

Reference Criteria – Admissions, Undergraduate Medicine Program

General Criteria

1. Each applicant must have two different references, provided by different individuals, submitted with their application; one **MUST** be an academic referee (unless the applicant has received an approved [exemption](#) by the Admissions Office).
2. References must be completed in English.
3. References must be typed, with the exception of signatures; hand written reference letters are not accepted.
4. References must be submitted electronically via the MUN Online Application Service (OAS).
5. References must be signed, electronic signature is acceptable, and include complete contact information for the referee, **including phone number and professional email**.
6. Contact email for referees must be professional, not personal accounts (i.e. @hotmail.com, @yahoo, @gmail, etc.)
7. Referees must **state and describe** their professional affiliation to the applicant.
8. **It is the applicant's responsibility to follow up with referees to ensure references are submitted by the application deadline.** Applicants are able to monitor the status of reference requests via their student account. Reference letters **cannot** be submitted via the MUN OAS after the published deadline, the system will be closed and any links issued in advance are expired. Applications that do not have two acceptable references received by the published deadline are incomplete and will be closed; refunds of application fees will not be issued.
9. If an applicant is experiencing difficulty obtaining a response from a referee, they should obtain a different referee to request a reference; in these instances, you **must** notify the Admissions Office via email at munmed@mun.ca of your challenges.
10. Referees, both academic and non-academic, must have a direct supervisory and/or professional relationship with the applicant. **References vouching for personal character only are not accepted and applications with such are closed.**
11. References submitted from family members, friends, colleagues, or acquaintances are not accepted under any circumstances. Referees must have a strictly professional relationship to the applicant. See the [Application Handbook](#) for more details.

Acceptable References

1. An academic referee¹ must be an individual who is part of your direct academic education at the university level. This includes:
 - i. a professor or course instructor who has graded course work that contributes to a final grade on a transcript;
 - ii. a professor who has supervised or graded your work (via an honours program, thesis, or directed study course);
 - iii. a professor with whom you complete volunteer research work AND you begin the completion of a research-based graduate or honours degree with this professor no later than 5 months after the application deadline;
 - iv. a graduate teaching assistant IF they had teaching duties and supervised and graded your work as an undergraduate student;
 - v. a co-op practicum supervisor IF they were directly related to your field of study, supervised, and graded your university course work;

This does not include:

- a. references from high-school teachers and/or teaching administrators in secondary education.
 - b. instructors teaching courses in non-degree programs;
 - c. undergraduate students or teaching assistants who oversaw your work but did not grade your work (i.e. lab assistant);
 - d. a degree program administrator who did not evaluate post-secondary work;
 - e. a research supervisor who oversaw your work in a voluntary or paid position, that does not meet the criteria in (iii) above;
 - f. a co-op practicum supervisor IF they were directly related to your field of study and supervised your performance but did not grade academic work. Such a supervisor is an acceptable non-academic reference.
2. A **non-academic referee** must be someone who has directly supervised you in a professional capacity in either an employment or volunteer environment:
 - i. an individual who has supervised or managed you in a post-high school voluntary position that involved service to a specific group, individual, organization, or the community, who can comment on your non-academic attributes;
 - ii. an academic or professional with whom you have completed voluntary research work, and who does not meet the criteria for 1.iii;
 - iii. a direct employer, manager, or supervisor in a workplace or paid position after graduation from high school;
 - iv. a **varsity** coach from the applicant's university.

¹ Exemptions to submitting an academic reference are permitted only when approved by the Admissions Office. The criteria to qualify for an academic exemption can be found [here](#).

This does not include:

- family members, friends, colleagues, or acquaintances;
- peers, fellow volunteers, and/or colleagues in any setting;
- a high school coach;
- an instructor or colleague outside of a post-secondary institution, in a hobby or community group. (Examples: fellow Scouts leader, dance instructor, coach of a recreational community team, etc.)
- a family doctor, in the context of a patient-doctor relationship;
- clergy and/or fellow parishioners;
- a physician, or other professional, with whom the applicant has shadowed;
- a physician, or other professional, with whom the applicant works but does not report to directly;
- peers at a student-led organization;
- a professional individual (pharmacist, doctor, politician, engineer, etc.) who has not worked directly with and/or evaluated the applicant in an official capacity and professional setting, either via employment, community involvement, or volunteering.

If a reference falls in multiple categories, both appropriate and not appropriate, the applicant should apply their **initial relationship** to the referee as their decision criteria. For example:

- After many years as their patient, you are now employed by your family doctor (or other physician). Your initial relationship is as doctor-patient, making this referee not acceptable.
- You work in a position whereby a close family friend or neighbour is your supervisor/manager/employer, and assisted you in obtaining the current employment. Your initial relationship was not as employer-employee; this referee is not acceptable.

Applicants are strongly advised contact the Admissions Office at munmed@mun.ca for any questions regarding the acceptability of referees that are not contained in the criteria herein.

Please note that applications submitted containing references that do not meet the criteria contained within are considered incomplete and will be closed.