

Letters of Support General Guidance

Funding bodies often have guidance around what needs to be included in a letter of support including any institutional commitment that may be required.

If there is institutional commitment required, e.g. MRC New Investigator Research Grant, BBSRC David Phillips Fellowship, then discuss the request with the Department before proceeding as these will need approval first.

In general letters of support can be broken down into three parts as below.

1. Key Achievements and Track Record

These are usually included in the opening paragraph and are essentially the headlines about the applicant. Use the CV to pull out any key achievements, awards, prizes, major grants, recent high profile papers, anything that may make the applicant stand out. Demonstration of standing in the scientific community can also be included here, e.g. invitations to present research at conferences, invitations to participate on boards/committees, contribution to policy making etc. Demonstrating the candidate is on an upward trajectory is important.

2. The Project

What is the applicant's research expertise? Include here a brief synopsis of their research area (including any recent publications) and how their intended project builds on their track record. What is the likely impact of the research? Is there potential to translate the research? Is the project strategically important? Is this a priority area for the Department? Are there key internal/external collaborators involved? Particularly in a personal fellowship, what research will follow on for the candidate.

3. The Environment

Where will the research be undertaken? Who are the supervisors/senior staff and how will they provide support and mentorship? Why is Imperial the best place to undertake the research? Are there particular facilities/expertise available here? Training and development opportunities? For personal fellowships, having a strong personal development plan is crucial. Is there strategic importance? If Imperial is contributing any commitment towards the application this should be included.