

**Notes to Applicants on Requirements in relation to References.**

**In accordance with schedule 1, 1 (g) of the regulations the names and addresses of two referees who are willing to provide clinical references relating to two recent posts as a medical practitioner which lasted at least 3 months without a significant break and which may include a current post, or, where this is not possible, a full explanation and name and address of an alternative referee or referees. Applicants should note the following;**

- In order to fulfil the requirement for references for two 'recent' posts one referee report must relate to the current post held. Where this is absent, it will be requested, or an explanation sought for its absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will an alternative be accepted and where this is the case, a further referee report relating to a post held within the previous two years will be requested. Where this is also not available due to employment history (e.g. long term occupation of one post) two references from the same post will be accepted, and the most recent reference from an alternative post as a medical practitioner will also be requested.
- Referee reports should be provided by medical doctors (i.e. not other clinicians such as nurses). The GMC registration of referees will be checked.
- Referee reports should be from referees who have direct recent experience of working with an applicant in a clinical setting.
- At least one referee report should refer to general practice experience, particularly where this can be within the last 2 years, and if not, an explanation should be provided.
- Where an applicant has not worked in NHS clinical general practice for 24 months or more preceding application, they will be considered to be a "returner". In these circumstance applicants will be advised of the process for application for inclusion in the NI GP development scheme for an induction or returner educational programme. In such circumstances a referee report in respect of general practice experience within 2 years will not be available and referee reports outside this timeframe will be considered as part of the application programme for that scheme. In the event that an applicant meets the criteria and is approved for inclusion in

this scheme, conditional inclusion in the NI PMPL will be agreed for the purposes of undertaking the scheme. The condition will be removed on successful completion of the scheme. Inclusion in the scheme is not guaranteed at the time of application due to limited capacity.

- Where an applicant is an ST3 doctor and has carried out their training in England, Scotland or Wales, one referee report must be from the GP Trainer. Where this is absent an explanation will be sought for its absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will an alternative be accepted. In some instances this will result in a referee report that relates to a shorter period than three months. This will be accepted in light of the fact that the vocational training certificate will be followed up by the BSO at the end of the training year, and, where this is not provided, the trainee GP will be removed from the performers list.

- Where an applicant has been subject to retraining or supervised practice, a reference will be required from the relevant supervisor. Where this is absent, it should be requested or an explanation sought for its absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will an alternative be accepted.

- Where an applicant currently has a workplace or educational supervisor, a reference will be required from the supervisor.

- Referee reports must be provided on the template provided to ensure that full information required to inform a decision on inclusion in the NI PMPL is secured.

- Absence of clinical referees reduces the amount of information on which HSCB can assess an applicant's clinical competence. Failure to provide on request reduces the amount of information on which the board can assess the applicant's clinical competence and may indicate that a referee feels unable to provide a 'good' reference which would be a cause for concern. Failure by a referee to provide evidence of their own professional registration may cause the HSCB to question whether the reference can be relied upon to provide evidence of the applicant's clinical competence. Referees from doctors practising overseas may prove difficult for the HSCB to verify as genuine.

- Any issues or concerns arising with referee reports submitted by an applicant will be referred to the NI PMPL Committee for review.

Please note that the referee report template makes reference to the GMC's "Good Medical Practice".