



# **Providing References Policy and Procedure**

Core Documentation Cover Page

# Providing References Policy and Procedure

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	June 2017 SMT	New Policy approved to provide a clear process for staff about providing references to current and former employees and workers of the British UCO of Osteopathy.	HR Manager	J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jun 2019
V2.0	Aug 2017 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update institution name change from British School of Osteopathy to University College of Osteopathy.	HR Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jun 2019

## Equality Impact

Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)

Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)

X

Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)

**If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy, please email your comments to: [quality@uco.ac.uk](mailto:quality@uco.ac.uk)**

## PROVIDING REFERENCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## 1. SCOPE

- 1.1 The policy will apply to all current and former employees and workers of the University College of Osteopathy (UCO).
- 1.2 The following provides details of the UCO's policy and procedure in responding to requests for references. Any questions regarding these arrangements should be addressed to the HR Department.
- 1.3 This policy and procedure is non-contractual and may be updated or varied by Human Resources.

## 2. POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR PROVIDING REFERENCES

- 2.1 The UCO regularly receives requests from other organisations to provide employment references for current or former employees. Whilst recognising that the UCO is generally under no obligation to reply, its policy is to provide a factual response where it is the employee's wish that a reference be provided.
- 2.2 All references provided under this policy will be prepared on behalf of the UCO by the Human Resources Department and will comply with the guidance contained within the Information Commissioner's Office: Employment Practices Code. Under no circumstances should other employees or managers provide references, either written or verbal, on behalf of the UCO. The UCO will normally only respond to a reference request received from a prospective employer or a lender (for example in connection with a mortgage or loan application).
- 2.3 For current employees, before responding the HR Department will check with the subject of the request that they agree that a reference is provided. For former employees, the UCO will record the on-going consent of the individual to respond to future reference requests as part of the leaving process.
- 2.4 In circumstances where an individual has confirmed in writing with the HR Department, either during their period of employment, or at the end of it, that they do not wish references to be provided, a response to any reference request would confirm that the UCO does not have permission from the individual to provide this information.
- 2.5 All references provided are on a confidential basis and the person requesting the reference will be advised of this, and that the reference must not be disclosed to a third party. Copies of references will not be provided to employees/workers who are the subject of reference requests and they are not subject to disclosure by the UCO under the Data Protection Act 1998.

- 2.6 The UCO recognises its common law duty of care to both the subject and recipient of the reference. All references will therefore be provided in an objective, accurate and fair manner. It may not be possible therefore, to respond to some pre-printed reference questionnaires or letters, where the information requests the opinion of the UCO on the suitability of the individual. Whilst every care will be taken in the provision of a reference, each recipient will be advised that the UCO does not accept liability for any omission, errors or judgements made by the recipient in respect of the reference.
- 2.7 If members of staff or departmental managers receive requests for references directly, they must not respond but should forward the request to the HR Department so that a response on behalf of the UCO can be prepared.
- 2.8 If an employee is asked to provide a personal reference on behalf of another employee, and agrees to do so, it must be provided on a totally personal basis and make no reference to the UCO. The name and address of the UCO must not be disclosed and the reference should not be provided on UCO headed paper or from a UCO email account.
- 2.9 In circumstances where an employee is the subject of either an investigation, or Informal/formal proceedings at the UCO, a reference should not be provided unless it is relevant to matter under investigation or the proceedings. This should be approved by the investigating officer in advance of any reference request. Any approved reference request must comply with this policy, specifically in relation to providing personal references (section 2.8).

### 3. RETAINING A COPY OF THE REFERENCE

- 3.1 The HR department should retain a copy of the reference and written record of any subsequent enquiries securely for up to 18 months in the personnel file. Thereafter, the reference should be disposed of securely.

### 4. STUDENT REFERENCES

- 4.1 Student references that relate to work carried out for the UCO should be directed to Human Resources. Any other student reference, for example, relating to their period of study or regarding accommodation etc. should be directed to the Registry Department. Student references should be based on factual information only.