

# Letters of Support

## How to Write an Effective Letter of Support

We recommend that you offer to draft a letter of support for your consultant(s)/collaborator(s) to ensure that all deadlines are met.

In addition, by providing a draft letter of support, you ensure two things:

1. That the letter of support will contain all of the information you need
2. That you will get the letter back from your consultant(s)/collaborator(s) in a timely fashion (assuming you give them enough lead time! We suggest 2-3 weeks)

Drafting your own letters of support also serves another important purpose. It can give both parties an early warning of unrealistic expectations. It is a vehicle for negotiating exactly what services, reagents, or expertise will be provided to support your work.

The goals of a letter of support are to:

- Specify what the consultant(s)/collaborator(s) will contribute to the research
- Convince the reviewer that the consultant(s)/collaborator(s) will fulfill the request
- Convey enthusiasm for the work
- Lend credibility to your proposal

As long as your letter demonstrates specifically what your collaborator(s) will be contributing to the project, there is no right or wrong way to draft a strong letter of support in the absence of funding agency guidelines. One format that you might consider in the absence of such guidelines follows.

## Example Letter of Support Format:

Letters of support should be:

- Unique and written from the point of view of your collaborator(s) or consultant(s)
- Printed on institutional letterhead and signed by the appropriate party (someone authorized to make the commitment of support)
- Addressed either to the PI of the proposal or to the granting agency – check the guidelines of the specific grant and/or agency
- Address any specific guidelines (e.g., particular assurances) required by the funding agency or the university, as outlined in the Request for Application (RFA)
- Follow any other guidelines (e.g., page limits) required by the funding agency

### **First Paragraph** (1-3 sentences)

- Statement of support for the project/research – use words that convey enthusiasm

- Identify the research project by name/title

Examples:

“I am pleased to support your research proposal titled xxxx.”

“Your proposal to do xxxx has my enthusiastic support.”

### **Body Paragraphs** (1-3 paragraphs, or more as necessary)

- If applicable, state how the goals/research of the collaborator(s)/consultant(s) are well-aligned with the goals of the proposed research. What is the collaborator’s motivation to work with you?
- State as specifically as possible the role of the consultant(s)/collaborator(s) in the project.
- State why this collaborator/consultant is the appropriate person/organization/lab to perform the work.
  - What is their relevant experience/expertise? Have they previously worked on a similar project? Do they have a successful track record?
  - Do they have specialized equipment or reagents? Other resources?
- If you have worked with this collaborator before, be sure to say so! It demonstrates that a productive relationship has already been established.

### **Last Paragraph** (1-3 sentences)

- Include a cordial closing. The level of formality should be determined by the level of personal relationship between the PI and the collaborator/consultant. If you know each other very well, it can be less formal.

Examples:

“I look forward to collaborating with you on this work.”

“Best of luck with your grant application.”