

The Concrete Research Council's Annual RFP ACI Technical Committee Endorsement

The ACI Foundation's Concrete Research Council (CRC) strives to advance the knowledge and sustainable aspects of concrete materials, construction, and structures by soliciting and selecting research proposals, assisting in financing them, and publishing results, in coordination with ACI technical committees.

Principal investigators (PIs) are required to obtain documented support/endorsement from the most relevant ACI Technical Committee (TC) for the proposal to be considered for funding by the ACI Foundation. Endorsement requires the TC chair or a Subcommittee/Task Group Chair to complete an online endorsement form which will upload to the PI's application. There will be opportunity to:

- Confirm that an administrative ballot from either the full committee or subcommittee/task group (*at the discretion of the Main Committee Chair*) was performed and passed by majority vote.
- Indicate the importance of the proposal (*High, Medium, Low*) and if endorsing multiple proposals, provide the ranking (*#1 of 3, #3 of 5, etc.*) of each proposal.
- Additional comments regarding the merit of the proposed research are welcome.

The main purpose of requiring an administrative ballot is to facilitate committee awareness and discussion. These requirements are meant to improve communication between the PI, the ACI TC, and the CRC. The resulting involvement and assistance from the ACI TC to the PI will lead to greater project impact on ACI work, documents, and industry impact.

The TC will need time to administer a ballot, therefore, **the PI must contact the technical committee Chair by the posted deadline.**

Schedule for Submissions:

- CRC Annual RFP Opens: **August 1**
- Request for endorsement to ACI TC Chair: **September 1**
- *Suggested deadline for completing ballots: November 15*
- CRC Annual RFP Closes: **December 1**

Instructions to Principal Investigators

Contact and provide your research concept and proposal abstract/executive summary to the ACI TC Chair by **September 1**. It is your responsibility to confirm with the TC Chair the committee's method of evaluation for endorsement.

For example, committees may use a task group or a subcommittee to evaluate proposals/research. They may or may not require a brief presentation of the research. ACI technical committees may have defined research needs and not be open to reviewing proposals on all topics. Whatever the case, committees are required to perform an administrative ballot to determine support.

The TC may request additional information via conference call, online meeting, or during an in-person presentation at the fall ACI Concrete Convention to support a committee ballot. You may also be asked to revise your proposal based on TC feedback. A **completed endorsement from at least one ACI Technical Committee must be** submitted with your online proposal application. Additional endorsements from other ACI Technical Committees may be submitted but are optional.

Instructions to ACI Technical Committees

Principal Investigators may contact you for endorsement of their research proposal.

Proposal Evaluation - each TC may evaluate submitted proposals by the method that works best for that committee. Below are a few methods that various committees have found to be successful:

- **5-minute Presentation** – you may ask the PI to give a 5-minute presentation to the committee, subcommittee, or task group. Inform the PI what information you need, in addition to the executive summary of the proposal, for your group to assess whether to endorse the work or not.
- **Subcommittee Review** – some of the large committees have formed a standing subcommittee to review research needs and submitted proposals.
- **Task Group Review** – allow for volunteers from the committee to serve on a task group and rotate throughout your membership so that different members can contribute to proposal reviews.
- **Defined Research Needs** – if your committee prefers to only review proposals that meet a defined research need, please contact Tricia G. Ladely, ACI Foundation Assistant Director (+1-724-601-3075 / Tricia.Ladely@acifoundation.org) to discuss.

All evaluations, discussions and administrative ballots should be based on your typical committee preferences and logistics.

Conflict of Interest - the CRC requires all those reviewing proposals to determine and declare if they have a [Conflict of Interest](#).

A conflict of interest is when a reviewer:

- is a relative of the potential recipient,

- has a current, or is considering a future, business or financial relationship with the submitting organization/institution, potential recipient, or with a family member of the potential recipient, or
- is currently employed or enrolled, was previously employed or enrolled within the last 12 months, is being considered for employment, or is serving on governing committees at the submitting organization/institution.

If a reviewer determines that a conflict of interest exists, they shall notify the TC Chair and recuse themselves from any discussion of the research/proposal. They should also avoid any actions that are intended to influence other members to vote in favor or against the proposal and abstain from voting on the ballot.

Please note, ACI is a close-knit and small community, and individuals will have countless interactions with other individuals. These interactions may involve teamwork on technical committees, or friendships could exist, but these alone do not constitute a COI unless the reviewer cannot provide an *objective opinion*.

