



Once the faculty has reviewed the above documentation, the faculty and student should have a 30- to 60-minute meeting. It is then easiest to write the LoR immediately after this meeting.

What is the Structure and Content of the LoR?

In this section we will propose a sample structure for a typical LoR for residency training. The letter should be written on letterhead and the heading of the letter should include the student's AAMC ID, name and the date.

The letter should open with "Dear Program Director" and the first paragraph should again reference the student's name, what field of medicine they are applying to, e.g. Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act disclaimer.

Next, the faculty should explain their relationship with the student. For example, the faculty may have interacted with the student during six weeks of the ob-gyn clerkship, and then four weeks of a maternal fetal medicine 4th-year elective. Or, perhaps the faculty worked with the student for a year on a research project. This paragraph should also include the faculty member's expertise in medical education so that the reader can make a judgment on the faculty member's ability to identify strong students.

Potential topics for discussion in the body of the letter include:

- Medical knowledge
- Professionalism
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Advocacy, research, QI, service, curriculum development
- Personal characteristics
- Passion for the specialty
- Future potential

The body of the letter should not recapitulate the student's CV, but it should add to the student's application. The CV lists the outcomes of the student's hard work. Take one of those outcomes and comment on the skills that the student now has to bring to a residency program. For example, if the student wrote a research manuscript, explain the role that the student played and the skills they acquired. This may include being able to formulate a research question, do a literature search, collaborate with a statistician and collect data.

Another helpful hint is to think about the student from the perspective of a residency program director. What knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors does a program director want in an

applicant? Think about the student as a clinician, a surgeon, a researcher, an educator and a leader. Support statements with specific examples of observed performance. For example, if one of the student's qualities is compassion, support it with an example of an observed patient encounter. If the student has strong technical skills, give an example from the operating room where this was observed, e.g. closing a Pfannenstiel incision.

In the closing paragraph comment on what makes the student unique or sets them apart from other applicants. Reiterate the strength of the overall recommendation. The letter ends with a faculty signature, which may be electronic. With the signature, the faculty should include their academic rank and titles.

How Do Faculty Submit the Letter to ERAS?

Prior to submitting the final letter to ERAS, have a second person edit and proofread the letter and double check spelling, grammar, student name and gender pronouns. The final version of the letter should be on letterhead with pertinent faculty contact information, including a phone number or email. Faculty can sign the letter with an original or electronic signature.

All letters are now submitted electronically via the ERAS LoR portal on the AAMC website. The student will provide the faculty with the Letter Request Form (LRF) with a link to this portal and directions to upload the letter. When faculty click on the link, they will need an AAMC username and password. If the faculty does not have one, they will be prompted to create an account.

Criteria for uploading the LoR:

- File must be in a PDF format
- File cannot exceed 1 MB
- File cannot be encrypted or password protected
- Filename cannot contain special characters (*?:<>)
- Page size must be 8.5 x 11 inches

Steps to upload the letter:

- Identify the ERAS Letter ID on the Letter Request Form, click "Add New LoR"
- Enter the ERAS Letter ID exactly as it appears on the LRF, click Continue
- Verify the Application Season, Applicant, and LoR Author Details, click Upload
- Upload the LoR by selecting Browse to locate the file, click Continue
- After verifying the LoR, click Finish



How Can Writing LoRs Be Used for Promotion?

Faculty should inquire about the impact of the LoR and ask the students to keep them informed about their Match process, including number of interviews, programs inviting applicant to interview and Match results. This is an opportunity for the faculty advisor to build their CV by recording the activity under advising, include the names of students that a faculty member wrote LoRs for, the time commitment and

the Match success of those students to measure the impact or value of faculty effort. While writing LoRs can sometimes seem like an onerous task, it is incredibly important for the applicant and their success in the Match. It is an opportunity for faculty to have a huge impact on an applicant's future in ob-gyn and this honor should be welcomed and appreciated.





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This publication is part of the APGO Effective Student Advising Series. Advising medical students on a career in women's health can be one of the most fulfilling things that a medical educator does. Many physicians find themselves in the role of faculty advisor without any formal background or training in advising. The APGO Effective Student Advising Series pamphlets are intended to educate medical educators and learners about best practices for advising medical students on a career in women's health.



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