

**You are required to provide the details of two referees during this stage of the application process. To do this, complete two recommendation requests below.**

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the purpose of references?**

We ask for references as this is an opportunity for an academic or work colleague known to you to provide the studentship supervisor with an overview of you as an individual, as well as how you perform academically (or within your workplace). In addition, a reference is a good way for supervisors to try to gauge if you are ready to undertake a PhD.

### **What is SGSSS asking within the reference template, which will be sent to my referees?**

“Please provide an assessment of the applicant’s preparedness to undertake and complete a PhD and to flourish as a result of PhD funding, bearing in mind their academic work and other life experiences.”

### **Who can provide my references?**

Where possible your references should include an academic familiar with your work (form within the last 5 years). Both references can be from academics but you may include a work reference, especially if you have been out of academia for more than 5 years.

### **I am applying to more than one studentship, what do I need to do regarding my references?**

If you are applying to more than one studentship you must request two references for each application, regardless if they are the same referees. The reason for this is that the application system attaches a completed reference to the application associated with the request.

Although this might seem awkward for your referee(s), the reference completion process is very straight forward (see next question for details).

### **What happens when I submit my referees’ details as part of my application via *SGSSS Apply*?**

Once you submit your two referees’ details (full name and email address) online via *SGSSS Apply*, the system will automatically send them an email invite asking that they complete their reference. They then need to follow the link detailed within the email to create an *SGSSS Apply* “recommender” account (this takes a few minutes), at which point they can then complete and upload the reference template provided (must convert to pdf format first). Once completed and submitted online by your referee, the reference will be attached to your application automatically. You will receive an email confirming when this has been done. In addition, you will be able to see when your references have been returned via your application on *SGSSS Apply*. Please note, you will not be able to read your returned references, you will just be able to see when they have been returned.

### **When should I request my references?**

As you can request your references well before you submit your full application (please see question below), we encourage you to submit both of your referees’ details as soon as possible to allow them as much time as possible to respond. If you only request your references a days or so before the deadline, this may not be enough time for your referees to

respond, whereas if you do this a few weeks before the deadline you are giving yourself a higher chance that your references will be returned on time, allowing your application to be considered.

**I am concerned one or both of my referees might not respond to my reference request; what should I do?**

As an automatic reference request will be issued to your referees via *SGSSS Apply* as soon as you submit their details online, it is imperative that you have sought their permission before you send them a reference request. Not only is this polite, it will reduce the possibility of your application being incomplete and thus unable to progress.

If you have sought permission from your referees and you are still worried one or both may not complete the reference template on time or may forget etc., you can manage your reference requests yourself via your application within *SGSSS Apply*. The system will allow you to send reminders to your referees as well as change who your referees are (by withdrawing your reference request and deleting it, before submitting a new reference request). Please note, you can only manage your reference requests if you **HAVE NOT** fully submitted your application. Once you fully submit your application, you will no longer have the permissions to make changes to your reference requests.

As the application system will allow you to prepare the rest of your application, i.e. you can save your application and return as many times as you like without fully submitting it, it is possible to manage your references and have your application ready for submission well before the application deadline.

**What if my referee submits my reference late?**

**Late references will not be accepted.** As such, referees will have until 4pm (BST) on Friday 19 April 2024 to submit completed references.