

# IMPERIAL

## Principles of Academic References

*The below guidance on the process for academic references applies for roles in the Academic Job family (namely Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor).*

Principles for obtaining references in the academic appointment process:

1. For academic appointments, references should be gathered after candidates are shortlisted and before the interview stage, to inform the panel's decision.
2. The recruitment team managing the appointment will reach out to up to three named referees per candidate and compile the references for the panel. This will be the Senior Appointments Team for the appointment of Readers, Associate Professors, and Professors and the Recruitment Hub for Assistant Professors, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers.
3. The selection panel should exercise their judgement on how impartial and objective the references provided are, bearing in mind the referee's relationship to the candidate.
4. Referees should not be approached unless the candidate has agreed that they can be contacted. If the candidate requests no one be contacted at their current institution, this should be honoured, and not counted against the candidate.
5. It is not recommended that references be requested before the candidates have been shortlisted. This is to respect the time of referees as well as the teams who have to gather the references. In exceptional circumstances where references are needed before the shortlisting stage, the candidates should have been put through a longlisting process to screen out unsuitable candidates. Panels may also want to consider whether they initially request only one reference per candidate to reduce the workloads of referees and the recruitment teams. In addition, panels should recognise that time will be needed to obtain and collate the references and schedule interviews accordingly.
6. Panels may choose not to request any references prior to interview, or exceptionally to request references only for some of the shortlisted candidates. In either case, clear written instructions should be given to the recruitment team. Panels should provide written justification if they wish to treat candidates' references differently.
7. For various reasons, such as the lateness of referees, candidates may have different numbers of references available at interview. Panels should be aware of this and treat all candidates fairly.
8. For temporary positions such as Research Fellowships, panels may request references for (some) shortlisted candidates prior to interview, but should do so only for clear academic reasons.
9. Where there needs to be exceptions or deviations from these principles, appointment panels should consult the recruitment teams and/or consuls where appropriate.