



## UCL GUIDANCE FOR SCHOLARSHIP REFEREES

### Writing a reference in support of a UCL research scholarship application

**Good references play an extremely important role in the selection process.**

All references should ideally be typed and submitted by completing the appropriate 'Reference Form' page of the scholarship application. If a reference is submitted separately then this must be on letter-headed paper, signed and dated by the referee.

All References should:

- Contain the title, name, position, and contact details of the referee;
- State how long and in what capacity the referee has known the applicant;
- State how the applicant is ranked, indicating the cohort against which they were measured (e.g. top 20% of the students in the current year/all students ever taught...). Please also state what percentage of students can expect to achieve that grade within that cohort;
- Comment on **ALL** following areas: academic performance, study/research skills, prizes and scholarships won, relevant personal qualities, motivation and suitability for the intended programme or research project, as well as his/her career aims and prospects;
- Comment on, and illustrate the candidate's research potential;
- Where applicable, explain the grading structure of the qualifications attained and provide information about the distribution of grades within the cohort of students, i.e. what percentage of students within the cohort can expect to achieve this grade;
- Make a recommendation for funding for the intended programme (I recommend, I strongly recommend, I do not recommend, I am unable to comment ...).

Additionally:

- Reference Form 2 **MUST** be completed by the candidate's potential or current UCL supervisor;
- Financial circumstances of an applicant are **NOT** taken into account by the selection panel. However, it would be useful to include information relating to other funding applied for or awarded, or give reasons why other funds e.g. Research Council Awards, may not be available to the student;
- Wherever possible, referees should show that they (or at least the Department) have personal knowledge of the candidate;
- The reference must show beyond any doubt that the candidate possesses outstanding promise and research potential;
- References must show that the candidate has obtained, or is predicted to obtain (with as much confidence as can be shown) either a first class or a very good second class honours degree or their equivalent.
- If an applicant has studied at an overseas institution, referees should comment on the institution and its standing, as well as on the applicant's standard of degree. UCL academics can seek advice on international qualifications and equivalency from the Admissions Office;
- Where students have previously attended top-ranking institutions abroad or in the UK, the standing of these institutions should be mentioned in the reference. UCL academics can seek guidance on rankings of foreign universities from the UCL International Office;
- Referees should note that awards are made in respect of the candidate's research strength or potential as an individual, and not simply in terms of his/her value to the research group concerned. The importance of emphasising the candidate's potential cannot be over-stressed.