Letters of Affiliation

The most competitive candidates will include documentation of contacts with potential host affiliations with the application. This could be of a letter of invitation from the host institution/organization/individual indicating research support or have access to facilities available to the applicant; or, it could be a letter indicating that the admitting institution provides courses in the applicant's areas of study. IIE refers to these letters synonymously as: letters of support, letters of affiliation, letters of invitation and/or letters of admission.

There are no specific requirements for the letter of support from the host institution. Every affiliation relationship will be different depending upon the candidate’s project. In general, letters of support on institutional letterhead sent with the application are preferred. The letters should state how the supervisor/host institution will help the applicant to facilitate the project (i.e., what resources will be offered, what kind of supervision will be given, etc.) Some applicants propose to do independent research, so these letters of support are more crucial to establishing the feasibility of a project. Other applicants propose study projects, so letters of support are really a complement to the overall application, but attest to its feasibility. Therefore, you should try to get a letter of support that is as detailed as possible. Ultimately, it is up to your host affiliation as to the level/kind of support that they are willing to offer you.

In the U.S., we have become accustomed to rapid response, especially in electronic communication. Many cultures do not have this expectation, and many people do not enjoy the reliable connectivity or easy access to the Internet that we do. Therefore, be advised that you may not receive a response to your inquiries as quickly as you might hope. Applicants are advised to begin their search for an affiliation as early as possible.

Letters of support can be submitted to IIE via regular mail after the deadline. However, we cannot guarantee that letters of support submitted separately from the full application will be successfully married up with the application in time for committee review. We will make every effort to do so, but can make no guarantee. Also, IIE cannot confirm receipt of any documents. Please do not call or email us to ask if your letter of support was received. We recommend that you send your materials using a method that will provide return receipt.

Please note that we will not accept letters of support, recommendation, or foreign language reports sent via email or fax.