

Royal Northern College of Music

Employment References

Policy & Procedure

Department: Human Resources

Document owner: Head of
Human Resources

Approval Committee: HR
Committee

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RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

1 Purpose

References are requested to obtain information, in confidence, from a third party to provide a factual check on a candidate's employment history, qualifications, experience and/or an assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post in question.

This document sets out the College's position on employment references, when they are both requested and given. Care needs to be taken in writing such references, and this policy outlines the basic requirements that must be observed.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to all contracted RNCM staff.

3 Policy Statement

References can be provided on either a professional or a personal level. The reference itself should clearly identify which is being offered. A personal reference must not be given on RNCM letterhead, and should not be provided from a RNCM email account.

Information about staff can be disclosed in response to reference requests provided that there is a reasonable degree of satisfaction that it is the staff member's wish. If there is any doubt as to the authenticity of a reference request, its validity should be checked with the staff member.

4 References for Prospective Employees

Under normal circumstances a candidate should not start without satisfactory references. All offers of employment are made subject to the College receiving two satisfactory references, including one from the most recent previous employer. (See Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure). Applicants who are school leavers or graduates may nominate a Head Teacher, lecturer or work experience employer as appropriate.

If an individual does commence employment without both references having been received, HR will notify their line manager and will make every effort to obtain them as soon as possible.

5 Unsatisfactory (to the RNCM) References

In the event that an unsatisfactory reference is received after a provisional offer of employment has been made, advice should be sought from Human Resources on withdrawing the offer. If any information contained in the reference requires clarification, the recruiting manager should contact the referee to discuss further and must make notes of the discussion. The notes should be signed and dated by the recruiting manager and sent to the Human Resources department for retention on the individual's personal file.

All offers of employment are made subject to the receipt of two satisfactory references.

6 References for Former or Existing Employees

Referees have a responsibility to be truthful, not to be malicious and to include only what is accurate, true, fair and reasonable, and should ensure that they do not give a misleading impression.

All references should include the following disclaimer:

This reference is given to the addressee in confidence and only for the purposes for which it was requested. It is given in good faith, but neither the writer nor The Royal Northern College of Music accepts any responsibility or liability for any loss or damage caused to the addressee or any third party as a result of any reliance being placed on it.

Only the line manager (or where appropriate a member of Executive Committee) may provide an employment reference on behalf of the College. Members of staff providing a professional reference have a duty of care to the College, as the institution may be held liable for a negligent reference. Where a personal or character reference is provided, the referee will be personally liable for the content of the reference.

References may only provide information which is relevant, reasonable, and which the referee is qualified to supply. Expressions of fact or opinion should be clearly differentiated. Remarks may be qualified if necessary, e.g. "To the best of my knowledge..."

If requested, the number of sick days can be confirmed but the reasons for such absence cannot be provided without the staff member's explicit consent as this would be considered to be 'sensitive personal data'

A reference should clearly specify the basis on which it is being provided, to include:

- the referee's relationship with the staff member;
- the length of that relationship;
- the capacity in which the reference is being provided;
- the date of writing the reference

A copy of all professional references must also be sent to HR to be kept on the individual's personal file. The HR team will provide advice if required.

7 Complaints

If a manager receives a complaint about any aspect of employment references, no comment or liability should be admitted, and the matter should be referred immediately to the Head of Human Resources.

8 Related Policies

- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy