



## **Student Reference Policy**

### **1. Scope and Purpose**

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the requirements for staff members who may be asked by existing students and graduates to provide a reference. A separate policy is available for providing staff references.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff members providing references are aware of and comply with the University College requirements for provision of references.
- 1.3 Normally, the University College will only provide confirmations of academic achievement and any other form of references provided by staff should be in a personal capacity.
- 1.4 The University College is liable for any consequences of references provided by staff members, aside from those provided in a personal rather than University College capacity. As a result, the University College must ensure that all staff members who may be asked to supply student references are aware of this guidance.
- 1.5 The University College does not have a legal obligation to provide a reference, however it is usual policy to provide references in respect of current and former students when requested to do so by a prospective employer, educational institution or other body which has legitimate interest.
- 1.6 When providing references, the University College has a legal obligation and duty of care to both the student and the person seeking the reference against defamatory, discriminatory, inaccurate, or misleading references.

### **2. Key Responsibilities**

- 2.1 The guidance provided in this document relates to references which are received by the University College in respect of either current or former students.
- 2.2 All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy, and for acting in accordance with the University College requirements for the provision of references.
- 2.3 Registry is responsible for providing academic references in the form of confirmations of study.
- 2.4 Where any additional narrative is requested this will be drafted a member of academic staff relevant to the student's course of study and signed off by the Head of School. Registry is responsible for returning this to the enquirer. The University College is under no obligation to provide a narrative beyond the standard confirmation of academic achievement.
- 2.5 Any staff member requested to make a character reference is under no obligation to do so. These private references are not references given by or on behalf of the University College and must not, under any circumstances, be given using University College headed paper or contain any personal data obtained from University College records. The member of staff writing the reference must include a statement that the reference is given in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the University College.

### **3. Obtaining Student's Consent**

- 3.1 For official references, Registry will ensure that the student has given their consent in writing for a reference to be provided and a copy of their consent should be retained on the student record system.

3.2 For references given in a personal capacity it is the responsibility of the referee to ensure that the student has given their consent.

#### 4. Responding to a reference request

4.1 All requests for references in an official capacity will be handled by Registry and will be provided on headed paper.

4.2 Any requests received elsewhere should be sent to Registry via registry@aecc.ac.uk.

4.3 The University College do not permit verbal references.

#### 5. Guidance on Personally-supplied References

5.1 Facts and opinion must be differentiated. If an opinion is offered about the abilities or potential of a student or alumni, the Referee must be qualified (i.e. have the relevant knowledge) to give such an opinion and the opinion stated should be based on facts known to the Referee and supported by evidence. The Referee must take reasonable care to ensure the accuracy of all facts stated in the reference and/or any facts upon which an opinion is based and must refer to relevant records where appropriate.

5.2 When providing a reference, the referee should indicate how long they have known the student, in what capacity, and ensure that facts stated are correct. It is the responsibility of the Referee to ensure that the information provided is true, accurate, fair, and not misleading.

5.3 All references should be marked 'Private and Confidential' and for the attention of the addressee only.

5.4 Where the reference request is in the format of a form to be completed, Referees should make it clear what is, and what is not, covered by the reference.

5.5 A Referee must not deliberately omit positive facts or focus only on the negative facts, as this may create an unfair impression of the student.

#### 6. Data Protection and Confidentiality

6.1 Information provided by the University College about its students is determined by our Student Privacy Notice, and any queries should be made to our Data Protection Office.

Version	1.0
Approved by:	Senior Management Group
Originator/Author	Academic Registrar
Policy Owner	Deputy Academic Registrar
Reference/ source	Internal Staff Policy & relevant comparators
Date approved	16/04/2024
Effective from	16/04/2024 2024
Review date	Spring 2025
Target	All staff and all learners
Policy location	VLE, SIP, public website
Equality analysis	This policy equally applies to all students
Amendments	This policy makes clear the distinction between standard confirmations of academic achievement provided by the University College and any form of character or personal reference given by a member of staff in an unofficial capacity and not via University College email accounts or on branded/headed paper.