing both job offers and places on post-graduate courses. This means that students who have a positive academic reference are more likely to secure academic and career opportunities after graduating from their course. Students should therefore seek to obtain an academic reference from a member of their academic team. However, we know that this is not always possible and there are many complexities surrounding how students can request an academic reference and what our academic colleagues are able to provide as an academic reference. This Policy explains our expectations of both students and academics when requesting and producing academic references.
- 1.2. Our approach to references is:
 - a) Clear and accessible. This means this Policy is widely available and written in such a way that you should not need additional support in understanding what references are, your responsibilities, our responsibilities, how to request a reference and what we consider in writing your reference. Despite this, you may seek support from the Student Experience and Wellbeing team by emailing ASK@Regents.ac.uk.
 - b) Timely, flexible, and proportionate. This means that we will act swiftly where requests are made, use a range of information to make decisions based on the facts of each case, and seek to put in place outcomes proportionate to those established facts.
 - c) Embedded and informative. This means we will use our experience of reference requests to inform enhancements and improvements to your student experience. We do this through our formal committees and through annual monitoring of our service and delivery.
- 1.3. The applicability of this Policy under the University's Collaborative Provision arrangements is detailed in Schedule A.
- 1.4. If you have a disability, we may make reasonable adjustments when producing your academic reference. These adjustments may include (for example) larger text, video or voice recorded references. A positive reference is not a reasonable adjustment. This means that your references, regardless of disability will be written according to their own merit.
- 1.5. You are required to read and understand this Policy, including being familiar with any updates made during your studies.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Our approach to producing References includes the following definitions:
 - a) "Academic Reference": A factual summary of your confirmed achievement. This means a summary of marks as confirmed by the Progression and Finalist Board. This reference can only be written by a member of university staff who is employed in an academic capacity. This does not normally include links to proforma templates (either as a document or online platform).
 - b) "Character Reference": An opinion-based description of your character. This may be informed by your academic achievement. For further detail, please see below.
 - c) "Reasonable Request": A request made in good time, through the appropriate channels available, containing a select number of suggested criteria, and requested in a format that the University is reasonably able to provide.
 - d) "Appropriate University Channels": Official lines of communication sanctioned by the University, such as emailing the academic's university email.
 - e) "Excessive Request(s)": where the request exceeds the bounds of a reasonable request. This could be but not limited to: an unreasonable volume of requests, a request that is made outside of a reasonable timeframe, outside of the appropriate channels, containing too many criteria, in a format that the University is not reasonably able to provide.
 - f) "Fraudulent Reference": Where an academic produces reference against their will or

produces an inaccurate reference under duress or adverse pressure. Or if a student creates a reference impersonating a member of academic staff.

- g) "Academic or Member of the Academic Team": A member or staff involved in teaching on a course, including, visiting lecturers, module tutors, module leaders, course leaders, and Directors of Programme.
- h) "Reasonable timeframe": A timeframe that would allow sufficient time for a reference to be produced without undue pressure. Typically, this is 15 working days.
- i) "Reasonable Adjustments": Changes the University is reasonably able to make to its standard operations in order to accommodate for a disability.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. We will:

- a) We will issue Academic references as per this policy following a Reasonable Request.
- b) We will respond to Academic reference requests within a reasonable timeframe (within 15 working days of your request).
- c) Put in place appropriate channels to request a reference from academics.
- d) We will ensure the content of an Academic Reference is accurate and based on factual information.
- e) We will make your reference available to you in the format you request if we are reasonably able to.
- f) We will ensure your Character Reference can be supported by evidence.
- g) We will inform you if we believe your request(s) are excessive.
- h) If we refuse to issue a reference, we will ensure to inform you of the refusal within the reasonable timeframe and explain why your request for a reference was refused.

3.2. We expect you to:

- a) Put your request in writing using the staff member's University email address and to include sufficient identification such as your full name, student number, the name of your course, and the years you were studying at Regent's.
- b) Request references from appropriate members of staff i.e. a member of the academic team who knows you well enough to produce an accurate reference. This would normally be someone that has had contact with you within the last two years.
- c) In advance of providing an Academic Member of staff's details to a third party you should seek (and receive) permission from the Academic Member of staff before sharing the member of staff's details with the third party.
- d) If a third party such as a prospective employer or University requests a reference on your behalf, you will contact the Academic Member of staff via email to give them permission to speak to the third party regarding your personal data.
- e) Request a reference within a reasonable timeframe.
- f) Ensure the number of requested criteria to be covered in your reference is reasonable and not excessive. A reasonable academic reference would be up to one page in length, and a character reference would be up to one page in length with 500-1000 words contained in each.
- g) Refrain from attempting to dictate what is written in your reference.
- h) Inform the University of any reasonable adjustments you require when requesting your reference.
- i) Determine what you require from a reference and make the fewest number of requests possible for an Academic or Character Reference.
- j) Respect an academic's decision not to provide you with a reference. Refusal from an academic to provide a reference will not normally be a suitable basis for a complaint.

