**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) 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
* 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.”