

How to Write an Effective Letter of Support

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. Below is one format that you might consider following.

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
- Address any specific guidelines (*e.g., particular assurances*) required by the funding agency or the university, as outlined in the request for applications (RFA) or as requested by your research administrator
- 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 (*example: “I am pleased to support your research proposal titled xxx.”*)
- Identify the research project by name/title

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.