

If you cannot get a reference

Sometimes it can be difficult to get a reference. For example, if an organisation has gone out of business or the employer has died.

As a job applicant, if you're having trouble getting a reference, you can ask the employer who needs the reference if they'll accept:

- a reference from someone else, for example a manager or someone you worked with
- a reference from a different employer
- a reference from someone you have not worked with but knows you well, sometimes called a personal or character reference

As an alternative to a reference, an employer might employ you on a 'probationary period' (or trial). This gives the employer time to assess if you're able to do the job.

If you cannot get a detailed reference

Some employers have a policy not to give detailed work references. If this is the case, ask if they can provide a basic work reference instead.

For example, a brief written statement of your role and the dates you were employed.

[Use our reference request letter template to ask for a basic work reference](#)