



UK Visas & Immigration

Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent)

version 07/18

Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) of the Points Based System – Policy Guidance

This guidance is to be used for all Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent)
applications made on or after 6 July 2018

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Introduction

1. This document provides policy guidance to migrants wishing to apply for the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) category of the Points Based System and should be read alongside the relevant paragraphs of the Immigration Rules.
2. This document reflects policy at the time of publication and is subject to change. You should check the guidance regularly to confirm the current requirements to obtain limited or indefinite leave.
3. For the purpose of this guidance, the terms 'we', 'us' and 'our' refer to the Home Office. 'You and your' refers to the person making the application.

Who is the route for?

4. This route is designed for highly skilled individuals in the fields of science, humanities, engineering, the arts and digital technology who will enrich the United Kingdom's knowledge economy and cultural life. We recognise that such talented individuals should have few restrictions on their economic activity once here. If you qualify, the route allows you to work and change employers, or to be self-employed, without the need for further authorisation or to be sponsored for employment in a specific post.
5. You may qualify under this route if you are already internationally recognised as having made significant contributions as a leader in your field, or you have already demonstrated potential to contribute significantly as a future leader in your field. Annex A of this document describes the criteria you would need to meet.

Key Facts*

<p>How much leave will I be granted?</p>	<p>You can choose how much leave to apply for, up to a maximum of 5 years (5 years 4 months if obtaining Entry Clearance) in each grant.</p> <p>You can subsequently apply to extend your leave if you require further limited leave in the United Kingdom. There is no maximum limit on the time you can spend in the UK in this category.</p> <p>Extension applications can be made while you are still in the UK, or alternatively if you need to travel, they can be submitted overseas in any country as long as you have authority to be living in that country (and have been given authority to live there for more than 6 months).</p>
<p>What work can I do under Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent)?</p>	<p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work as self employed/contracted/employed; • work in any sector** • work for any employer and move between employers without any additional approval from the Home Office • take up employment at any level** <p>You cannot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work as a Doctor or Dentist in Training; or • as a professional sportsperson/sports coach. <p>** Please note that to extend your leave, or apply for settlement, you will need to demonstrate that you have been</p>

	paid for employment in your specialist field.
Can I apply for leave if I am already in the UK?	<p>You can switch into Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) if you have leave in the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Tier 1 route; • Any Tier 2 route; or • Tier 5 (Temporary Worker), if you have been sponsored in the Government Authorised Exchange sub-category in an exchange scheme for sponsored researchers <p>If you hold leave in any other category, you should leave the UK and apply for entry clearance.</p>
Can I make my Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) application in person at a Premium Service Centre in the United Kingdom?	<p>You cannot submit an application for endorsement (stage 1 application) at a Premium Service Centre (PSC).</p> <p>You can submit your leave application (stage 2) at a PSC, but should only do so if you have already received your endorsement (stage 1) decision. See Timing your stage 1 application for further details.</p> <p>Applications to extend your Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) leave or to apply for settlement may be also be submitted at a PSC.</p>
Can I make a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) entry clearance application using a priority service outside of the United Kingdom?	<p>You cannot submit an application for endorsement (stage 1 application) in person.</p> <p>You may be able to submit your entry clearance application (stage 2) using a priority service or super priority service, depending on options available in the country where you apply. More details of the available options in each country are available at www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre.</p> <p>You should only apply for stage 2 if you have already received your endorsement (stage 1) decision. See Timing your stage 2 application for further details.</p> <p>Applications to extend your Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) leave may also be submitted via premium services where applicable.</p>
Are dependants allowed?	<p>Yes. Your dependants can accompany you if they meet the relevant requirements. Further details are available here: www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent/family-members</p>
Can I travel while my application is outstanding?	<p>You may travel while your application for endorsement (stage 1 application) is outstanding. You are not required to submit your passport at this stage.</p> <p>If you have submitted a leave application (stage 2) while you are in the United Kingdom, you cannot travel outside of the United Kingdom while your application is under consideration.</p>

Can I study?	Yes, but you may need to need to obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate. Further details are available later in this document: see Annex B .
Can I claim public funds e.g. child/housing benefit?	Most migrants are unable to claim public funds. There are some exceptions. Further details are available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-funds--2/public-funds .
Do I have to demonstrate a minimum level of English to apply?	There is no requirement to speak English at either the initial stage or when applying for an extension of limited leave to remain. You will need to demonstrate your level of English to qualify for settlement.
Does the route lead to settlement?	<p>Yes. However, the qualifying period depends on whether you are granted under either the exceptional talent (3 years) or exceptional promise (5 years) criteria. The period must be continuous though some absences are allowed. This means that it is possible to apply for settlement without extending limited leave, in a number of circumstances.</p> <p>Further details are available later in this policy document: see Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) settlement (Indefinite Leave to Remain) applications.</p> <p>Please note, the qualifying period for any PBS Dependant Partner is 5 years, regardless of whether the main applicant is eligible for accelerated settlement. Dependent children can qualify for settlement if both parents are settled or applying for settlement at the same time, or at the same time as the main applicant if the main applicant has sole responsibility for them.</p>

*This table reflects the current Immigration Rules and is subject to change.

The Application Process

6. Applying for your first Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa is a two-stage process.
7. **Stage 1** assesses your skills, abilities and achievements and enables the Designated Competent Bodies to decide whether you should be endorsed in order to progress your application. While Stage 1 applications are submitted to the Home Office, they are **not** immigration applications. As such, Stage 1 applications do not affect any current leave you hold in any way.
8. Stage 1 is submitted online. It can be submitted from wherever you are in the world but the supporting evidence must be sent to the UK for consideration. The form is available here: <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-1-exceptional-talent-endorsement>.
9. If you are granted an endorsement by a Designated Competent Body, you must then apply for Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) leave to enter or remain. This is **Stage 2** of the process, which is undertaken solely by the Home Office and assesses immigration matters only.

10. How you apply for stage 2 depends on where you are applying from.

I am outside of the UK	I am inside the UK
The majority of applicants must apply online. Further details are available here: www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent/apply	You must apply online The form is available here: https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-1-exceptional-talent-visa

11. There are separate fees for each stage. You can check whether you have been successful at stage 1 before you apply for stage 2. You can, however, also apply for stage 1 and stage 2 at the same time if you wish. Please note that stage 1 applications must be submitted by post and cannot be accepted at a Premium Service Centre or visa application centre outside of the UK. Further details are available later in this document: see [Timing your stage 1 application](#).
12. If you are applying for an extension of Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) leave which you already hold, you only need to make a single application. You do not need to obtain a new endorsement. You will need to pay the full Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) fee in a single payment. Further details are available later in this document: see [Extending your Tier 1 \(Exceptional Talent\) Leave](#).
13. You can also make an application for settlement once you have been in the United Kingdom continuously for either 3 or 5 years, depending on whether you were endorsed under exceptional talent or exceptional promise criteria. Further details on settlement criteria are available later in this document: see [Tier 1 \(Exceptional Talent\) settlement \(Indefinite Leave to Remain\) applications](#)
14. If you are applying for the Isle of Man's Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route, please see [Annex F](#).

