

The Open Group Certified Architect (Open CA) Program

Frequently Asked Questions about Reference Letters

October 2010

Candidates for Open CA certification justify their claim by providing a package of information to the members of a Certification Board. That package forms the basis of the subsequent interviews with the Certification Board. As part of the information package, candidates are asked to provide Reference Letters from individuals who can vouch for the accuracy of certain items of information in the package. These notes are intended to answer some Frequently Asked Questions about the Reference Letters.

Why do I need to provide Reference Letters?

For certification at Levels 1 and 2 the Reference Letters are intended to validate the total duration of your experience developing IT architectures, as claimed in the experience requirements at EC01.

For certification at Level 3 the Reference Letters are for a different purpose. They are intended to validate your involvement in each of the projects covered by the Experience Profiles in section 6 of your package.

How many Reference Letters do I need to supply?

For certification at Levels 1 and 2 you need to provide a letter that vouches for your involvement in each of the projects that you nominate in EC01 to prove that you have the required number of months of experience. Should a single individual not be in the position to vouch for your involvement over the whole of the period of a particular project, you may need to include letters from more than one individual for that project. If a single individual can vouch for your involvement in more than one project, then they only need to provide a single Reference Letter, providing that each of the projects are identified with your involvement explained, in that one letter.

For certification at Level 3 you need to provide a letter that vouches for your involvement in each of the projects that you nominate in your Experience Profiles. Should a single individual not be in the position to vouch for your involvement over the whole of the period covered by a particular Profile, you may need to include letters from more than one individual for that Profile. If a single individual can vouch for your involvement in more than one Profile, then they only need to provide a single Reference Letter, providing that each of the Profiles are identified and your involvement explained, in that one letter.

If you are a candidate for Level 3 certification who is not already Level 2 certified, you will need to provide a combined package including an abbreviated Level 2 package. Under those circumstances, in addition to the Reference Letters for Level 3, you will need to supply Reference Letters to support your Level 2 claim. The Open CA Specification Authority is currently considering which Reference Letters are needed. While it is under consideration, you should submit one Reference Letter for your Level 2 Experience Profile and one additional Reference Letter covering the major activity cited in EC02, EC06, EC07, and EC08.

From whom should I obtain these Reference Letters?

For certification at Levels 1 and 2, your Reference Letters should be from customers or clients (external or internal) who can vouch for your participation and contribution in each of the projects. As an alternative, you could ask for a Reference Letter from a Master Certified Architect who has the same knowledge of the project. Letters from your immediate manager will not be considered.

For certification at Level 3 for the Profession Lead CPC, each Reference Letter should be from a principal stakeholder in the profession (or a related profession) who is familiar with the project and its significance to the business. For the other two CPCs, each Reference Letter should be from a principal stakeholder in the solution who is familiar with the project and its significance to the business.

How do I make these Reference Letters available?

The letters need to be attached or embedded in the package that you submit. Unless there is a serious problem, the best way is to scan images of the letters printed on headed note paper and personally signed by the author. The letters can either be scanned by you or the author, but remember not all image formats will print correctly after being imported into Microsoft Word. Do carry out some tests to make sure that the Reference Letters print together with your package. Jpeg is usually one of the most successful formats.

Remember that the pages on which you print the Reference Letters are included in the total of 50 pages that must not be exceeded. If you wish to reduce the size of the letter images please make sure that all the details will still be legible when printed.

How are these Reference Letters used?

The letters are to validate that you did work on particular projects and that you did undertake a particular role. Any additional information in the letters about the success of your activities and the success of the project is useful, but it is subjective information from third-parties and the Certification Board members are unaware of the capability of the authors to make such judgements. However for Level 3, authors have to be principal stakeholders, so their opinion on success does have significance.

Prior to the Certification Board, Open Group staff in the Certification Authority will contact the author of each letter purely to validate that the author did write that letter and was responsible for its contents. Make sure you provide up-to-date contact information for the authors in your package.

What should be included in the Reference Letters?

Make sure each reference letter relates to a specific experience, or experiences. These letters are not general character references. Each letter should contain at the very minimum the following information:

- Identification of the project
- The start and end dates of the project
- Your role in the project
- The relationship of the author to the project
- The working relationship of the author to you
- (For Level 3) The strategic nature and the success of the project

Are there any samples, or templates, for Reference Letters?

See below.

Rustbucket & Krash

Auto-Renovation Franchise

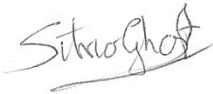
1959 Edsel Drive
Cuttenshut
Colorado

14 June 2009

To whom it may concern,

I should like to confirm that Frank L Wright was an architect on the team developing our Workshop Scheduling and Progressing subsystem from March 2007 to January 2008.

Best Wishes,



Silvio Ghozl

CIO Central Services

Atlantis City

Flood Defense Authority

110 Canal Street
Atlantis City
Mariana Trench

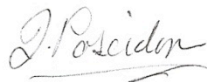
26 December 2004

Dear Mr. Gaudi

As Program Manager, I am happy to confirm your involvement as Lead Architect of our Heads-Up project between July 2002 and November 2004. Your input to the project started with initial requirements gathering and continued through to initial deployment.

As manager of this joint project between Atlantis City and Kraken Industries, I consider that the overall success achieved was largely due to the quality of the architectural work for which you can be justly proud.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Poseidon". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

John Poseidon

Heads-Up Program Manager

Mountebank Pharmaceutical Supplies

Elixir House
Sayare Avenue
Suffring Magna
Wiltshire

22 November 2009

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to confirm that for the past four years Christopher Wren has been acting as Senior Lead Architect on our project for the end-to-end integration of our Snake Oil product line automation. In that role he has been responsible for coordinating and integrating the efforts of four architecture teams dealing with the architectures of systems covering all aspects of production control, quality control, warehousing and order delivery.

Christopher has exhibited outstanding leadership in promoting the collaboration between the diverse stakeholders involved in such a wide-ranging integration. He has also established the governance processes and IT Architecture development methods that have enabled the User Groups, architecture teams and implementation teams to collaborate in obtaining major long-term benefits to our pharmaceutical production business.

Christopher's team leadership, attention to detail, and troubleshooting abilities have been a major factor in the success of this major project.

Yours sincerely,



I.M. Makinu-Beta

CIO Mountebank Pharmaceuticals