Confidentiality - as a reminder, the contents of each proposal are confidential and are to be used solely for evaluation purposes associated with the CRC RFP process. Final results of ACI Foundation funded research are required to be made available in the public domain without restriction.

You do not have to provide an endorsement for proposed research if the technical content of the proposal is not relevant to the concrete industry, the technical work of your committee or possibly other reasons specific to your committee.

You do not have to entertain any request for endorsement if the PI misses the deadline.

If your committee is in favor of the proposed research, tell the PI to enter your name and email in their online application and send you the request for endorsement. You will receive an email with a link to an online endorsement form. When completed, hit “submit” and the information will be saved directly to the online application.

Guidance on Administrative Ballots

The purpose of an administrative ballot (*either in person or via online meeting*) to the technical committee (*or at the discretion of the Main Committee Chair to a subcommittee or task group*) is to reflect and record support or non-support to endorse the research proposal.

- If the ballot DOES NOT PASS a majority vote, please provide general feedback to the requesting PI. Never provide details on specific committee members or their votes, only general anonymized results.

- If the ballot PASSES, indicate as such on the Endorsement Form and provide any pertinent comments that may help the CRC in their review.
- Indicate the importance of each proposal: high, medium, low.
- Multiple Proposals / Ballots - if you receive multiple endorsement requests from PIs, you will need to prioritize their importance to your committee or the concrete industry. Provide the rank (such as, #1 – of 2, #2 – of 3, etc.), in the online committee endorsement form.

Note: CRC, ACI, and Staff assess endorsed proposals based on their relevancy to ACI and the concrete industry and their potential to advance ACI standards, improve industry projects or systems, or provide thrusts into new markets. Therefore, your completed support form will be carefully used in the CRC’s review process.

Reference: Balloting is detailed in the 2022 ACI Technical Committee Manual. Administrative ballots are covered in section 3.1.1.

Generic example of an Administrative Ballot:

Ballot Type: Administrative

Ballot Title: Research Proposal on XYZ

Ballot ID: optional

Ballot Description: (Enter general description of what is being balloted and why.)

Project #: optional

Start Date: enter

End Date: enter

Ballot Items

1.	Do you approve of endorsing XYZ research?
2.	Do you approve of the following proposal ranking?

Voting Summary

There were 20 committee members eligible to vote.

Item	Affirmative	Affirmative with Comment	Negative	Abstain	Not Returned
1.	16	2 - comment(s)	0	1	1
2.	16	2 - comment(s)	0	2	0

BALLOT ITEM 1: *Indicate result (PASSED/DID NOT PASS).*

BALLOT ITEM 2: *Indicate result (PASSED/DID NOT PASS).*

The following information will be requested in the online endorsement form:

1. Proposal Title
2. Principle Investigator
3. ACI Committee Number (ACI ###)
4. ACI Committee Name (*as listed on the ACI Committee Directory*)
5. The importance of the proposed research as it relates to the technical activities of your ACI technical committee, the general activities of ACI and the concrete industry. Describe whether it will advance ACI standards, improve industry projects or systems, or provide thrust into new markets.
6. Identify which committee documents, ACI standards, or other industry documents the research will influence and advance.
7. Has or will your committee form a Task Group or identify an individual 'Champion' that will serve in an advisory capacity to the PI for the proposed research and assist the PI in project reporting to the ACI technical committee and the CRC at their bi-annual convention meetings? (Yes/No)
8. Has or will your committee form a task group or identify an individual 'Champion' that will assist the PI in the adoption and dissemination of project research findings in ACI documents and the concrete industry? (Yes/No)
9. Has or will your committee form a task group or identify an individual 'Champion' that will assist the PI in the adoption and dissemination of project research findings in ACI documents and the concrete industry? (Yes/No)
10. Did the PI present their research concept and proposal abstract or executive summary to your committee? (Yes/No) If YES, when: date of administrative ballot.
11. Has your committee performed an administrative ballot to vote on supporting the research proposal? (Yes/No). If YES, did the ballot obtain a majority approval?
12. Provide any additional comments from committee discussion or the ballot that will help the CRC review the merits of the proposal.
13. Was this the only proposal that your committee reviewed? (Yes/No) If YES, state the importance (high, medium low).
14. If your committee endorsed multiple proposals, please indicate the rank for this specific endorsement: #1 of 3 (highest), or #3 of 3 (lowest), etc.
15. Will your committee dedicate committee meeting time at ACI concrete convention meetings to receive project status updates and discuss implementation of results with the PI or Task Group or 'Champion' and document the discussions in the committee meeting minutes? (Yes/No)