Stage 1 – Exceptional Talent Endorsement

The Designated Competent Bodies

15. At stage 1, one of five Designated Competent Bodies will advise the Home Office whether you meet its eligibility criteria and have reached the appropriate level to be endorsed under Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent).
16. The recognised Designated Competent Bodies are:
 - **Arts Council England** – for arts, culture, fashion, film and television applications;
 - **The British Academy** – for humanities and social science applications;
 - **The Royal Society** - for natural sciences and medical science research applications;
 - **The Royal Academy of Engineering** – for engineering applications; and
 - **Tech Nation** – for digital technology applications.
17. The criteria applied by each Designated Competent Body when deciding whether you show Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise appear in Appendix L of the Immigration Rules available on GOV.UK here: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-l-tier-1-competent-body-criteria. They also form part of this guidance.
18. Each Designated Competent Body specifies the evidence you must send to demonstrate that you meet their criteria. You should only provide photocopies of these documents, unless we

direct you to provide originals. Please note that we will not take responsibility for irreplaceable and/or valuable items provided as part of an application.

19. **In addition to the stage 1 form, if you are applying to be considered by Tech Nation you must also complete a separate form that includes questions specific to digital technology applicants.** This is available here: <https://technation.io/visa-scheme/>. You will not be required to submit any additional evidence to the Home Office as the Tech Nation online form allows you to upload evidence directly.
20. Sector specific questions for other Designated Competent Bodies are included within the stage 1 form.
21. We cannot advise which Designated Competent Body is best placed to consider your skill set. You cannot ask for two Designated Competent Bodies to assess a single stage 1 application. This document provides guidance on what specialties each Designated Competent Body cover and you should use this to select which is most appropriate.
22. Designated Competent Bodies have two sets of criteria:
 - **Exceptional Talent criteria** for applicants who have already demonstrated that they have made a significant contribution as a leader to their field; and
 - **Exceptional Promise criteria** for applicants who may be earlier in their careers but have already shown the potential to make significant contributions as a future leader in their field.
23. Some Designated Competent Bodies offer fast-track options for certain applicants, details of which are included later in this guidance.
24. Further details on the Designated Competent Body criteria and requirements are set out in at [Annex A](#) of this document. You should fully read these requirements before submitting an application.
25. If you receive an endorsement from the Designated Competent Body, your stage 1 application will be approved by the Home Office and you can move onto stage 2 of the process. You are not able to live and work in the UK as a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) migrant until you have made a successful stage 2 application.

The limit

26. Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) is subject to a limit of 2,000 endorsements in total per year (beginning on 6 April one year and ending on 5 April the following year). This is split into 2 phases with half the limit available from 6 April to 30 September each year; and the body's remaining unused allocated endorsements made available from 1 October to 5 April each year.
27. The first 1000 places in the limit are allocated between the Designated Competent Bodies as follows:
 - Arts Council England - 250 places;
 - The Royal Society - 250 places;
 - The Royal Academy of Engineering - 150 places;
 - The British Academy - 150 places;
 - Tech Nation - 200 places.
28. The remaining 1000 places are unallocated and are available to any Designated Competent Body once it has used its allocated places. Priority will be given based on the date of application.
29. Additionally places can be reallocated between Designated Competent Bodies within the overall limit, if agreed by the relevant bodies.

30. If the limit for a Designated Competent Body is reached at any point, and there are no remaining unallocated places, this will be clearly stated on the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) section of the GOV.UK website so you should check this before making an application. Further information would appear here only if a limit is reached: www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent.
31. For information about how the Isle of Man's Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route affects the UK limit, please see [Annex F](#).

Timing your stage 1 application

32. The service standards for stage 1 applications can be found at www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent/eligibility.
33. **Please note that a Stage 1 application will not extend your leave while a decision is being made on your endorsement application.** This means that if you are already inside the United Kingdom and your leave is expiring while your stage 1 application is under consideration, **you will be considered to be overstaying** in the United Kingdom.
34. If your current leave is due to expire imminently, and you wish to retain your current permission to live and work in the UK whilst your endorsement application is being considered, you should consider submitting the stage 1 application and the stage 2 application at the same time – though this is not mandatory. If you are making both applications at the same time, you must indicate this on the application forms so that your stage 2 application is held pending the result of your stage 1 application. However, if your stage 1 application is unsuccessful then both applications will be refused and you will lose both the stage 1 and stage 2 fees. We will not retain your stage 2 application to allow you to reapply for stage 1.
35. **Applications for stage 1 cannot be submitted in person at a Premium Service Centre (PSC) or at a visa application centre overseas.** If you submit a stage 1 application at the PSC it will be rejected. You will be charged a rejection fee and your appointment booking fee will not be refunded.
36. As stage 1 is not an immigration application, there is no requirement to submit your passport at this stage (unless you are simultaneously submitting a stage 2 application). This means that you can travel whilst the application is under consideration, provided you hold valid leave to remain. You can submit your stage 1 application while you are in the UK even if you are in a category which does not allow you to switch into Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent).
37. You should ensure that you are contactable via the email address provided on your form in case further information is required and because notification of your stage 1 decision will be emailed to that address.

Unsuccessful stage 1 applications

38. If your application for endorsement is unsuccessful and you think that a mistake has been made, you can ask us to check the decision by means of an endorsement review. Full guidance on endorsement reviews can be found in [Annex C](#) of this guidance.
39. Alternatively, you can make a new application for stage 1 or make an application under a different immigration route if you meet the relevant criteria for that route. Both of these options will require you to pay a new application fee.

Stage 2 - Immigration application

40. At stage 2, the Home Office will consider immigration aspects of your application including whether General Grounds for Refusal apply and, if you are in the United Kingdom already, whether you can switch into Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent).
41. You must submit a copy of your endorsement letter that was emailed to you when your stage 1 application was approved unless you have submitted stage 1 and stage 2 simultaneously (in which case these will be linked by the Home Office).
42. If you are applying from inside the UK, you must make a valid application. Further details on how to submit a valid application are provided when you complete your form.
43. **You must apply for stage 2 within three months of gaining your endorsement** or your immigration application will be refused and you will have to re-apply for endorsement.
44. If you intend to apply for settlement at some point in the future, you should retain a copy of your stage 1 letter. Your letter confirms whether you were granted under exceptional talent or exceptional promise criteria and will determine whether your qualifying period is 3 or 5 years respectively.

