

Providing Referee details as part of a College of Social Sciences PhD Funding Opportunity application

Each applicant is required to provide the details of two referees during the application process. To do this, applicants need to click 'Add / Manage Referees' within the online application form via the Scholarships Application Portal.

IMPORTANT: If references are not provided then an application will be removed from the competition.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of references?

We ask for references as this is an opportunity for an academic, or line manager from work, known to you to provide our reviewers 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 reviewers to try to gauge if you are ready to undertake a PhD.

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

References will be asked to provide us with 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. To encourage equivalence amongst applicants, we ask referees to submit between **175 to 250 words** in this section

Who can provide my references?

Where possible your references should include an academic familiar with your work. 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.

- If the funding opportunity you are applying for is a **pre-defined supervisor-led project**, none of the supervisory team can act as referees.
- If the funding opportunity is a **student-led open competition**, members of your proposed supervisory team can act as referees, if appropriate.

How many references do I need?

All CoSS PhD funding opportunities that ask for references require **2 references only**. You must enter the name and email addresses of **2 referees only** – the Portal will not allow you to submit your application with less, or more, than 2 referees details.

I am applying to more than one PhD funding opportunity, what do I need to do regarding my references?

If you are applying to more than one PhD funding opportunity you must request two references for each application, regardless if they are the same referees. The reason for this is that the Scholarships Application Portal 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 enter my referees' details and click 'send email' as part of my application via the Scholarships Application Portal?

Once you submit your two referees' details (full name and email address – their own email address, **please do not provide shared or general team email addresses**) and click 'send email' online via the Scholarships Application Portal, the system will send them an email invite asking that they complete and upload a reference template (Microsoft Word document provided). ***Please ensure that you have contacted your referees before doing this, to ensure that they are willing and available to provide a reference by the closing date. You must also ensure that the email address you enter is correct.***

They then need to follow the link detailed within the email to create a Scholarships Application Portal Referee account (this takes a few minutes), at which point they can then access, complete and upload the reference template provided. Once completed and submitted online by your referee, the reference will be 'attached' to your application automatically.

You will be able to see when your references have been returned via your application on the Scholarships Application Portal. Please note, you will not be able to read your returned references, you will just be able to see when they have been completed.

When should I request my references?

As you can request your references before you submit your full application, **we encourage you to submit both of your referees' details and click 'send email' as soon as possible to allow them as much time as possible to respond**. If you only request your references a few days or so before (or on) the deadline, this may not be enough time for your referees to respond, whereas if you do this a week or more before the deadline you are giving yourself a higher chance that your references will come in by the deadline, and your application can progress.

Referees generally have 1 week beyond the application closing date to provide their references.

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

As a reference request will be issued to your referees via the Scholarships Application Portal as soon as you submit their details and click 'send email' online, it is imperative that you have sought their permission before you send them a reference request. Not only is this polite, but it will reduce instances where your application is incomplete and thus unable to progress in the competition.

It is your responsibility to ensure your referees provide references – the CoSS Graduate School cannot follow up with your referees, nor can the Portal currently send reminder emails. If you are concerned that your referee/s have not received the request, please ask them to check their Junk or Spam folders.

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, you can manage your reference requests yourself via your application within the Scholarships Application Portal. The system will allow you to change who your referees are (by withdrawing your reference request and deleting it, before submitting a new reference request). **We recommend you do not full submit your application until both your references have been received, as once you fully submit your application you will no longer be able to make changes to your reference requests.** CoSS Graduate School are unable to amend referees details or trigger remind emails.

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 before the application deadline.

What if my referee/s submitted their reference late (or do not submit a reference at all)?

Referees are generally given 1 week beyond the application closing date to provide their references. We will not provide referees any additional time beyond this to submit their references. This deadline is final and should any references still be outstanding, the application will automatically be marked as unsuccessful.

As such, it is imperative that you ensure:

- The referee details you provide are accurate (e.g. email address), and the email address you provide for the referees is theirs and not a shared or team email address.
- You have contacted your referees prior to providing their details and are confident that they are willing and available to provide a reference by the deadline

