



## Tier 1 Exceptional Talent Route

### Tech City UK Eligibility and Assessment Criteria

Tech City UK is one of five Designated Competent Bodies appointed by the Home Office who assess applications from migrants wishing to enter the country under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route. Tech City UK can make up to 200 recommendations to the Home Office for allocation of up to 1000 visas under this strand.

The following criteria apply only to digital technology applicants who will be assessed by Tech City UK. These criteria will apply to all applicants making a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route application from 6 April 2014 to 5 April 2015. They are subject to annual review and as a result may change for applicants applying in future years.

#### **Eligibility criteria**

Successful applicants will be currently engaged professionally as practitioners in their field and able to evidence a substantial track record at a high level in at least one country other than their country of residence. We expect applicants to demonstrate recent and regular activity. Other professional practice will be considered in the context of company success, industry recognition and individual endorsement.

In order to enter the UK through the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route you must be established as a world-leading recognised expert in your field within the digital and tech industry.

You must be able to demonstrate that you are professionally engaged in producing work of outstanding quality. Successful applicants will have been either entrepreneurs or employees who have published (other than exclusively in newspapers or magazines), distributed, exhibited internationally or established businesses.

#### **How to provide evidence of exceptional talent**

You must provide the following documents to support the application:

1. Evidence of exceptional talent in your field (see details below); and
2. Letter of endorsement (see details below)

#### **Application process**

To demonstrate Exceptional Talent within the field of digital technology you must meet the following

criteria:

**1. Provide evidence that your work is of exceptional quality and has national or international recognition as set out below:**

**Exceptional Talent (world leader)**

This should consist of **no more than ten documents** in total to support **all the mandatory criteria** and **two or more** of the qualifying criteria set out below.

For digital technology industry evidence for this section please see Appendix 1

**Mandatory**

You must:

- Have a proven track record of innovation in the digital technology sector as either:
  - A director or founder of a digital technology sector company; or
  - An employee within the digital technology sector
  
- Provide a dated letter of recommendation from a recognised UK based expert who is familiar with the applicants work and contribution to their field, and is qualified to assess his claim to be a world leader in his field;
  
- Meet two or more of the Qualifying Criteria.

**Qualifying**

- Have led in the development of new or leading-edge technology.
  
- Have had significant commercial success in the digital technology sector.
  
- Have received or been nominated for a prestigious internationally recognised prize in the digital technology sector.
  
- Have been recognised as a world leading talent in the digital technology sector.

**2. In addition to the relevant Home Office application form, the applicant must submit**

- (a) A completed Designated Competent Bodies' Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) application form;
- (b) A short curriculum vitae outlined his career and publication history (of no more than 3 A4 sides in length);
- (c) Dated letter of recommendation from a UK based recognised expert who is familiar with your work and contribution to your field, and is qualified to assess your claim to be a world leader in your field. Further details of the contents of this letter are available in Appendix 1 below.

(e) Evidence in relation to at least two of the qualifying criteria listed above.

**3. The documents in paragraph 2 above must be written in English or accompanied by authorised English translations.**

**4. When assessing applicants Tech City UK will take into consideration the following:**

(a) Your track record/career history (including your international standing, the significance of your work and the impact of your activity in a company or as an individual);

(b) The strength of the supporting statements in the letter of personal recommendation, and evidence in relation to qualifying criteria;

(c) The expected benefits of your presence in the UK in terms of the contribution to the UK digital technology sector.

### Assessment Process

Tech City UK which is acting as a Designated Competent Body will consider the 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.

### Advice to Home Office

Tech City UK will provide the Home Office with an assessment of whether an application meets the eligibility and assessment criteria and will advise the Home Office accordingly. All decisions as to whether or not to grant entry to the route will be made by the Home Office. If the Home Office deems that you have not qualified under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route, you may still apply through other routes.

All enquiries should be directed to the Home Office, not to Tech City UK. The decision as to whether or not to grant entry to you will be made by the Home Office.

### Appendix 1

The following examples indicate the type of evidence that could be assessed by Tech City UK when looking at the mandatory and qualifying criteria. These examples are not exhaustive and alternative evidence can be supplied to demonstrate you meet the relevant criteria.

**1) Examples of Authoritative Contributions via award, speaking engagements, or authorship.**

- Have won or been nominated for a nationally or internationally recognised Tech Award
- Has been a keynote speaker at a global digital technology conference
- Has authored a well-reviewed book on digital technology or on programming or published material in a professional or major trade publication which shall include the title, date and author of such published material and any necessary translation.

It remains for Tech City UK to judge whether a particular award provides appropriate evidence of Exceptional Talent.

## **2) Proof of experience in a digital technology business as:**

- An Executive level employee with shares in the company
- An employee with distinguished reputations in their field
- A Founder with shares in a company

Examples of evidence could include, publicity releases, publications, contract or endorsements or letters of recommendation from senior executives in the applicant's field.

## **3) Proof of Technical Contributions:**

An example of this could be:

- Evidence you are a maintainer of a major open source\* project
- Demonstration of product or application development or design with distinguished reputations as shown by critical reviews, ads, publicity releases, publications, contract or endorsements
- Evidence of contribution to patents.

\*Major Open Source projects are described as major programming languages, or frameworks. Ruby, Ruby on Rails, Django, Python, Go, PHP, etc.

If you want to use this information to show you meet the criteria, you will need to submit your GitHub or similar code hosting public profiles and/or patent paperwork.

It remains for Tech City UK to judge whether a particular programme provides appropriate evidence of Exceptional Talent.

## **4) Evidence of any active digital technology businesses you have established outside of the UK or businesses which have dissolved in the last five (5) years.**

- Evidence for each business should include your last set of audited accounts and projection for current financial year.
- Evidence should also be provided regarding the current number of outlets or stockists of the business' products.

## 5) Provide letter of endorsement as set out below:

You must provide a letter of endorsement (as described below) from a senior member of an established organisation in the digital technology sector. This should be an institution or company with a national or international reputation and recognised expertise in your specialist field.

Acceptable organisations would be those which are well established nationally and/or internationally, work with industry experts and are widely acknowledged as possessing expertise in your field.

Tech City UK reserves the right to determine whether organisations or individuals are well established and widely acknowledged as possessing expertise in your field.

## 6) All letters of endorsement should:

- Be written on headed paper, dated, and signed by the author who must be an authorised member of the organisation such as the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Finance Director or Head of Course
- Include details of the author's credentials (for example, a CV/resume) and how they know you (personal relationship or reputation)
- Detail the your achievements in your specialist field and how in the opinion of the author they have: demonstrated that you are a world leader in your field
- Describe how you would benefit from living in the UK and the contribution you could make to the UK digital technology sector
- Details of any future professional engagements you have in the UK would also contribute towards Tech City's assessment
- Include full contact details of the author including personal email address and direct telephone number so that personal contact can be made.

Letters of endorsement should be written specifically for this purpose and include the information detailed above. The letter should not be a general all-purpose reference letter.

## 7) Format of application

Completed Tech City UK application forms should be accompanied by **no more than ten** supporting documents in total to support **all the mandatory criteria and two or more of the qualifying criteria** set out above. Sending additional information is unlikely to aid your application and may delay the consideration.