General Grounds for Refusal

45. General Grounds for Refusal are Immigration Rules which apply to all applicants, regardless of which route they have applied for. Details on General Grounds for Refusal are available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-grounds-for-refusal-about-this-guidance.

Switching

46. This is only relevant if you make your application from inside the United Kingdom.
47. You can switch into Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) from your current category of leave to remain in the United Kingdom if you have permission to stay as:
 - a Tier 1 Migrant;
 - a Tier 2 Migrant; or
 - a Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) Migrant, sponsored in the Government Authorised Exchange sub-category in an exchange scheme for sponsored researchers.
48. If you hold any other type of leave, you are unable to switch in-country into the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) category and you would instead have to return overseas to apply for entry clearance. If you do this, you should ensure that your stage 1 application is still valid (see [Timing your stage 2 application](#)).

Timing your stage 2 application

49. **If your stage 1 application is successful, the Designated Competent Body endorsement is valid for three months from the date of issue.** You must apply for stage 2 before this date or your application will be refused.
50. If you are already in the United Kingdom, you should apply for stage 2 before your current leave to remain expires – ideally, this should be at least a month before it expires. However, you should note that we will grant the period of leave which you request from the date that we make the decision, and consequently if you apply much earlier than one month before the

expiry of your current leave, there is a risk that you will not be granted enough leave to qualify for settlement without applying for a further extension.

51. Applications for stage 2 can be submitted in person at a Premium Service Centre (PSC) in the UK or via priority or super priority services outside of the UK (where applicable). These applications are subject to a higher application fee in return for a quicker decision. If you wish to apply using one of these services, you should only do so if you have already received your stage 1 (endorsement) decision. If you have submitted a stage 1 application which is still under consideration or you wish to submit the stage 1 and stage 2 applications at the same time, you should not apply in person. This is because your stage 2 premium application will be delayed but you will still be charged the higher fee. Further details of Premium Services are available on the website www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres. Further details of priority services available in the rest of the world can be found at www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre.
52. The service standards for stage 2 applications vary depending on where you make your application.
53. Current timeframes for considering overseas applications can be found at www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times. The service standards for in country applications can be found at www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent/switch-to-this-visa.
54. **If you are making a stage 2 application from within the UK, you should not make plans to travel outside of the Common Travel Area whilst your application is under consideration.** If you request your passport back from us in order to travel prior to a decision being reached on your application, your application will be treated as being withdrawn in accordance with Paragraph 34J of the Immigration Rules.

Receiving your stage 2 decision

55. Notification of your stage 2 decision, and return of any documents that you have submitted in support of your application, will usually be by post. In the UK, we will use Royal Mail 'Signed For'. If you would prefer, when you submit your stage 2 application you can provide a pre-paid Royal Mail 'Special Delivery Guaranteed' envelope of a sufficient size to return all your documentation.
56. If you apply at a Premium Service Centre, you will usually receive your stage 2 decision on the same day. For further details on receiving your decision using priority services available outside of the UK see www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre.

Successful stage 2 applications

57. The amount of leave you are granted will depend on the amount you request. Regardless of the length of leave you request, the stage 2 fee is the same. You are able to request one of the following options:

Outside the UK	Inside the UK
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 year• 2 years• 3 years• 4 years• 5 years and 4 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 year• 2 years• 3 years• 4 years• 5 years.

58. In addition to the stage 2 fee, you must have paid the correct Immigration Health Surcharge for the period of time you request when you make your stage 2 application. Guidance on the Immigration Health Surcharge can be found at www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent.

Unsuccessful stage 2 applications

59. If the Home Office refuses your stage 2 application and you think a mistake has been made, you can request a review of that decision.
60. More information about administrative review is available on the GOV.UK website at: www.gov.uk/ask-for-a-visa-administrative-review
61. In some cases, it may also be possible for you to re-apply for stage 2. For example, if your reason for refusal was that you were in the United Kingdom but unable to switch, you may wish to use the same stage 1 decision to apply from outside of the United Kingdom (as long as your endorsement is still within the 3-month validity period). Alternatively, you can make an application under a different immigration route if you meet the relevant criteria for that route.
62. Both of these options will require you to pay a new application fee.

Extending your Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) Leave

63. This section describes the current requirements for extensions. You should always check the latest guidance before you apply. Extension applications are made to the Home Office and mirror the Stage 2 application process. No stage 1 endorsement application is required.
64. If you are applying from inside the UK, you must make a valid application. Further details on how to submit a valid application are provided when you complete your form.
65. **To be approved you must meet the following two criteria:**
 - The Designated Competent Body that originally endorsed your stage 1 application has not advised the Home Office that this has been withdrawn; and
 - During your most recent period of leave as a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) migrant, you have earned money in the UK as a result of employment or self employment in your field of expertise (see paragraphs 69 and 70 below). This is the field for which the Designated Competent Body endorsed you.
66. As with stage 2 applications, your application will also be subject to General Grounds for Refusal. Details of General Grounds for Refusal are available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-grounds-for-refusal-about-this-guidance
67. You must have paid the correct Immigration Health Surcharge for the period of time you request when you make your extension application. Guidance on the Immigration Health Surcharge can be found at www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent.

Designated Competent Body has not withdrawn endorsement

68. Each Designated Competent Body is required to inform the Home Office if it withdraws an endorsement. Following a withdrawal, you would be contacted to confirm this and your leave would be curtailed (removed) as appropriate. You do not need to contact your specific Designated Competent Body or provide any evidence to demonstrate that you are still endorsed by the Designated Competent Body.

Previous earnings as a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) Migrant

69. The Immigration Rules specify the documents that we will accept as evidence of earnings (see [Annex B](#) for more information on specified documents). To show that you have personally

earned money in the UK as a result of employment or self employment in your expert field, you should provide the following supporting evidence:

If you are a salaried employee or a director of a limited company, you can provide one of the following documents:

- Payslips: These should be original formal payslips showing your employer's name. If you are unable to provide these, your alternative payslips must be accompanied by a letter from your employer, on the employer's company headed paper confirming the earnings.
- Personal bank statements clearly showing the payments made to you from your employer or a limited company of which you are a director: Bank statements provided must be on official bank stationery, and must show payments to you. If you wish to submit electronic bank statements you should also provide a supporting letter from the bank on the bank's headed paper confirming that the documents are authentic. Alternatively, we will accept an electronic bank statement bearing the official stamp of the bank issuing the statements. This stamp must appear on every page of the statement.
- An official tax document produced by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) or employer, which show earnings on which you have paid tax or will pay in a tax year. For these purposes, we define official tax documents as:
 - a document produced by HMRC that shows details of declarable taxable income on which tax has been paid or will be paid in a tax year (for example, a tax refund letter or tax demand);
 - a document produced by an employer as an official return to HMRC, showing details of earnings on which tax has been paid in a tax year (for example, a P60); or
 - a document produced by a person, business, or company as an official return to HMRC, showing details of earnings on which tax has been paid or will be paid in a tax year. The document must have been approved, registered, or stamped by HMRC.

