

Reference evidence form

A structured worksheet for gathering the evidence behind a strong UCAS reference — before the deadline scramble. Students and subject teachers complete the factual sections; the reference writer turns them into the school's professional view. Free to use and adapt.

How to use this form

A strong reference is built from specifics: real examples, accurately attributed, gathered while they are fresh. The most common avoidable mistake is leaving evidence-gathering until October, when teachers are writing from memory under pressure.

This form moves that work earlier and spreads it across the people who actually hold the evidence.

Suggested process:

- The student completes the factual sections about their reading, experience, and responsibilities — ideally during the summer or early in Year 13.
- Subject teachers and tutors add academic evidence and context they hold.
- The reference writer uses the assembled evidence to draft the reference. They own the wording, the judgement, and the final sign-off.

This form gathers evidence. It is not a draft reference, and students should not be asked to write their own reference wording.

Section A — Student and route

Field	Detail
Student name	
Tutor group / cohort	
Intended course or route area	
Five choices (if known)	
Early (15 Oct) or main (13 Jan) deadline?	
Reference writer / owner	
Predicted grades	
Sensitive circumstances to handle separately?	Yes / No — (if yes, route via the named staff member, not this form)

Section B — Academic evidence (completed with subject teachers)

For each subject, capture concrete, verifiable evidence — not adjectives. "Top of the class" is weaker

than "independently extended the coursework into a second investigation."

Subject 1: _____

- Specific strength or achievement (with evidence):
- Source (assessment / project / class work / competition):
- Why it matters for the intended route:
- Contributing teacher:

Subject 2: _____

- Specific strength or achievement (with evidence):
- Source:
- Why it matters for the intended route:
- Contributing teacher:

Subject 3: _____

- Specific strength or achievement (with evidence):
- Source:
- Why it matters for the intended route:
- Contributing teacher:

(Copy the block for additional subjects.)

Section C — Evidence beyond the classroom (completed by the student)

Record things you have genuinely done. Be specific — names, dates, and what you actually did matter more than how it sounds.

Wider reading / lectures / online courses / projects / EPQ

- What:
- When:
- What you took from it (one honest sentence):

Work experience / volunteering / employment / placements

- What:
- When:
- What you took from it:

Leadership / responsibilities / clubs / mentoring / community

- What:
- When:
- What you took from it:

Section D — Context the reference writer should know

Use this for anything that helps the writer give a fair, rounded picture. Keep safeguarding and highly sensitive matters out of this form — flag them to the named staff member instead.

- Relevant circumstances affecting studies (illness, caring responsibilities, disruption):
 - Trajectory or improvement worth noting:
 - Anything the student is modest about that staff have observed:
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Section E — Reference writer notes (staff only)

This is where evidence becomes judgement. The writer owns every line of the final reference.

- Most relevant academic qualities to evidence:
 - Most relevant personal qualities to evidence:
 - Claims to verify before use:
 - Anything that should not be used publicly, or needs careful handling:
 - Final reviewer / sign-off owner:
 - Date finalised:
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A note on what stays human

The reference is the school's professional view of a student. That judgement does not move to a tool or to the student. This form exists to make sure the person writing the reference has accurate, specific material to draw on — so the finished reference is grounded in what the student has genuinely done, and the school can stand behind every word.

About this form

Provided free by Outleap, which builds school-led software for UCAS, references, feedback, and progression — including an evidence bank that captures this material as students go, so the reference writer is not starting from a blank page. Schools are welcome to adapt this form and use it under their own name.