

Health references and registration panels: an introduction

Before the Health Professions Council (HPC) registers an applicant, we need to know that they are of good health, or that their health will not affect or impair their ability to practise lawfully, safely and effectively.

We need to know this information because the Health Professions Order specifies that we must have 'evidence of good health and good character'. As part of the application we therefore ask for a health reference.

The health reference is completed by a registered medical practitioner (ie someone who is registered with the General Medical Council). They must not be a relative of the applicant. They must either have been the applicant's doctor for three years, or have access to the applicants medical records for the past three years.

When they fill in the health reference, they will sign to say that they do not know of any medical reason that would affect the applicant's ability to practise their profession.

We may contact the person who fills out the health reference, in order to verify it, or to gather further information if necessary. The applicant must include the completed health reference, sealed in an envelope, with their application.

When received, the health reference is checked by a Registration Officer to ensure that it is properly completed and signed. If the person completing the reference has detailed a health issue, the form is given to the Registration Manager who reviews the information given.

The role of the Registration Manager is to review the information provided and decide whether or not the applicant can be registered.

Registration Panel

If the Registration Manager is unable to make a decision, she can ask the Registration Panel to review the information provided. The panel is made up of members of the Registration Committee. If necessary, the Registration Manager may ask no less than three members of the panel to review information provided about an applicant to assist in the process.

If health is an issue

If the person who has been asked to complete the health reference is unable to sign it, the Registration Manager can ask the Registration Panel to review the information provided. The panel will then advise the registration manager as to the appropriate course of action, which may include contacting the general practitioner for further information or seeking the guidance of an independent medical advisor.

Claire Harkin
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Enc. Health reference form
Application guidance notes page 9 (health reference)

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