Or

- Dividend vouchers. Dividend vouchers must show the amount of money paid by the company to you, normally from its profits. They should confirm both the gross and net dividend paid. You should provide a separate dividend voucher or payment advice slip for each dividend payment.

If you have worked in a self-employed capacity, you can provide one of the following documents:

- A letter from your accountant (confirming the amount you have earned): This letter should be on headed paper and confirm the gross and net pay for the period to be assessed. The letter should give a breakdown of salary, dividends, profits, tax credits and dates of net payments earned. If your earnings are a share of the net profit of the company, the letter should also explain this. All accountants must be either fully qualified chartered accountants or certified accountants who are members of a registered body in the UK.
- Company or business financial accounts: These must clearly show the net profit of the company or business. Accounts must show both a profit and loss account (or income and expenditure account if the organisation is not trading for profit) and the balance sheet should be signed by a director. Accounts should meet statutory requirements and should clearly show the net profit made over the earnings period to be assessed.

If you have worked as a sponsored researcher, you should provide evidence of your funding.

- The funding should be provided by an institution. It does not need to be based in the UK. The evidence can be in the form of a letter on official headed paper to you confirming the details of the funding. Evidence should include:
 - Your name;
 - The name of the sponsor;
 - The name of the host institution where you will be based;
 - The title of the post; and
 - Details of the funding provided, including the amount of funding.
70. Whichever type of employment you have undertaken, you will need to provide additional documents to show the money was earned as a result of work in your expert field. You will also have to explain why the work you have carried out is relevant to your expert field. The documents required are:
- A contract of service or work between you and a UK employer/institution which indicates the field of work you have undertaken; or
 - A letter on the UK employer/institution's official headed paper confirming that you have earned money in your expert field.

Timing your extension application

71. If you are already in the United Kingdom, you should apply for an extension of your leave before your current leave to remain expires. We encourage applications to be made at least a month before your existing leave expires. However, you should note that we will grant the period of leave which you request from the date that we make the decision and, consequently, if you apply much earlier than one month before the expiry of your current leave, there is a risk that you will not be granted enough leave to qualify for settlement without applying for a further extension.
72. Applications for extension can be submitted in person at a Premium Service Centre (PSC). PSC applications are subject to a higher application fee in return for a quicker decision. Further details of Premium Services are available on the website www.gov.uk/ukvi-premium-service-centres. You may also be able to submit a priority application outside of the UK. For further details of priority services available in the rest of the world see www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre.
73. The service standards for extension applications vary depending on where you make your application.
74. Current timeframes for considering overseas applications can be found at www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times. The service standards for in country applications can be found at www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent/extend-this-visa.

Receiving your extension decision

75. Notification of your extension decision, and return of any documents that you have submitted in support of your application, will usually be by post. In the UK, we will use Royal Mail 'Signed For'. If you would prefer, when you submit your extension application you can provide a pre-paid Royal Mail 'Special Delivery Guaranteed' envelope of a sufficient size to return all your documentation.
76. If you apply at a Premium Service Centre, you will usually receive your extension decision on the same day. For further details on receiving your decision using priority services available

outside of the UK see www.gov.uk/findwww.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre.

Unsuccessful extension applications

77. If the Home Office refuses your application and you think a mistake has been made you can request a review of the decision.
78. More information about administrative review, is available on the GOV.UK website at: www.gov.uk/ask-for-a-visa-administrative-review
79. Alternatively, you can make an application under a different immigration route if you meet the relevant criteria for that route. This will require you to pay a new application fee.

Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) settlement (Indefinite Leave to Remain) applications

80. This section describes the current requirements for settlement (also known as Indefinite Leave to Remain). Please note that the Immigration Rules are subject to change. You should always check the latest guidance before you apply.
81. The settlement form is called 'SET(O) – Application for indefinite leave to remain in the UK in one of the categories listed in this form and a biometric immigration document'. The form is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-settle-in-the-uk-form-seto
82. You will need to meet some requirements which apply to all Points Based System settlement applications and some which are specific to Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) applicants.
83. The Immigration Rules for settlement can be found in paragraph 245BF of Part 6A of the Immigration Rules. These are available on our website here: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-part-6a-the-points-based-system.

Length of time in the UK needed to qualify – settlement

84. If your endorsement was given under the exceptional promise criteria, you can apply for settlement under Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) once you have completed 5 years' continuous leave in the United Kingdom under the route.
85. However, if your endorsement was given under the Designated Competent Bodies' exceptional talent criteria, you can apply for settlement once you have completed 3 years' continuous leave.
86. In both cases, leave you have accrued under the following routes will count towards your three or five year continuous leave:
 - Tier 1 Migrant (excluding as a Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Migrant or Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) Migrant); or
 - Tier 2 Migrant (excluding as a Tier 2 (Intra-Company Transfer) Migrant).
87. Please note that your biometric residence permit does not confirm whether you were granted under talent or promise criteria. You can check by reading your stage 1 endorsement letter.

88. If you are not sure which criteria you were granted leave under, and you no longer hold a copy of your stage 1 endorsement letter, you can check this by emailing ExceptionalTalentEndorsements@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.
89. Your qualifying period can include time from the date your initial application (for entry clearance or leave to remain) was approved.
90. **You can apply for settlement up to 28 days before you reach the end of the qualifying period. If you apply earlier than that, your application may be refused.** Your qualifying period will be the 3 or 5 years immediately before the date you apply for settlement or the 3 or 5 years immediately before the date your settlement application is decided, depending on which is most beneficial for you. If you have spent more than the required time in the United Kingdom, we will only consider the most recent 3 or 5 years as applicable.

Absences - settlement

91. You cannot have had more than 180 days' absence from the United Kingdom during any consecutive 12 months of the qualifying period.
92. Whatever the reason for absences from the United Kingdom, they will still be counted towards the maximum 180 days (but see information about delayed entry to the UK below). This includes any absences for work reasons, or serious and compelling reasons. The only exception is where you have been absent from the United Kingdom assisting with a national or international humanitarian or environmental crisis, such as the Ebola crisis which began in West Africa in 2014 and you can provide evidence that this was the purpose of the absence.
93. You can include time between your entry clearance being granted and you entering the United Kingdom as part of your continuous period. Absences between the date entry clearance is granted and the date you enter the United Kingdom are treated as an absence from the United Kingdom and will form part of the 180 days allowed within a continuous 12-month period.

