

Employment reference letter

A statement about someone's work with you, given to support a future application. In Australia an employer is not obliged to provide one — but anything you do write needs to be accurate and capable of being substantiated.

Before you send this

- You are not required to give a reference. If you do, it must be accurate — an inaccurate reference can expose you either to the employee or to the new employer.
- Stick to what you observed and can evidence. Avoid speculation about the person's suitability for a role you know nothing about.
- Keep it factual where the relationship ended badly. A short confirmation of dates and duties is a legitimate response.
- Do not include health information, personal circumstances or anything that could be discriminatory.
- Have one person in the business own references, so the tone and content stay consistent.

Letter template

EMPLOYEE NAME

DATE

To whom it may concern

POSITION HELD

DATES OF EMPLOYMENT (FROM / TO)

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE EMPLOYEE (E.G. DIRECT MANAGER)

Duties and responsibilities

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Strengths observed

- Reliability and attendance — describe what you observed, not a general impression
- Quality of work, with an example if you have one
- Working with others — teamwork, communication, customers

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

I am happy to be contacted if further information would be helpful.

Signature

SIGNED

NAME AND POSITION

DATE

This template is general information for Australian employers, not legal advice. Employment obligations depend on the applicable modern award or agreement, the employment contract and the circumstances. Confirm anything you are unsure of with Fair Work or a workplace relations adviser.