



Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) Visa: Eligibility and Assessment Criteria

The Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa route is available for exceptional people in the natural sciences, medical sciences, engineering, social sciences and humanities and the arts who wish to enter the UK. People may apply to enter the UK through this route if:

- They are demonstrated to be world leaders in their field (exceptional talent); or
- They have demonstrated the potential to become world leaders in their fields (exceptional promise).

Applicants will be assessed by one of four Designated Competent Bodies: the British Academy (for applicants in the social sciences and humanities), The Royal Academy of Engineering (for applicants in engineering) and the Royal Society (for applicants in natural and medical sciences); and Arts Council England (for applicants in the arts). The three national academies (and Arts Council England) have agreed to advise UK Border Agency (UKBA) on the merits of applicants under Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent).

The national academies have been invited by the UKBA to fulfil this role in virtue of their national role and standing. The national academies have agreed in order to assist in the identification of outstanding scholars, scientists and engineers wishing to enter the UK under this new route.

Each Designated Competent Body will use its judgement of the evidence submitted to advise the UKBA on whether applicants can be defined as possessing “exceptional talent”, in relation to published criteria. It may consult with other bodies within the UK or internationally as part of this process.

Criteria for assessment for Tier 1 (Exceptional talent) Visa

Applicants for a visa under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route must demonstrate that they are either a world leader in their field, or have the potential to be a world leader.

The following criteria apply only to applicants in the fields of natural sciences, medical sciences, engineering, social sciences and humanities, who will be assessed by one of the three national academies (for full details of the remit of each academy, see the national academies’ Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa application form). These criteria will apply to all applicants making a Tier 1 Exceptional Talent application in the current financial year ending 31 March 2012. They are subject to annual review and consequently may change for applicants applying in future years.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants will **only** be eligible to apply for the exceptional talent route if they meet **all** the following mandatory criteria and **at least one** of the qualifying criteria. Applicants to the exceptional promise route will **only** be eligible to apply if they meet **all** the mandatory criteria for this route. The route for exceptional talent – both world leader and exceptional promise (potential world leader) – is open to active researchers in academic, industry or government research institutions.

Exceptional Talent (world leader)	Exceptional Promise (potential world leader)
Mandatory	Mandatory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an active researcher in a relevant field, typically within a university, research institute or within industry; • Have a PhD or equivalent research experience; • Provide a letter of personal recommendation from an eminent person resident in the UK who is familiar with your work and your contribution to your field, and is qualified to assess your claim to be a world leader in your field; • Meet one or more of the following Qualifying Criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an active researcher in a relevant field, typically within a university, research institute or within industry; • Have a PhD or equivalent research experience; • Provide a letter of personal recommendation from an eminent person resident in the UK who is familiar with your work and your contribution to your field, and is qualified to assess your claim that you have the potential to be a world leader in your field; • Be at an early stage in your career; • Have been awarded, hold, or have held in the past five years, a prestigious UK-based Research Fellowship, or an international Fellowship judged by the competent bodies to be of equivalent standing.
Qualifying	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a member of your national academy or a foreign member of academies of other countries (in particular any of the UK national academies); • Have been awarded a prestigious internationally recognised prize; • Provide a written recommendation from a reputable UK organisation concerned with research in your field. The letter must be written by an authorised senior member of the organisation, such as a Chief Executive, Vice-Chancellor or similar, on official paper. 	

Application process

In addition to the standard VAF9 application form, you must:

- Complete the national academies' Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa application form;
- Provide a short curriculum vitae outlining your career and publication history (of no more than 3 A4 sides in length, in pdf format);
- Provide a mandatory letter of recommendation from an eminent person resident in the UK who is familiar with your work and your contribution to your field, and is qualified to assess your claim to be a world leader or a potential world leader in your field. The letter should include details of how the eminent person knows the applicant; the applicant's achievements in the specialist field, and how in the opinion of the eminent person the applicant exhibits exceptional talent; how the applicant would benefit from living in the UK; and the contribution they would make to UK research excellence and to wider society.
- Provide evidence in relation to at least one of the qualifying criteria listed above.

Documents should be provided to the UK Border Agency along with your visa application form in hard copy. Authorised English translations must be provided for all documents which are not originally written in English. Applications must be printed and will not be accepted if hand written.

Any applicant submitting false or fraudulent evidence will be ineligible for consideration through this scheme. If evidence submitted is subsequently found to be false or fraudulent the UK Border Agency will be informed immediately and will take action accordingly.

Assessment Process

The national academy which is acting as a Designated Competent Body will consider your application against a number of eligibility and assessment criteria, as detailed above and below. A first consideration undertaken by the Designated Competent Body will check whether the application meets the published eligibility criteria. In cases where the Designated Competent Body considers the application to meet the criteria, it will seek comments from experts in your field. Experts will be asked to indicate if there are any conflicts of interest with regard to your application; if conflicts of interest exist, another expert will be asked to comment instead. In cases where, in the view of the Designated Competent Body, the published eligibility criteria have not been met, the application will not be passed on to the next stage of consideration.

Assessment Criteria

When assessing applicants the national academies will take into consideration the following:

- Your track record/career history (including your international standing, the significance of your publications, prizes and research funding awarded, patents, and the impact of past innovation activity, in a company, academia or as an individual);
- The strength of the supporting statements in the letter of personal recommendation, and evidence in relation to qualifying criteria, including a written recommendation from a reputable UK organisation concerned with research in your field (if relevant);
- The expected benefits of your presence in the UK in terms of the contribution to UK research excellence and to wider society, including potential economic benefits from exploitation of intellectual capital;
- In addition, the competent bodies will also consider:

Exceptional Talent (world leader)	Exceptional Promise (potential world leader)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether you are the winner of a prestigious prize or award; • Whether you have secured significant funding for your work in the past ten years; • Whether you are regarded as a world leader in your field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether you have provided evidence sufficient to demonstrate that you have the potential to be a future world leader in the field; • The level of additional funding secured during or following tenure of a relevant fellowship; • Whether you can provide evidence of a relevant prize or award for early career researchers; • The significance of your contribution to your field relative to your career stage.

Advice to UKBA

The Designated Competent Body will provide the UKBA with an assessment of whether an applicant meets the assessment criteria and will advise the UKBA accordingly. All decisions as to whether or not to grant entry to an applicant will be made by the UKBA. If the UKBA deems that an applicant has not qualified under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route, he/she may still apply for UK entry through other routes.

All enquiries should be directed to UKBA, not to the competent body.

UKBA will consider each application, taking into account the advice from the Designated Competent Body and the requirements of the Immigration Rules, and decide whether the application for entry clearance, leave to enter or remain should be granted or refused. If the UKBA refuses an application for entry clearance, leave to enter or remain under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route, the applicant may still apply for UK entry through other routes.

The decision as to whether or not to grant entry to an applicant will be made by the UKBA.