

ORPAS: References

We will now talk about the references required by the Ontario rehab schools.

You will provide ORPAS with your referees' contact information. Your referee will receive an email directly from ORPAS about the process. There are two components that your referee needs to provide. They will need to complete a form and upload a supporting reference letter.

It is important to evaluate who can best provide a good supporting reference. Use each referee to build your application. Consider first what you want discussed in your references and then find people who can provide that information, following the referee requirements for each school. If you are considering having a professional (PT, OT etc.) write a reference letter, it needs to be substantial. So in other words they need to be able to provide details on how they know you, how long they have known you, what you know about the health care system, etc.

We recommend that you ask the potential referee in person, "do you have time to write a supporting reference letter for professional school?" If they don't, it is better to find out now as reference letters have an impact in your application package.

Give your referee enough time and information to write a letter. Do not leave this to the last minute. Meet with your referee in person at least 6 weeks before the deadline. Tell them that they will receive a link to a form through e-mail from ORPAS. It is very important that they save this e-mail, as it will only be sent once! Ask your referee not to delete the e-mail until they have submitted the form, including the letter, as ORPAS is unable to resend the e-mail. ORPAS also will not send reminder e-mails. It is the responsibility of the applicant to follow-up with the referees concerning the completion of the references. The referee may find it helpful if you provide them with any personal statement or essay answers, admission requirements, and résumé or activities you included in your application. Provide them with any information that will help with their task.

If you are not applying this year, start cultivating relationships with faculty members as we find many students worry about academic references - so go to your classes, meet with your professors during office hours, and consider conducting research with them; however, remember that you need someone that can speak to your academic background.

Here you can view the school, program, and the type of references they are looking for; academic, professional or clinical. This list has been updated for the 2016 intake:

There will be details in upcoming slides about who does or does not qualify as a reference for some programs.

For the Queen's OT and PT program, 2 references are required. For the OT program you can submit 2 academic or 1 academic & 1 professional. The PT program requires 1 academic & 1 professional.

Toronto has the same requirements - 2 academic or 1 academic & 1 professional for OT, and 1 academic & 1 professional for PT.

However, the Toronto SLP program requires 3 references – 2 academic and 1 clinical.

For the Western PT program, 2 references are required; 1 academic and 1 professional. The Audiology and SLP programs, require 3 references: 2 academic and 1 clinical.

There are no references required for Western OT, or the McMaster programs.

This is a screen shot to show what type of information is required about your referees. Note that there is a comments box that you can complete. This information will be sent in the body of an email that ORPAS sends directly to your referee. You should explain the process to your referee when you meet to ask them to be a referee for your rehab school applications. ORPAS will provide the same due date as your ORPAS application.

Note that for OT and PT, you will only use the first 2 or 3 Referee spots to create forms. SLP and Audiology, only, require the Confidential Clinical Referee form.

Please note that each referee also needs to write a letter **and upload it to the form page**. It is best if the referee can provide proof such as examples of the attributes listed and not just list them.

Your academic or professional referee is to rank you: Excellent, Good, Average, Fair, Poor, or Unknown in the following categories: Intellectual capacity, Initiative, Leadership capabilities, Maturity, Co-operation, Integrity, Problem-solving, Fluency in spoken English, Fluency in written English, Fluency in spoken French, Fluency in written French, Ability to communicate, Emotional stability, Ability to relate to others, Ability for self-directed learning, Tolerance of others and Overall rating.

On the Clinical Referee form, the rankings are: top 10% (outstanding), next 20% (above average), next 20% (average), lower 50% (below average) for the following categories: Respect for others, Tact, Sensitive to clients' needs and others, Interacts appropriately with supervisor and with other professionals, Communicates effectively, Sense of self-worth and confidence, Curiosity, Empathy, Reliability, Initiative, Recognition of limitations, Respect for social and cultural differences, Carries out assigned tasks, Keeps records/materials in good order, and Maintains confidentiality.

Note, if you worked in more than 1 clinic, and had an additional experience where the clientele differed in either population or age group from the first experience, you are encouraged to submit a Clinical Reference Form from each site. Additional forms are available on the ORPAS website.

Let's talk about the different types of references. **Professional references** should include someone who can judge an applicants' performance & interpersonal skills from a non-academic perspective such as a health care professional or volunteer in health care. **Academic references** for the OT and PT programs should be someone who has a perception of the applicant with respect to: motivation and desire to enter rehab sciences, your ability to relate to people in a compassionate and caring manner, your moral and ethical development, and your academic strengths and weaknesses.

This is some guidance provided for the OT reference requirements updated for the 2016 intake.

For the Queen's OT program, positions such as TA, lab coordinator, and athletic trainer do not qualify as academic references.

The academic reference is someone who holds a position in an academic institution, has taught you and can judge your academic ability, for example, someone who holds a faculty or professorship position.

Note for the Toronto OT program, if you submit 3 letters, they will forward the best 2 to the admission committee. For the Toronto professional reference, referees can include volunteer supervisors, research supervisors, OT mentors (from job shadowing), community leaders and experienced healthcare

professionals. It is okay to use a lab instructor for a reference but their frame of reference in terms of comparing an applicant to other students will not be as great as faculty.

For the Queen's PT program, again, positions such as TA, lab coordinator, and athletic trainer do not qualify as academic reference.

For the Toronto PT program both academic and professional referees must be able to address the applicant's ability for studies in a health profession. Toronto is often asked whether students using sessional or part-time instructors for academic references is acceptable including titles such as: Head Athletic Therapist, OR Teaching Laboratory Coordinator & Instructor.

Toronto said that this depends on the type of course the students are taking with these types of instructors. The academic reference is meant to evaluate a student's academic abilities, so if these instructors taught academic-type classes, then it would be fine. But if these instructors taught more practical courses, like an Internship Coordinator, then it's more of a grey zone. In those instances the student should email PTStudent.Services@utoronto.ca to double check. The preference would be they have an academic reference for an academic class.

This is some guidance provided about referees for Western. The Western, PT program requires an academic referee who holds an academic faculty position in university, has taught the applicant, and is qualified to judge applicants' ability; positions such as TA, lab coordinator, and athletic trainer do not qualify as academic references. The second reference letter is someone who can judge applicants' performance and interpersonal skills from the perspective as a PT, employer, or someone who supervised applicant working with special needs is ideal.

For the Toronto SLP program, the academic reference must be a full-time faculty member or lecturer, assistant professor, or higher. The clinical reference should be from a primary supervisor, and references from program directors who are not supervisors are not acceptable. Applicants are encouraged to submit reference forms from a supervisor from all clinical sites.

These requirements apply to Western as well; the academic reference should be a professor who knows you well.

Your referees should provide details and proof about your interpersonal skills and characteristics that align with the profession of speech-language pathology or audiology.