

REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF SUPPORT POLICY	
Initiated by: ACvA Board	Approved by: ACvA Board
Version: 1.0	Date Approved: March 2023
Supersedes: N/A	Amendment date: N/A

1. Principles and Purpose

The Australian Cardiovascular Alliance (ACvA) often receives requests from its members and more broadly from the cardiovascular and stroke research community for letters of support to accompany funding applications. The purpose of this policy is to apply a consistent approach for requests for letters of support for research funding.

ACvA is committed to supporting its members to attract funding for projects that align with the ACvA's strategic priorities and initiatives. It should be noted that the provision of a letter of support does not automatically result in ACvA playing a role in the project. ACvA will assess the impact of each request individually to determine the nature and level of support it will provide.

2. Definitions

There are different types of support ACvA may be able to provide, for example:

Support in principle ACvA is in favour of the proposal or project, based on the information provided. The principle, or the idea, seems good and ACvA agrees with the outcome or benefit received.

Partnership An arrangement in which the parties agree to collaborate to advance their mutual interests.
A partnership can hold either or both parties responsible for all liabilities and will only be entered into if there is significant benefit that aligns directly with ACvA's Strategy and available funding and capacity. How ACvA will be recognised as a partner of the project (e.g. acknowledgment in a publication) is to be determined prior to entering the agreement. Clarity regarding the role of partners is to be provided along with the request. In some circumstances and on the advice of the ACvA Board Executive, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be entered into between the ACvA and the proposed partner.

3. Applications

A granting agency may require in-kind contributions or matched funding to demonstrate the commitment by an organization to the success of a research project or a proposal. These contributions may be considered part of the overall budget. Letters of support provide the funding agency with confirmation of the value of the contribution.

In-kind contributions are both non-monetary or cash equivalent resources that can be given a cash value, such as goods and/or services in support of a research project or a proposal. In-kind contributions may include: partner organisation

volunteer and staff time spent participating on the project; employee salaries for time allocated to the project; professional, analytical, and other donated services; travel; and dissemination of research knowledge through various means (i.e. website, membership e-newsletter, flagships). ACvA will determine the type of contribution to be provided and what resources and/or services will be allocated to the research project or proposal at the time of the request.

Matched funding will not be considered by ACvA at this time.

Qualification criteria the following qualifications will apply:

- The Principal Investigator (CIA) must be a current ACvA member.
- The application must be in line with ACvA strategic direction(s).
- The application must clearly describe how the ACvA can best collaborate and make a contribution.

Letters of Support will not generally be provided if:

- The objectives of the application do not fit with the ACvA Strategy, priorities & values.
- There is an ongoing expectation to continue the project beyond reasonable timeframes.
- ACvA does not have sufficient capacity and/or resources to allocate to the project.

4. Process

The applicant must follow these steps:

1. Send an email to ACvA Executive Director email: acva@ozheart.org as far as possible ahead of your submission deadline. Allow 2 weeks for the request to be processed.
2. Include the following information in your request:
 - a. Name of Principal Investigator (CIA), co-Principal Investigator(s) group (CIs) or organization
 - b. Grant title, name of funding agency and amount of funding being requested
 - c. A short paragraph highlighting the objectives of the grant application; explaining why ACvA should enter as partner, collaborator or end-user; and how ACvA will be engaged in the project.
 - d. A one-page summary of the proposed research
 - e. Name of the person and institution to which the letter should be addressed.
 - f. Any additional form(s) that need to be filled out
 - g. Any instructions and guidelines that may apply.

ACvA will follow these steps:

3. The ACvA Executive Director will contact the principal investigator within two business days to confirm receipt of the support letter request email. And to confirm that ACvA received all the information needed to produce the letter, to request some additional information, or to set up a call to discuss the proposal in more detail.

4. The ACvA Executive Director will assess the request for a letter of support to determine if the application qualifies as per the criteria set out above. If it qualifies, the next step will be to determine the type of support ACvA will provide and to specify, if required, in-kind contributions, costing and timeframes. Consultation will take place with the ACvA Board Executive Committee for Letters of Support or Partnership requests that do not meet all the criteria set out above and/or Partnership requests where there may infer/confer a liability to the organisation. The Executive will also advise on the need for a formal MoU with the proposed partner.
5. Once the above steps have been completed and the terms of the partnership or support have been agreed to by the ACvA Executive Director, the ACvA will send the applicant, by email, a signed copy of the support letter on official letterhead.
6. Requests determined as unsuccessful in accordance with the above criteria will be advised accordingly.
7. A register of letters of support will be kept and the ACvA Board will be updated quarterly.