

Reference Letters Structure/Template

- ▣ Addressee name and address if known
- ▣ Date
- ▣ Salutation ('To whom it may concern', or 'Dear Sir or Madam', or 'Dear <title> <surname>')
- ▣ Confirm dates, job title(s) capacity, and salary and benefits details if required/appropriate.
- ▣ Confirm that the person's performance and attitude was (at all times) satisfactory/exceeded expectations or standards.
- ▣ Briefly explain the person's responsibilities (optional)
- ▣ Briefly describe their skills/qualifications/strengths/characteristics (optional)
- ▣ State that you would willingly re-employ the person if the opportunity arose (optional, and very re-assuring for the reader)
- ▣ Offer to provide more information if required (optional)
- ▣ 'Yours sincerely' if writing to a named addressee

N.B. It's a matter for your own discretion how much praise and positive information to include in the reference letter, hence the optional items.

Character or Personal Reference Letter

Choosing Effective References

Your references –people who know your skills and abilities – are a crucial part of your marketing strategy. Your references should be people who:

- Know you well enough to be able to answer specific questions about your character, skills and work ethics
- Can recommend you for this Bursary without reservations
- Have good communication skills, especially on the phone as the steering committee could follow up with references by phone

Who should you ask to provide a personal reference or write a character reference letter for you? Certain situations require character reference letters of a more personal nature, such as character testimonials or references for a position in non-business organizations such as councils, clubs, or societies. Neighbours and acquaintances may be willing to write a reference for you. Business acquaintances, professors/academic advisors, customers, and vendors can all make good references. If you volunteer consider using leaders or other members of the organization as personal references.

Be specific when you ask people to write letters of reference. Provide information about where to send letters. Tell your references why you need the letter and give them information about the bursary application. Let your references know what knowledge, skills and experience you want to emphasize. Their letters should confirm and support what you say in your application. If possible, show them the application form.

Always ask the writer if it would help to provide them with a draft. Always send a card or email to thank the people who provide you with letters of reference.

Example & Template for Personal or Character Reference Letter

Date

To whom it may concern

I confirm that I have known (name) for (number) years. (State relationship - social, business, working together in some other capacity, club, activity, project, etc.)

At all times I have found (name/him/her) to be (state characteristics - eg, dependable, reliable, hard-working, conscientious, honest, courteous, etc - to be as helpful as possible think about what the reader will most prefer to see, in terms of satisfying concerns, or seeing evidence of relevant required skills or characteristics).

I'm happy to provide further information if required.

Sincerely, etc.