

Transcript – LRP Submission of a Reference Letter

Transcript Disclaimer:

This transcript is NOT a certified transcript, and thus is not a legal document and is not for use in a court of law. The information contained within this document is for general information purposes only.

Welcome to this video tutorial on the submission of a reference letter for an applicant of a Loan Repayment Program, known as LRP, award. LRPs are a set of programs established by Congress and designed to recruit and retain highly qualified health professionals into biomedical or biobehavioral research careers by helping them offset the educational costs of an advanced degree. Independent research applicants will be expected to provide a minimum of three but no more than five referees, or recommenders. These individuals will upload their reference letters to NIH through an online portal. The URL for the portal is provided to the referees by an email message sent by the applicant.

It is important to note that the referee is *not* required to have an eRA Commons account to provide a reference letter. However the referee will need to know the applicant's Commons User ID to successfully submit the letter.

The responsibilities of the referee 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 applicant. 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
- 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 a referee/recommender, you should know that at no time can the applicant access the content of your reference letter. They will only be able to see when and by whom reference letters have been submitted for a given application.

To begin, you will need to go to the portal provided to you as a link in the email sent to you from the applicant who is requesting the reference letter. 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 Referee 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 also now 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 final step is to check the two checkboxes just below the reference letter 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 referee 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 referee portal page. Select the second radio button for Preview and Download Previously Submitted Reference Letter, and 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 reference letter for a Loan Repayment Program applicant. If you need help, you can reach out to the LRP Information Center. If you need technical assistance with submitting your reference letter, please contact the eRA Service Desk.

- The LRP webpage: <https://www.lrp.nih.gov/>
- LTP Referees/Recommenders Page: <https://www.lrp.nih.gov/referees-recommenders>
- **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 the submission of a reference letter for an applicant of a Loan Repayment Program award. Thank you for watching.