

Othejobs Blog #4 - The Referee

Aug 25, 2014 | 0  | [ontheblogs](#), [onthejobs](#), [Working & training in healthcare](#)

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Welcome to the 4th part of a 7-part career guide for junior doctors written by Dr Abhijit Pal (PGY2) with Dr Emma McCahon (Clinical Director of Critical Care Program at Children's Hospital, Westmead, and Clinical Lead of LEAP, a leadership program for junior doctors run by [HETI](#)).

How do I pick references?

NSW Health jobs require 2 referees, but its good to have 3 in case one is unavailable. Because of the number of applications and the number of time referees are contacted the system sends each referee a series of set generic questions about your performance and ability. It is unlikely that they will be contacted directly, particularly for jobs where there are multiple applicants and posts. All of this is compulsory, and you will not get a job if you don't have referees.

They will have to answer fairly specific questions about you:

- **Would you re-employ this candidate, and if so, why or why not?**
- **How would you rank this candidate from 1 to 10 from residents you have worked with?**
- **Can you comment on the candidate's performance in relation to the selection criteria?**

Some people will recommend having nursing/allied health/social work staff as referees as well to show you work well in a multidisciplinary environment (you can list this on [your CV](#)).

Remember that a consultant has to write a recommendation to others, saying that you are a good candidate.

The referees have to be recent (within the last 12 months) and should be someone who has directly observed your work and/or supervised you.

How to ask a potential referee

At the end of a term, ask Registrars, Consultants, NUMs, etc... if they'd be happy to provide you with a reference - watch for their response. If they are jumping out of their

boots to give you a reference, it's a good sign. If it's a "sure, I'll see you around", probably not.

Pick reliable references who will respond to the email. Warn them that they are likely to get an email in August.

Specialties sometimes require at least one specialist in the field you are hoping to get a job in (e.g. BPT applications require at least one FRACP).

Stay in touch with your referees, let them know what jobs you are intending on applying for, think about sending them a recent copy of your CV and job descriptions of the jobs you are applying for to make it easier for them to give you a reference.

Above all - never put someone forward as a referee for a job without informing them first and obtaining their consent. Unbelievably this happens more often than you would think!

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