

## Information on writing a citation for an ACCEA application

### **Citation writers and the applicants whose form they are supporting should not normally be employed by the same organisation**

The purpose of a citation is to provide external support for an applicant for a new award. As these are national awards, ACCEA assumes that in the vast majority of cases someone from outside the applicant's organisation would be able to write a citation emphasising the impact of the individual's contribution to the wider NHS. The citation should include information that goes beyond what is written on the application form and stresses the impact of the applicant's contributions.

### **Citations must be submitted on time**

The NNB cannot submit its list until every ranked applicant has a properly completed citation. If the citation is incomplete, the process is stalled until this is corrected. There is no way of submitting these citations other than electronically. If you are asked to write a citation, **please** take this task seriously and check that 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, i.e. your job title or role in an organisation. The RCoA President also signs all the citations.

The practical aspects of writing a citation include:

- Knowing the applicant and their contributions well.
- You must write your citation within the word limit – there is a strict character limitation (currently 1350 characters).
- Avoiding acronyms and superlatives.
- Being very specific about what the applicant's contribution has been in the area that the body submitting the form is representing – ACCEA are looking for 'impact factor'.
- Understanding the scoring system in detail – what counts for 6 or 10 points for instance is essential knowledge.
- Being willing to get a second opinion on what you have written.

### **Knowing the applicant**

You should have a detailed knowledge of what they have done that is clearly over and above any expectation within their contract. You must have a copy of the application form they intend to submit. Make a list of their claims and how they match what you know already, and balance this against their job plan. Simply repeating the content of the applicant's form's domains is not as effective in a citation as setting their achievements into context for the reader.

Next make your own Word document that itemises all the aspects you think are important to your specialist area. 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 they are already a national award holder. ACCEA has stated that an application may be compared with the applicant's last successful application for possible duplication.

### **Character count at every opportunity**

The standard **1350** characters including spaces is the maximum you can include. The extra text will simply disappear and it may not be apparent when looking at the screen. The College recommends that you limit a citation to **1200** characters including spaces to allow room for your name and the capacity in which you are writing the citation – these are all included in the



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character count. Drafting the citation in a Word file is a good way of being able to check the character count accurately before copying it and pasting it into the form. It also provides a way of spell-checking the citation before its transfer to the form.

**Do not use any acronyms if at all possible**

Whilst we have provided ACCEA with a list of common anaesthetic, intensive care and pain medicine related acronyms, so has every other area of medicine. Realistically, the assessors are not going to look up ones they don't instantly recognise. GMC and HEE may be permissible, but acronyms like ICNARC or NELA probably are not.

**Stay within the script**

Be very careful to stick to the specific area of support that you are expanding on and provide examples if possible. Make sure that they are at national level, or above and, whenever possible, provide numbers, e.g. "he is 1 of 100 chosen from 8000 eligible consultants": this gives a context within which the lay reader can understand how great an achievement this is.

**What counts for what?**

The documents for assessors on the ACCEA website gives details of the scoring system for each domain and gives examples of what level of activity scores most highly. Applicants repeatedly fail to read the guidance; it will help you enormously if you do. It is recommended that you 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 well be positive). Then ask a non-medical colleague to read it as well. If they understand what you meant to say - send it in!

**Who to send it to**

Your finalised citation must be sent to the College on [accea@rcoa.ac.uk](mailto:accea@rcoa.ac.uk) once a deadline date is agreed.

With best wishes

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