For example, if you entered the United Kingdom 100 days after you obtained entry clearance and have a further 81 days' absence during the remainder of the continuous 12-month period, you will exceed the 180 days you are permitted to be absent from the United Kingdom. You would therefore not qualify for settlement 5 years after the date you obtained entry clearance. You would need to wait until a date where you have spent a total of 5 years in the United Kingdom with absences of less than 180 days in any consecutive 12 month period, before you could qualify.

94. If you have been outside of the United Kingdom for more than 180 days in a consecutive 12-month period, you will need to start the qualifying period for settlement again. If this happens, you may need to obtain a further grant of limited leave to remain to complete your continuous period in the United Kingdom.
95. For settlement applications made from 11 January 2018, we consider absences from the UK on a rolling basis, rather than in separate consecutive 12-month periods. If your qualifying period includes leave granted before this date any absences during that leave will be considered under the previous rules – in separate 12-month periods, ending on the same date as you make your settlement application.

For example:

You apply for settlement on 30 June 2020. Your continuous period includes the following grants of leave:

- One grant of leave from 1 July 2015 to 28 July 2018 – Any absences during this grant of leave will be considered in separate 12 month periods, ending on 30 June each year.

- One grant of leave from 29 July 2018 to 30 June 2020 – Any absences during this grant of leave will be considered on a rolling basis. We will not include any absences from the previous grant of leave when we assess this.

Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) criteria - settlement

96. Settlement applications are made to the Home Office and you must meet the following two criteria:
- The Designated Competent Body that originally endorsed your stage 1 application has not advised the Home Office that this has been withdrawn; and
 - During your most recent period of leave as a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) migrant, you have earned money in the UK as a result of employment or self employment in your field of expertise. This is the field for which the Designated Competent Body endorsed you.
97. See the earlier section on [extension applications](#) for more details of these criteria.
98. As with stage 2 and extension applications, you will also be subject to General Grounds for Refusal. Further details on General Grounds for Refusal are available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-grounds-for-refusal-about-this-guidance.

Knowledge of Language and Life - settlement

99. When you apply for settlement, you are required to show that you have knowledge of language and life in the United Kingdom before you can be granted (unless you fall under an exemption).
100. You can demonstrate this by passing both the Life in the UK test and holding an English speaking and listening qualification at level B1 or above.
101. More information on Life in the UK test including how to book a test and the relevant exemptions can be found here: www.gov.uk/life-in-the-uk-test
102. More information on the language requirement can be found here: www.gov.uk/english-language

Annex A – The Designated Competent Body Guidance

A1. Introduction

This annex contains guidance on applying to each of the following Designated Competent Bodies:

- [The science Bodies – the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society.](#)
- [Arts Council England](#)
- [Tech Nation](#)

You should read fully the guidance for the Designated Competent Body which you want to consider your application.

Please note that the information contained in this annex is provided by the relevant Designated Competent Body.

Where the DCB requires a letter of personal recommendation from a UK based individual or to hold a UK researched based fellowship, specified evidence from the Isle of Man is also acceptable.

Science Bodies – the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society (the ‘Research and Innovation Talent’ Visa)

A2. Disciplines – Science Bodies (the ‘Research and Innovation Talent’ Visa)

These Designated Competent Bodies cover a range of disciplines in the areas of science, engineering, humanities and medicine for active researchers in academic, industry or government research institutions. You should use the list below to decide which, if any, cover your particular area of discipline.

The British Academy

Classical Antiquity

- Latin language and literature
- Ancient Greek language and literature
- Classical studies
- Ancient history

Theology and Religious Studies

- Theology
- Biblical studies
- Comparative religion
- Religious studies

African, Asian and the Middle East Studies

- Ancient oriental languages
- Chinese language and literature
- Japanese language and literature
- Other Asian languages and literature
- Modern middle eastern languages and literature
- African language and literature
- Ancient middle eastern/central Asian languages and literature

Linguistics and Philology

- Linguistics
- Sociolinguistics
- Philology
- Cognitive science
- Psycholinguistics

Early Modern Languages and Literature: From 1500 - 1830

- English language and literature from 1500 - 1830
- Celtic languages and literature from 1500 -

Modern Languages, Literatures and other Media: From 1830 to present day

- Comparative literature from 1830 to present day
- English language and literature from 1830 to

1830

- European languages and literature from 1500-1830
- Slavonic and east European languages and literature from 1500-1830
- Other languages and literature from 1500-1830

History of Art and Music

- History of art
- History of music
- Architecture
- Ethnomusicology

Medieval Studies: History and Literature: From 400-1500

- Medieval history
- English language and literature from 400 - 1500
- Celtic languages and literature from 400-1500
- European languages and literature from 400-1500
- Slavonic and east European languages and literature from 400 - 1500
- Other languages and literature from 400 – 1500

Philosophy

- Political philosophy
- Economic philosophy
- Logics
- Metaphysics
- Ethics

Anthropology and Geography

- Anthropology
- Human geography
- Economic geography
- Cultural studies - anthropology
- Historical geography

Political Studies: Political Theory, Government and International Relations

- Political theory
- International relations
- Government
- Political economy
- Comparative politics

present day

- Celtic languages and literature from 1830 to present day
- European languages and literature from 1830 to present day Slavonic and east European languages and literature from 1830 to present day
- Other languages and literature from 1830 to present day
- Drama , theatre and film studies
- Library and information sciences
- Cultural studies
- Communications and media studies

Archaeology

- Prehistory
- Medieval and post-medieval archaeology
- Classical archaeology

Early Modern History to c1850

- Early modern history
- Social history - to c1850
- History of science and ideas - to c1850

Modern History from c1850

- Modern history
- Social history - from 1850
- History of science and ideas - from 1850

Economics and Economic History

- Economics
- Economic history
- Business and management studies
- Econometrics
- Agricultural economics

Sociology, Demography and Social Statistics

- Sociology
- Social policy and administration
- Demography
- Education
- Cultural studies - social science

Psychology

- Psychology - social science
- Cognitive science - social science
- Behavioural science - social science
- Educational psychology
- Social psychology

- Development studies
- Parliamentary studies

Law

- Law
- Socio-legal studies
- European law
- Jurisprudence
- Theory of law

The Royal Academy of Engineering

Aerospace

- Aerospace manufacturing
- Turbomachinery and aerothermal engineering
- Avionics
- Radar Systems
- Antennae
- Satellite Systems
- Autonomous systems
- Airlines
- Materials for aerospace

Biomedical and Medical

- Medical devices
- Medical imaging
- Medical physics
- Biomaterials
- Medical robotics
- Optoelectronics
- Bionanotechnology
- Drug delivery
- Rehabilitation
- Systems/synthetic biology
- Neuroscience
- Forensics
- Orthotics

