

Policy History
Policy No. HR17
Approving Jurisdiction: President
Administrative Responsibility: Vice President Finance & Administration/Associate Vice President Human Resource Services
Effective Date: November 2004

Provision of References Policy

Employees may be asked to provide references for employees or students by outside parties. Employees should be aware of legal liability that can occur as a result of providing references. The following principles and procedures are provided to guide those asked to provide references.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

When giving oral or written references for employees or students, the following principles must be observed:

1. All references must be truthful and accurate so as not to mislead the prospective employer or organization.
2. The reference must be able to be substantiated later if necessary.
3. The information given must be an honestly held representation of belief, made with due deliberation.
4. The reference given should not intentionally misrepresent the character of the employee/student by deliberate non-disclosure of information. (In the case of a legal agreement of non-disclosure, the statement, "I am not at liberty to provide any further information" should be used.)
5. In accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FOIPOP), any data or individual records of a personal and private nature cannot be disclosed without a signed release form from the employee/student.

EMPLOYEE REFERENCES

Employee references may be given by appropriate supervisory personnel in respect of employees who reported to them while employees at the University. If only part of their service was in that unit, actual dates should be specified.

Copies of any letters of reference written for the employee should be forwarded to the Human Resource Services for inclusion in the employee's file. Ideally, reference information should be discussed with the employee in advance of departure. Telephone requests for information should

be verified and documented when given and should follow the general principles in the policy. If the person has not contacted you, ask the requester to provide evidence that the person has listed your name as a reference.

If contacted for reference information on former employees, the Human Resource Services will only provide verification of start/end dates and job duties. Performance evaluations and other information will not be given out unless there is a signed release from the individual concerned.

In addition, all reference information inquiries from third parties such as ICBC, WorkSafeBC, banks, or legal counsel should be forwarded to Human Resource Services.

This policy is not intended to prohibit the issuance of collegial recommendations by college employees for colleagues they come in contact with in the course of their employment. Any reference given should include a preamble, how long you have known the person and in what context (eg: as a colleague, at a conference, or as member of committee).

STUDENT REFERENCES

Student references may be given by appropriate University faculty or administrative personnel where this is a part of their normal duties and when requested by the student or by a prospective employer or organization. A copy of any written reference should be forwarded to Admissions for inclusion in the student's file.

Release of confidential information is subject to the provisions of Policy *AR3 Confidentiality of Student Records/Files*. Confidentiality of student records and files requires written permission from the student for release to a prospective employer or other organization. The following information would be covered by Policy C.4:

1. Application and registration information
2. Counseling report, files and recommendations
3. Information on Library use
4. Cumulative transcript
5. Academic record

When giving student references, a signed release form must be obtained from the student in advance of giving information (See Policy Attachment *HR17a Consent for Release of Student Information*).

PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Reference information provided on friends or other non-employment contacts are personal recommendations; college letterhead must not be used for personal recommendations. It is acceptable to indicate your title, but you should include a context statement. For example, "I am writing on behalf of my neighbour"

CONFIDENTIALITY OF REFERENCE INFORMATION

Reference information received on employees or job applicants is confidential and must not be disclosed outside the Search Committee in accordance with Kwantlen's policies on recruitment, except as required under FOIPOP (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy) legislation.

Individuals providing references for employees or students may wish to state that they are giving the reference in confidence. If you do not state that the reference information you provide is given in confidence, you should be aware that the information you have provided may be required to be released to the employee or student by the Privacy Commissioner.

RELATED POLICIES

AC13 Faculty Recruitment
AR3 Confidentiality of Student Records / Files
HR11 Administrative Recruitment
HR12 Recruitment/ Relief Auxiliary Support Staff
HR13 Recruitment /Support Staff
HR14 Employment/Students
HR17a Consent for Release of Student Information
IM2 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy