REFERENCE REQUEST – CONFIDENTIAL

To whom it may concern:

Overleaf is a request for a reference for someone who has applied to study with the Queen’s Foundation for campus-based learning.

We have included information about Queen’s and the commitment that students make when they attend for training to assist you when writing your reference. We have also set out five areas for you to specifically comment on.

For your information, students have a right to ask for a copy of their file which would include this reference. If there is anything that you wish to discuss in confidence relating to this reference please get in touch directly on admissions@queens.ac.uk tel: 0121 4541527 and ask to speak to the Academic Dean.

We are very grateful for the time you take to complete this.

Best wishes,



**David Allen**

**Academic Dean**

The Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education provides vocational training for students going on to become Readers, Ministers, and a variety of other lay and voluntary positions in the Methodist, Anglican and other denominational churches. Programmes of study are validated by one of our partner universities: Durham University and Newman University. Programmes span academic levels 4-8 or all levels of under and post graduate study.

The college has around 400 students, most of whom are part time and all of whom are of age over 21. There are approximately 19 faculty plus a variety of associate tutors. Accommodation, lecture rooms, study space and a library are available on campus.

All programmes are assessed with 100% coursework. These take the form of written assignments, theological reflections, book reviews, learning journals, portfolios, placement reviews, exegesis, commentaries on sermons, and presentations. Assessment takes place throughout the year following the relevant module teaching. The teaching year is long (mid-September to early July for full time students, throughout the year for part time students) because of the additional vocational requirements of study and placements. Teaching contact hours are high to suit the needs of our adult learners with a wide variety of academic backgrounds. Time for private study therefore is slightly less for our subject area than in a normal undergraduate university situation. Teaching styles are varied and there is far less emphasis on formal lectures and more on discussions and explorations.

Each student has a personal tutor who is with them throughout the duration of their studies. Academic support is provided by the module lead for each module studied.

There is a virtual learning environment (Moodle) for all teaching materials, to submit assignments and for some online modules. The library has 50,000 books and 60 current journal subscriptions, plus access to over 500 journals and ebooks online (see http://www.queens.ac.uk/library/).

Many students follow evening and weekend pathways and there is full tutor support during those periods. Others follow Distance Learning Programmes and have access to tutorial support via email, phone, online seminars etc. Although we do not have a dedicated student support centre, we do provide extensive dedicated personal tutoring and pastoral care systems.

**Reference**

For many of our students, study at Queen’s will be the first time back in the classroom (or virtual classroom) for many years and so we take a broad approach to seeking evidence of a potential students’ ability to undertake a programme of study. As such we would be very grateful if you could directly address the issues outlined below:

**1. Capacity for Study.** Please comment on, for instance, arrangements the prospective student may have spoken to you about for ensuring they have enough time not only to attend lectures but also to undertake private study each week e.g. communicating with their employer/reducing other commitments.

2. **Commitment to Study.** Please comment on their commitment to undertaking this course in particular but also their ability to commit to a long term project and see it through.

3. **Choosing to Study at the Queen’s Foundation.** This provides evidence of both their commitment and also their understanding of the type of undertaking they are committing to.

4.a **Potential for University Level Study.** Has the candidate undertaken training at work at an advanced level? What are their communications skills like? Having read the description of the mode of study and assessment do you have any comments about the applicant’s wish to develop skills in these areas e.g. in report writing or presentation skills. If you are their minister do you have evidence of how the candidate has engaged with training in a Church context? You could comment on their openness to different ways of thinking, their wider reading and their critical thinking skills.

4.b **Subject Specific Knowledge.** It is quite usual for a student who has never studied theology formally to meet other criteria for study at Queen’s. We would like you to comment specifically on this area if the candidate does not have formal qualifications such as GCSEs or A Levels. In this case, comment on their commitment to studying theology/their attempts to engage with this subject prior to training here.

5. **Openness to Academic Study/Critical Thinking**. As an ecumenical college, our students benefit from meeting others with a wide variety of denominational and theological backgrounds and views. Academic study will also naturally include evaluating evidence and opinions different to the students own. We ask students both to listen to and respect those views but also to learn from them. Could you comment on the applicant’s ability to critically evaluate different views and evidence and be open to different interpretations?

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| 1. **Capacity for Study.**  |
| 2. **Commitment to Study** |
| 3. **Choosing to Study at the Queen’s Foundation** |
| 4. a. **Potential for University Level Study** |
| 4. b. **Subject Specific Knowledge** required: Y/N |
| 5. **Openness to Academic Study/Critical Thinking** |
| **Any other comments:** |
| Referee Name (print): |  |
| Known to the applicant as (e.g. Minister/ Line manager): |  |
| Known the applicant for (approx. years or months): |  |
| Referee Signature: |  |

This reference will be kept on file for the duration of the applicant’s study at the Queen’s Foundation and in the archive for 10 years. After that date it will be destroyed. If the application is unsuccessful it will be kept on file for one year and then destroyed.