Civil, Construction & built environment

- Environmental engineering
- Infrastructure
- Contamination
- Numerical modelling
- Climate change and sustainability
- Fire
- Waste Management
- Offshore and coastal engineering
- Geotechnical engineering
- Engineering design
- Building engineering physics

Electrical and Electronic

Chemical and Process

- Hydrogen
- Carbon
- Clean technology
- Catalysis
- Combustion
- Food processing
- Chemical
- Pharmaceuticals
- Coal and gas technologies
- Nanotechnology
- Petroleum geoscience
- Earth Science – Petroleum engineering

Computing and Communications

- Imaging
- Informatics
- Algorithms
- Web and data science
- Software engineering
- Signal processing
- H-CI/C-HI
- Computer vision
- Image processing
- Artificial intelligence
- Data science
- Telecommunications

Materials and Mining

- Wireless
- Signal Processing
- Semiconductor
- Nanotechnology
- Networks
- Optoelectronics
- Electromagnetic
- Electronic devices
- Electrical materials
- Sensors
- Microsystems
- Acoustics
- Lasers
- Control
- Power

Energy and Power

- Renewable Energy
- Transmission and Distribution
- Energy Infrastructure
- Hydrogen Power
- Fuel cells
- Energy conservation
- Energy conversion technologies
- Nuclear energy

Innovation & Policy

- Business
- Innovation
- Entrepreneurship
- IP
- Knowledge transfer
- Design
- Ethics
- Education
- Law
- Public engagement
- Regulations
- Policy
- Risk
- Sustainability

- Metallurgy
- Structural integrity
- Materials science
- Plastics and composites
- Materials performance
- Structural materials
- Welding and joining technologies

Transport and Mechanical

- Automotive
- Rail and Marine engineering
- Transportation infrastructure
- Turbomachinery
- Mechatronics
- Acoustics and vibrations
- Ultrasonics
- Heat and Thermodynamics
- Fluid Dynamics

Special (including emerging or multi-disciplinary areas of engineering)

- Quantum computing
- Agricultural engineering
- Engineering project management
- Leadership or management of engineering business
- Engineering biology
- Machine learning
- Neurotechnology
- Quantum technologies
- Regenerative medicine/engineering
- Robotics

The Royal Society

Pure and Applied Mathematics, Computer Science

- Mechanics (theoretical and applied)
- Applied mathematics and theoretical physics
- Computer science (excluding engineering aspects)
- Pure mathematics
- Statistics and operational research

Astronomy and Physics, Theoretical Physics, and Applied Physics

- Astronomy
- Astrophysics
- Biophysics
- Computational physics
- Condensed matter (including softmatter, liquids and nano-materials)
- Cosmic radiation
- Cosmology
- Crystallography
- Elementary particle physics
- Gravitation
- Interstellar medium
- Lasers and optoelectronics
- Low temperature physics
- Magnetism
- Mathematical and theoretical physics
- Nuclear atomic and molecular physics
- Planetary science
- Plasma physics
- Quantum theory
- Semi-conductors
- Solar physics
- Statistical
- Physics (applied)
- Physics (experimental)

Earth Sciences and Environmental Physical Sciences

- Archaeology
- Mineralogy
- Physical geography
- Atmospheric physics and meteorology
- Atmospheric chemistry
- Climate sciences
- Hydrology
- Physical Oceanography
- Chemical Oceanography
- Limnology

Chemistry, Applied Chemistry, Theoretical Chemistry

- Chemistry, general
- Chemistry, organic
- Chemistry, inorganic
- Chemistry, physical
- Chemistry, applied
- Chemistry, theoretical
- Chemistry, biological
- Chemistry, materials

Engineering, Technology, Instrumentation, Materials Science, Experimental Fluid Dynamics

- General
- Civil
- Structural
- Environmental
- Mechanical
- Chemical
- Aeronautical
- Electrical
- Electronics
- Opto-electronic (including lasers, optical microscopy, optical imaging, fibre optic components and optical computing devices)
- Semi-conductors
- Space technology
- Communications (including information theory)
- Computer engineering (including software)
- Control (including robotics)
- Medical
- Nuclear technology
- Fluid dynamics
- Materials science (including materials engineering)
- Instrumentation
- Electric power

Biochemistry, Structural Biology and Molecular Cell Biology

- Biochemistry and molecular biology
- Biophysics and structural biology
- Molecular immunology
- Molecular microbiology
- Cell biology (including molecular cell biology)

- ### Developmental Biology, Genetics (excluding population genetics), Immunology and Microbiology (except medical microbiology)
- Developmental biology

- Geology
- Geodesy
- Geochemistry
- Geophysics
- Seismology

Anatomy, Physiology, Neurosciences, Health and Human Sciences

- Animal (especially mammalian) and human physiology and anatomy (non-clinical)
- Physiology and medicine (non-clinical)
- Pharmacology (non-clinical)
- Physiology (non-clinical) (including biophysics of cells)
- Endocrinology and reproduction (non-clinical)
- Experimental psychology
- Behavioural neuroscience
- Development and control of behaviour
- Cellular neuroscience
- Molecular medicine
- Medical microbiology
- Nutrition
- Medical statistics and demography
- Medical instrumentation

Clinical

- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biochemistry
- Structural biology
- Mathematics
- Informatics
- Engineering
- Genetics
- Cellular and developmental biology
- Microbiology
- Immunology
- Anatomy
- Neuroscience (including neurology and neurosurgery)
- Physiology
- Pharmacological sciences
- Medical specialties (excluding oncology, neurology)
- Paediatrics
- Surgery
- Anaesthesia
- Oncology

- General microbiology (including bacteriology and virology)
- Cellular and humoral immunology
- Cellular pathology
- Genetics (excluding population genetics)
- Cytogenetics
- Immunology
- Epidemiology (non-clinical)

Organismal, Evolutionary and Ecological Science, including soils and agriculture

- Organismal animal biology (including invertebrate and vertebrate zoology)
- Plant sciences / botany
- Ethology
- Evolution
- Ecology (including behavioural ecology)
- Taxonomy and systematics
- Population genetics
- Agricultural science
- Environmental biology
- Biological modelling
- Biological statistics
- Soil science
- Entomology
- Palaeozoology
- Parasitology

- Clinical Pathologies
- Imaging (including radiology)
- Dentistry
- Ophthalmology
- Obstetrics
- Gynaecology
- Psychiatry and mental health
- Public health
- Epidemiology
- Statistics
- Primary care
- Social sciences
- Humanities and law in medicine
- Administration of health services
- Health services research
- Health policy
- Health improvement
- Education
- Science and society

A3. Criteria – Science Bodies (the ‘Research and Innovation Talent’ Visa)

The assessment process is completed in two steps. An initial eligibility check is completed to check that you meet mandatory (and, for Exceptional Talent applicants only, qualifying) criteria. You will only be eligible for full assessment if you pass this first step.

