Is the IM SEL Mandatory, and should it be separate from the IM Chair/Department letter or any other standard, traditional LoRs?

No, the IM SEL is not mandatory, though it is recommended when feasible. The IM SEL is intended to replace the Chair/Departmental Letter and can also replace a standard LoR. As above, it is not meant to replace all LoRs. The IM SEL should be uploaded in place of the Chair/Department letter if the residency program requires/encourages a Department of Medicine (DOM) letter.

The IM SEL is a new and enhanced document from last year’s SLOE; thus, many US allopathic and osteopathic schools are not yet currently structured to produce all the information sought in the IM SEL. It is acceptable and understandable if certain components of the SEL cannot currently be provided.

Succinct descriptors of your medical school’s assessment process, how metrics are produced, and how students are graded will assist in the holistic review process. Different schools may employ different metrics to illustrate the learner’s growth and performance, including challenge areas. Since the IM SEL can allow for more equitable and direct comparisons in specific skills important in IM residencies, information on a student’s non-cognitive skills is also desired. Above all, IM SELs that provide more data will benefit applicants and will be viewed as a more trusted source, providing residency program directors a detailed composition of the learner for holistic review.

Who can complete the IM SEL?

For international medical graduate (IMG) letter writers, IM SEL authorship or responsibility will need to be adapted to fit the individual or institution’s process. Details of authorship should be indicated in the IM SEL section, Statement of Letter Preparation. The IM SEL can be completed by an individual observer from their medical school or an internship when a committee is not feasible or practical. Details of authorship should include relationship duration and the contact nature with the applicant (e.g., advisor, direct observer, indirect observer, etc.).

How should the IM SEL be uploaded?

The IM SEL should be uploaded into ERAS in the same manner as a standard LoR. It can be uploaded in place of the “Chair/Departmental Letter”, or it can be uploaded in lieu of a standard LoR.

For More Information...

AAIM conducted a webinar regarding the IM SEL on July 23, 2021. The webinar was recorded, so feel free to view the recording: https://www.im.org/meetings/webinars.

A comprehensive IM SEL FAQs addresses additional inquiries the Alliance received. Please click on the hyperlink to be directed to the document.

Should you have any additional clarifying questions, please direct them to educationandresearch@im.org.