

CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE – ADVOCATE PANEL SCHEME 2016 - 2020

EXPLANATORY NOTE TO REFEREES (Updated 2017)

1. Applicants to the scheme should identify referees who will provide references to support their application.
2. The requirement for references is as follows:
 - Level 1 applicants should provide one reference
 - Level 2 and 3 applicants should provide two references
 - Level 4 applicants should provide three references
 - Rape List applicants (already at level 3 or 4) no additional references needed
3. References can be obtained from any person whom the applicant believes best supports their application and is prepared to stand as a referee. For example, referees can be pupil masters; Heads of Chambers; current or retired members of the full-time judiciary; members of the part-time judiciary; instructing solicitors; other advocates who may have been opponents or leaders; instructing members of the CPS or other prosecuting authorities, and advocacy assessors.
4. The guidance remains that applicants applying for the specialist casework panels (fraud, extradition, POCA and Serious Crime Group) should also provide a reference(s) from a CPS lawyer from the specialist casework Division for each specialism applied for.
5. Instructing members of the CPS may compose a reference for an Advocate Panel applicant. Any reference provided by an instructing member of the CPS will be considered an organisational reference, and not a personal one. The draft reference **must** be referred to either the local Area CCP, or someone delegated by the CCP, for approval.
6. The referee must complete **document 7c** on the [Advocate Panel webpage](#). The approved reference can then be sent either to the applicant for submission together with their application, or sent directly to this same [Advocate Panels mailbox](#).
7. Referees should be aware that if the CPS subsequently receives a Freedom of Information Act request for release of the reference the request will be considered in line with the guidance from the Information Commissioner.
8. It remains the applicant's responsibility to secure the referee's agreement to provide a reference, to provide the referee with a reference form and to request that the reference is provided direct to the CPS.
9. Completed references should be submitted by the applicant, in a single submission, together with their application for to: Advocate.Panels@cps.gsi.gov.uk

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10. Referees should complete the appropriate reference form. There are two reference forms, a form for a level 1 applicant and a separate form for level 2, 3 and 4 applicants.
11. The reference forms can be found at:

[Level 1](#)

[Levels 2, 3 and 4](#)
12. Referees should be in a position to speak with authority about the skills specified in the selection criteria. The assessment boards are aware it is generally more difficult for applicants to level 2 to find referees who can speak with authority on all of the required skills and allowances are made for this.
13. Referees will be asked to consider the competencies of the applicant in respect of the level applied for under the following headings:
 - a. What is the extent of your knowledge of the applicant's work?
 - b. Analytical ability
 - c. Judgment
 - d. Written expression
 - e. Advocacy
 - f. Interpersonal skills
 - g. Legal knowledge
 - h. Additional information which would assist.