The initial eligibility check criteria are as follows:

Exceptional Talent applicants	Exceptional Promise applicants
<p>Mandatory</p> <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 dated letter of personal recommendation from an eminent person resident in the UK supporting the Tier 1 visa application, who is familiar with your work and your contribution to your field, and is qualified to assess your claim to be a leader in your field. • Meet one or more of the following qualifying criteria below. 	<p>Mandatory</p> <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 (including industrial research); • Provide a dated letter of personal recommendation from an eminent person resident in the UK supporting the Tier 1 visa application, 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 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 or advanced research post judged by the competent body to be of equivalent standing.
<p>Qualifying criteria</p> <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 dated letter must be written by an authorised senior member of the organisation, such as a Chief Executive, Vice-Chancellor or similar, on official paper. 	

If you meet these eligibility criteria, your application will immediately go forward for a full assessment which will look at the strength of the evidence you provide. Meeting the mandatory and qualifying eligibility criteria where applicable does not mean that you will be endorsed. It only means your application can proceed to a full assessment.

If you have passed the first step, the relevant Designated Competent Body will assign experts in your field to assess the following information:

- 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, they will also consider:

Exceptional Talent applicants	Exceptional Promise applicants
<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 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 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.

Experts assigned to assess your application will be asked if there are any conflicts of interest and if these exist, another expert will be asked to comment instead.

A4. Accelerated process for recognised peer-reviewed fellowships (the ‘Research and Innovation Talent’ Visa)

The British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society provide an accelerated endorsement process to allow international awardees of specific peer-reviewed UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and its Councils, Wellcome Trust, British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK and UK National Academies research fellowships to apply with assurance once the recognised fellowship or award has been granted by UKRI or its Councils, Wellcome Trust, British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK or the UK National Academies. Holders of other fellowships or grants are still eligible to apply following the usual processes.

A list of eligible fellowships is available at: <https://royalsociety.org/about-us/competent-body/>

To confirm that you wish to apply for the accelerated process with any of the named fellowship awards, you must select the relevant ‘accelerated process’ option on the stage 1 form.

You must also provide written confirmation of the award from the funding body. The confirmation must:

- be dated
- confirm your name
- confirm that you have been awarded an eligible fellowship.

Your fellowship awarding body will provide you with additional guidance to support your application.

A5. Accelerated endorsement process for senior academic or research appointments (the ‘Research and Innovation Talent’ Visa)

The British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering and The Royal Society also provide an accelerated endorsement process for individuals appointed to eligible senior academic or research positions at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI) or research institutes. This process offers greater certainty for applicants who have received a job offer that they will be endorsed, provided they meet the mandatory and qualifying criteria.

To apply using this accelerated process you must provide a mandatory statement of guarantee from the Director of Human Resources or equivalent of the appointing HEI or research institute. It should be dated and confirm that the recruitment process for your appointment met the below list of criteria:

That the job was advertised and an open competition was held for the position (applications where there was not an open competition may be considered providing all other criteria are met and a reasonable explanation is provided for that decision)
That a job offer of an eligible senior academic or research position at the employing institution has been made and accepted (please specify the position and Department) (eligible senior positions are Professor, Associate Professor or Reader in a HEI or equivalent positions at a research institute, such as Senior Group Leader)
That at least three references were required and received
That at least four senior academic representatives from the employing institution were present on the interview panel
That at least one senior external expert in a relevant field, who is not employed by the employing institution, was consulted during the recruitment process (either participating in the interview or providing written input).

The employing organisation must be a UK HEI or research institute listed on the UK Academies list of eligible organisations available at: <https://royalsociety.org/about-us/competent-body/> .

To confirm that you wish to apply for the accelerated process with an acceptable senior academic or research appointment, you must select the relevant 'accelerated process' option on the stage 1 form. Your employing institution will provide you with additional guidance to support your application.

The relevant Designated Competent Body will determine whether you meet the necessary criteria to be considered under this fast-track option for senior academic or research appointments.

A6. Evidence you must provide – Science Bodies (the 'Research and Innovation Talent' Visa)

If you are not applying under an accelerated route, you must provide the following documents to allow your application to be assessed:

- **A short curriculum vitae** outlining your career and publication history (of no more than 3 A4 sides in length);
- **A mandatory letter of personal recommendation** from an eminent person resident in the UK supporting your application. The person must be familiar with your work and your contribution to your field, and qualified to assess your claim for Exceptional Talent or Promise. It should be dated and include;
 - how the eminent person knows you;
 - your achievements in the specialist field;
 - how in the opinion of the eminent person you exhibit Exceptional Talent;

- how you would benefit from living in the UK; and
 - the contribution you would make to UK research excellence and to wider society.
- If you are applying under the exceptional promise criteria, evidence in relation to at least one of the qualifying criteria (see [Criteria – Science Bodies](#) for details).

Please note that the stage 1 application form asks you to provide details of your qualifications, significant papers/prizes etc. You should **not** provide copies of these documents with your application unless these specifically demonstrate you meet the qualifying criteria listed above ([Criteria – Science Bodies](#)).

Documents should be sent to the Home Office in hard copy once you have submitted your stage 1 form online. Authorised English translations must be provided for all documents which are not originally written in English.

Each Designated Competent Body will undertake checks on the information you provide if they consider it appropriate. If the Designated Competent Body finds that you have submitted false or fraudulent evidence, your application will be ineligible for consideration and the Home Office will be informed immediately.

Arts Council England

A7. Disciplines – Arts Council England

Arts Council England cover the disciplines listed below for the whole of the United Kingdom. Where appropriate, they can liaise with the three national arts bodies covering Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. You should use this list to decide whether your particular area of discipline is assessed by Arts Council England. It is advisable to contact Arts Council England if you require advice or guidance around the specific disciplines they assess. Contact details can be found on the Arts Council England website here: www.artscouncil.org.uk/contact-us.

Exceptional Talent and Exceptional Promise applications	Exceptional Talent applications only
<p>Considered by Arts Council England:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dance• Music• Theatre• Visual arts (including museums and galleries)• Literature• Combined arts <p>Considered by the British Fashion Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fashion design	<p>Considered by the Producers Alliance for Film and Television:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Film• Television• Animation• Post-production• Visual effects

Arts Council England accept applications on behalf of the Producers Alliance for Film and Television (PACT) and the British Fashion Council (BFC). If your discipline is covered by PACT or BFC, your application will be transferred to the relevant organisation for a specialist assessment.

A8. Criteria – Arts Council England

The criteria you must meet are different dependent on your discipline.