3.3. For support or guidance, you can contact the Student Experience and Wellbeing Team at Ask@regents.ac.uk.

- 3.4. If you try to gain a Fraudulent Reference by any means you will be subject to a General Misconduct allegation. This can include but is not limited to:
- a) Attempting to dictate what is written in your reference.
 - b) Pressuring a member of staff into producing a reference for you.
 - c) Making excessive and repeated requests for a reference.
 - d) Creating a false reference impersonating an academic member of staff.

4. Requesting References

- 4.1. All references produced by academic staff are produced upon request and will not be issued unless requested.
- 4.2. There are two kinds of references you may request from your academic team: an Academic Reference and a Character Reference. You can request one or both of these references.
- 4.3. Academic References can be requested up to 5 years after you have completed your course. Character References can be requested up to 2 years from the last time you were taught by the academic member of staff you are requesting your reference from.
- 4.4. Normally an Academic Reference would be up to one page in length, and a Character Reference would be up to one page in length with 500-1000 words contained in each.
- 4.5. You are able to request both references from the same academic or choose different academic team members for each reference.
- 4.6. You may request Academic and Character References from multiple academic team members if you are required to provide multiple referees. However, ensure that you make the fewest requests possible.
- 4.7. As part of your request, you may suggest specific criteria to be included in your reference, but the academic member is not obliged to provide the content you have suggested.
- 4.8. If your request for a reference is accepted by the member of staff you are requesting it from, your reference should be provided within 15 working days of your request.
- 4.9. Reference content is not negotiable. However, if you identify a factual error contained in your reference, you can request for this to be changed in line with your GDPR rights.
- 4.10. Academic Reference
An Academic Reference is a factual account of your academic progress or achievement. It may include the following:
- a) A transcript of your assessments undertaken as part of your course.
 - b) A summary of your attendance record during your course.
 - c) Any extra-curricular activities you were involved in and awards you have received during your studies at Regent's University London.
- 4.11. Character Reference
A Character Reference is an opinion-based description of your attitude and engagement during your course. This may include the following:
- a) A description of how the academic knows you and a statement of their own background and qualifications.
 - b) An account of your behaviour during your course.
 - c) Your strengths and weaknesses present both in your academics and in your character, including specific examples on how you approached certain areas of your course.

d) A description of the skills you possess or interests you have and how they would benefit the position or further course of study you are applying for.

4.12. Commentary on any study abroad period (provided by the university partnership office) or industry placements (provided by the careers team).

5. Having a Reference Refused

5.1. Academics have a right to refuse to provide a reference for you. References can be refused for any reason.

5.2. If your reference is refused, the academic will explain why your request was refused.

5.3. Refusal to give you a reference is not a valid ground for a complaint.

5.4. You are not able to appeal the decision to refuse a reference.

6. Schedule A

The applicability of this Policy under the University's Collaborative Provision arrangements is detailed below.

Where the Regent's University London Policy applies, collaborative partners may use different terminology, e.g. 'programmes' and 'units' instead of 'courses' and 'modules'.

Cours Florent

- 6.1. This policy is not applicable to students of Cours Florent. Students should refer to Cours Florent's policies.

DOMUS Academy

- 6.2. This policy is not applicable to Domus Academy. Students should refer to Domus Academy's policies for applicable policy.

Istituto Marangoni (London)

- 6.3. This Policy is not applicable to students studying at Istituto Marangoni London. Students should refer to Istituto Marangoni London's policies.

Istituto Marangoni (Paris)

- 6.4. This Policy is not applicable to students studying at Istituto Marangoni Paris. Students should refer to Istituto Marangoni Paris' policies.

Liverpool Media Academy (LMA)

- 6.5. This policy is not applicable to LMA students. LMA students should refer to LMA's policies.

Macromedia

- 6.6. This policy is not applicable to Macromedia students. Students should refer to Macromedia's policies for applicable policy.

Nuova Accademia delle Belle Arti (NABA) London

- 6.7. This policy is not applicable to students of NABA London. Students should refer to NABA London's policies.