



Australian Government

AFTRS

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AFTRS Policy on References

Responsible Officer	Director, Corporate Services
Contact Officer	Head of Human Resources
Authorisation	AFTRS Executive and Chief Executive Officer
Effective Date	Approved 25 th February 2033 Reviewed August 2011
Associated Documents	<i>Privacy Act 1988</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> AFTRS Staff Selection Policy and Procedure

1. Policy Name

AFTRS Policy on References

2. Preamble – Background

AFTRS staff have always provided references for staff and employees they have supervised. In 2003 the requirements and limitations on this were established in policy. These have now been reviewed.

3. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all AFTRS employees.

4. Policy Statement

AFTRS acknowledges that one of the roles of supervisors and managers is to provide accurate work references for current and past employees. In doing this, however, it needs to be remembered that any reference is an official AFTRS document as well as coming from the author. This policy aims to ensure references are provided correctly.

All references are subject to the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

5. Implementation

Certificate of Service

All employees leaving AFTRS are entitled to request a Certificate of Service. These are issued by Payroll and include only objective information such as periods of service and positions held.

Personal and Character References

While any employee is entitled to provide a personal or character reference for someone, these are not related to work and should not be linked to AFTRS. Accordingly they should not be on AFTRS letterhead, either print or electronic, and should not indicate your position at AFTRS.

References for AFTRS Positions

As a supervisor or manager you should provide an honest reference for your staff applying for positions within AFTRS. You may be asked to do this by either the employee of the Selection Committee.

If you are a member of the Selection Committee and an employee asks you to be a referee you can still agree. This is particularly important if you supervise the advertised position. You must, however, provide the reference before the interview so as there can be no question that you have altered the reference to compensate for the interview performance.

Work References

When providing a work reference it is important that you give a frank and honest view of the person's work performance and you must take reasonable care to base what you say on facts. It is alright to give an opinion but it should be based on facts e.g. specific incidents.

It is important that you explain your relationship to the person you are giving a reference for e.g. supervisor, colleague, or subordinate, and the period of the relationship. It is also important that you give a balanced picture, both strengths and weaknesses.

Remember to be particularly careful when giving a reference over the phone. It is more difficult to be objective during a conversation.

6. Guidelines

- While personal information for employees is protected by the privacy legislation, information on prospective employees isn't. In short, people can see their references under the Freedom of Information legislation.
- If a reference is unreasonably harsh it is possible for someone to claim compensation for financial loss from the organisation who gave the reference.
- If a reference contains false or misleading praise and an organisation employs someone because of it, this could be considered 'negligent misstatement' and the organisation providing the reference could have a claim against them from the employing organisation for any financial loss they have suffered.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed as required by changes to legislation or policy, relevant case law, or changes to AFTRS circumstances.