OET Referral Letter - Printable Guide

An OET referral letter asks another professional to assess or manage a patient. Make the reason for referral clear first, select evidence that supports that request, then specify the next action.

Purpose and paragraph plan

1 · Purpose: Patient's name and age, the problem, and what you want: assessment, investigation or management, and how urgently.

2 · Presenting problem: The symptoms or history that led to the referral: onset, duration, key positives and important negatives.

3 · Findings and treatment so far: Examination, results, relevant background and anything you have already started.

4 · Request and practical points: The specific action you want, patient concerns or preferences that affect the appointment, and an offer of further information.

Our original sample letter: A GP is referring a 61-year-old man with iron-deficiency anaemia, a change in bowel habit and weight loss. The reader is a gastroenterologist who needs to decide how quickly to investigate.

Dr Helen Varga

Gastroenterologist

Eastbank Specialist Centre

40 Harbour Street

Eastbank

22 October 2026

Dear Dr Varga,

Re: Mr Desmond Achterberg, DOB 03/05/1965

I am writing to refer Mr Achterberg, a 61-year-old bus driver, for urgent investigation of iron-deficiency anaemia, a recent change in bowel habit and unintentional weight loss.

Over the past three months, Mr Achterberg has had intermittent loose stools, and he has lost 4 kg without trying. He also reports tiredness and breathlessness when climbing stairs. He has not noticed any rectal bleeding or abdominal pain. A bowel screening test he completed on 15 October was positive, and his father was diagnosed with bowel cancer at the age of 70.

Abdominal and rectal examinations were unremarkable. Blood tests on 20 October showed a haemoglobin of 98 g/L, ferritin of 6 µg/L and an MCV of 74 fL. Coeliac serology, thyroid function, and renal and liver function were all normal. His only regular medication is amlodipine for hypertension, and I started oral iron today.

I would be grateful if you could assess Mr Achterberg and arrange a colonoscopy and gastroscopy as soon as possible. He is understandably anxious about the possibility of cancer, and as he works shifts, morning appointments would suit him best. Please contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

General Practitioner

Body: 191 words. Adapt the purpose and content to the task; do not memorise this letter. Full case notes and explanations are on the linked guide.