

Transcript – LRP How the Primary Mentor Submits a Reference Letter

Transcript Disclaimer:

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Welcome to this video tutorial on how the primary mentor submits a reference letter on behalf of an applicant of a Loan Repayment Program (LRP) award. The mentor will upload their reference letter to NIH through an online portal. The URL and the instructions to upload the letter are provided to the mentor by an email message sent by the LRP system.

The responsibilities of the mentor is to submit the reference letter using the portal before the application period ends. The end of the application period is included in the email you will receive from the LRP system. The applicant can provide you with the exact dates as they prepare to submit their application.

The reference letter can be no more than 7500 characters long and should include the following information about the applicant:

For All Applicants: Previous training and experience to prepare for a research career; Commitment to a career in research; Potential for a successful career in research; Research related strengths and weaknesses; and an Overall recommendation

Also include the following for renewal applicants only: Research accomplishments during the current/most recent LRP award period; Development as an independent investigator

As the primary mentor, you will need to provide concurrence to the following documentation: the applicant's research activities statement; the applicant's research environment statement; the applicant's research training and mentoring plan; and for renewal applicants, their research accomplishments.

In addition to uploading the reference letter, you will provide the applicant with an NIH formatted biosketch. The biosketch must not be more than 5 pages and will be uploaded by the applicant as part of the application process.

To provide your reference letter, you will need to go to the portal provided to you as a link in the email sent to you from the LRP system. You will start by selecting the option to submit a new reference letter and then click the Continue button on the right side.

On the next screen, you will verify the applicant and application by entering the applicant's eRA Commons User ID in the field provided. When done, click the Verify button on the far right.

The system will verify the user ID and then display the Mentor Reference Letter screen. Here you will complete all the required fields. Required fields are identified by a red asterisk on the field name.

The required fields are your first name; your last name; your email address; which you will need to confirm; the organization where you work; and your position or title.

With the personal information added, you will next upload your reference letter. Your reference letter should be a simple PDF document (without layers or password protection, etc.) and must be less than 5 MB in size. You will click the green Upload button and navigate to the reference letter you want to use, and select it.

The screen will update and show the reference letter file name and the date it was uploaded. You will now also see a View button and a Remove button. The view button will let you download the reference letter should you want to review it. The Remove button deletes the reference letter before it is submitted.

The next step is to read the five statements concerning your responsibilities as the mentor of the applicant. After reading the statements, check the box that acknowledges that you certify the statements.

The final step is to check the two checkboxes just below the statement certification section. The first confirms your electronic signature. The second checkbox confirms your understanding that the reference letter you are submitting will be used by NIH officials to help determine the applicants eligibility and suitability for an LRP award. When you are done, you can click the Submit button on the right side.

Within a few minutes of the submission of the reference letter, you will receive a confirmation email. The email will include a confirmation number and a link back to the mentor reference letter portal. This information will be necessary should you want to change or update the submitted letter.

If for any reason you wish to change your reference letter before the submission window closes, you will click the link in the confirmation email. This will open the mentor reference letter portal page. Select the second radio button for Preview and Download Previously Submitted Reference Letter, and then click Continue along the right side of the screen. Then follow the prompts to replace the existing reference letter.

There are a number of resources available to you to assist you with your mentor reference letter for a Loan Repayment Program applicant. If you need help, you can reach out to the LRP Information Center. And if you need technical assistance with submitting your reference letter, please contact the eRA Service Desk.

- The LRP webpage: <https://www.lrp.nih.gov/>
- LRP Research Supervisor/Mentor Page: <https://www.lrp.nih.gov/research-supervisors-mentors>
- **LRP Information Center**
Phone Number: (866) 849-4047
Email: lrp@nih.gov
- eRA Service Desk: <https://grants.nih.gov/support>

This concludes this video tutorial on how the primary mentor submits a reference letter on behalf of an applicant of a Loan Repayment Program (LRP) award. Thank you for watching.