

Writing a citation for ACCEA

You cannot write for someone within your own Trust.

The purpose of a citation is to provide external support for an applicant and it has to include information that goes beyond what is written on his or her own application form. It is likely that applicants will have several citations; there is a mandatory citation (Form 2) submitted by the employing chief executive (and many do write their own), there may be a RCoA citation as the National Nominating Body for Anaesthesia as well as the AAGBI and other specialist societies registered with ACCEA.

If you agree to provide a citation be very clear that it has to be submitted on time. The nominating body cannot submit its list until every ranked applicant has a properly completed citation. Equally if the citation is too long / incomplete the whole process stalls until this is corrected. There is no other way of submitting these citations other than electronically.

If you are asked to write a citation **please** take this task seriously and check you have the time to write it.

The citation has to be attributed to you and also has to identify what status you have in being asked to submit a citation. If you are not the recognisable 'head' of the organisation submitting the citation the form will need to be countersigned. For this College they are all signed by the President.

The practical aspects of writing a citation include:

- Actually knowing the applicant (a probity issue)
- Being able to count – there is a strict character limitation **[please ensure you read, and follow, this guidance given below]**
- Avoiding acronyms / superlatives
- Being very specific about what the applicant's contribution has been in the area that the body submitting the form is representing
- Understanding the scoring system in detail – what counts for 6 or 10 points for instance is essential knowledge
- Get a second opinion (from an expert) on what you have written

Knowing the applicant:

Usually you will have a detailed knowledge of what they have done that is clearly over and above their contracts. They must send you their final version of the CVQ. Make a list of their claims and how this matches to what you know already and balance this against their job plan.

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Next make your own word document that itemises all the aspects you think are important to your area; vascular anaesthesia for instance. Make sure that what you say is clear to a lay reader; it is highly unlikely that there will be more than one anaesthetist on the reviewing panel.

Finally – be sure that what they claim is current and since their last award if already an award holder.

Character count at every opportunity:

The standard **1350** characters including spaces is the maximum you can include. The extra text will simply disappear and (certainly at present), unlike the domains where it will warn if there are too many characters, it may not be apparent on looking at the screen. It is better to use line spacing and short words for obvious reasons. The College recommends that you limit a citation to **1200** characters including spaces to allow space for your name and the capacity in which you are writing the citation – all included in the character count.

Do not use any acronyms if at all possible.

Whilst we have provided ACCEA with a list of common Anaesthetic, ICM and Pain Medicine related ones, so has every other area of medicine. Realistically the assessors are not going to look up ones they don't instantly recognise – GMC may be OK, ICNARC probably isn't.

Stay within the script:

Be very careful to stick to the specific area of support and provide examples if possible. Make sure that they are a national level or above and where ever possible add numbers – he is 1 of a 100 chosen from 8000 eligible consultants – gives a context within which the lay reader understands how great an achievement this is.

What counts for what:

The scoring system for each domain gives examples of what level of activity scores most highly and just as importantly where one type of activity scores best. It is recommended to cover every domain in the citation if possible, but certainly emphasise any aspect that is scoring at 6 or above.

Check it:

Character count and spell check the text, and then do it again! Ask another higher award holder to read what you have written and give you critical feedback (which may be positive).

Then ask a non-medical colleague to read it as well. If they understand what you meant to say - send it in!

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Who to send it to:

The Regional Assessor who requested the citation needs to see it before it is submitted to the College. Their contact e-mail will have been given to you by the applicant themselves. This 'first glance' should be at least a week before the closing date at the College (9 November).

The Regional Assessor will then forward the final (agreed) version to the College before the 9th.

Thank you and Good luck

Andy Tomlinson