Arts and culture applicants

You must be able to demonstrate that you:

- are professionally engaged in producing work of outstanding quality which has been published (other than exclusively in newspapers or magazines), performed, presented, distributed or exhibited internationally;
- can show recent (within the last five years) and regular activity of being engaged professionally as a practitioner in your field; and
- can show a substantial track record in more than one country (if applying under the Exceptional Talent criteria) or developing track record in one or more countries (if applying under the Exceptional Promise criteria).

The evidence you must provide varies depending on the speciality you are applying to be considered under and whether you are applying under Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise.

Any evidence submitted must be paper based. Evidence cannot include other objects, digital versatile discs (DVDs) or compact discs (CDs), digital files or documents that only show web links.

(If you wish to use the content of a webpage as one of your ten permitted supporting documents, you must provide a printed copy of the page which clearly shows the uniform resource locator (URL) for the page.)

If you wish to be considered as an Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise applicant in the fields of arts and culture you must provide the following evidence:

Exceptional Talent (arts and culture)	Exceptional Promise (arts and culture)
<p>You must provide evidence to support two or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more examples of recent (in the last five years) significant media recognition such as features, articles and/or reviews from national publications or broadcasting companies in at least two countries, one of which can be your country of residence. Event listings or advertisements are not acceptable. Media recognition must provide a critique of your work. • Proof of having won at least one international award for excellence in the past five years, for example the Booker Prize, a Grammy Award; or domestic awards in another country, for example a Tony Award. • Proof of appearances, performances, publications or exhibitions in the past five years in contexts which are recognised as internationally significant your field or evidence of extensive international distribution and audiences for your work. <p>Proof must come from at least two countries, one of which can be your country of residence.</p>	<p>You must provide evidence to support two or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more examples of recent (in the last five years) media recognition such as articles and/or reviews from national publications or broadcasting companies in one or more countries, one of which can be your country of residence. Event listings or advertisements are not acceptable. Media recognition must provide a critique of your work. • Proof of having won or been nominated or shortlisted for at least one international award for excellence in the past five years, for example the Booker Prize, a Grammy Award; or domestic awards in another country, for example a Tony Award. • Proof of appearances, performances, publications or exhibitions in the past five years in contexts which are internationally recognised in your field or evidence of international distribution and audiences for your work. <p>Proof must come from one of more countries, one of which can be your country of residence.</p>

The evidence you supply must consist of **no more than ten documents** in total to support the above.

Please note: a ‘document’ is defined as a single piece of evidence (article, review, letter etc). If more than the permitted ten documents are submitted, only the first ten documents listed will be looked at and the additional evidence will be disregarded.

Arts Council England will conduct an independent assessment as to whether the evidence you provide appropriately and adequately supports your claim that you meet the relevant requirements.

Film and Television applicants

If you wish to be considered as an Exceptional Talent applicant in the fields of the film, television, animation, post-production or visual effects industry you must show the following:

Exceptional Talent (film, television, animation, post-production or visual effects industry)

You must show evidence for **one** of the following:

- have won (at any time), or in the last 10 years from your date of application, have received a nomination for one of the following awards:
 - an Academy Award,
 - a British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) (Film, Television Crafts, Cymru, Scotland and Games only) award,
 - a Golden Globe, or
 - an Emmy award

or

- have, within the last 10 years from the year of application, made a significant and direct contribution to winning or being nominated for one of the awards mentioned above:

or

- have within the last 15 years achieved a minimum of two nominations for one of the awards mentioned above.

or

- demonstrate notable industry recognition by providing evidence of:
 - international distribution sales and recognition, and
 - having achieved one of the following combinations:
 - won a minimum of two,
 - won one, and, within the last six years before the date of application, have been nominated for one other,
 - within the last six years before the date of application, have been nominated for a minimum of three, or
 - within the last three years before the date of application, made a significant and direct contribution to winning two, or being nominated for a minimum of three

of the Notable Industry Recognition Awards listed below.

- AFI Awards
- Akil Koci Prize
- American Academy of Arts and Letters Gold Medal in Music
- American Cinema Editors
- Angers Premiers Plans
- Annie Awards
- APA awards
- Argentine Academy of Cinematography Arts and Sciences Awards
- ARIA Music Awards (Australian Recording Industry Association)
- Ariel
- Arts Director's Guild Awards
- Arthur C. Clarke Award
- Artios Awards
- ASCAP awards (American

- European Film Awards
- Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique or International Film Critics Award given by the International Federation of Film Critics
- GDC Awards
- George Peabody Medal (Peabody Institute)
- Glamour Awards
- Gold Badge Awards – For outstanding contributions to the music and the entertainment industry of the United Kingdom
- Golden Melody Awards (Taiwan)
- Golden Reel Awards
- Goya Awards

- Otaka Prize – An annual composition prize for Japanese composers
- Peabody Awards
- People's Choice Awards
- Polar Music Prize
- Praemium Imperiale
- Preis der Deutschen Filmkritik
- Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik – For achievement in recorded music
- Primetime Engineering Emmy
- Prix de Rome
- Producers Guild of America Awards
- Pulitzer Prize for Music
- Producers Guild of America

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) • ASTRA awards • Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTS) • Australian Production Design Guild • Awit Awards (Philippine Association of the Record Industry) • BAA British Arrows Awards • Berlin International Film Festival • BET Awards (Black Entertainment Television, United States) • BFI London Film Festival • Bodil Awards • Brit Awards • British Composer Awards – For excellence in classical and jazz music • Brooklyn International Film Festival • Cannes International Film Festival / Festival de Cannes • Cannes Lions Awards • Chicago International Film Festival • Ciclope Awards • Cinema Audio Society Awards • Cinema Jove International Film Festival • CinemaCon’s International Filmmaker of the Year Award • Classic Rock Roll of Honour Awards – An annual awards program bestowed by Classic Rock • Clio Awards • Comet (Viva, Germany) • Cork International Film Festival • Country Music Awards of Australia (Country Music Association of Australia) • Creative Circle Awards • DICE Awards organised by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gracie Allen Awards • Grammy Awards • Grand Prix du Disque (France) • Grande Premio do Cinema Brasileiro • Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition • Grierson Documentary Awards • Hong Kong Film Awards • Hong Kong Film Critics Society Awards • HPA Hollywood Professionals Association Awards • Hugo Awards • IGF Awards • Independent Music Awards • Independent Spirit Awards • International Film Music Critics Association Awards • Irish Film and Television Awards • Ivor Novello Awards • Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Academy Award • Juno Awards (Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences) • Jupiter Awards • Kinsale Sharks Awards • Korean Association of Film Critics Awards • Latin Grammy Award (Latin Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences) • Lebanese Cinema Movie Guide Awards • Léonie Sonning Music Prize (Léonie Sonning Music Foundation) • Locarno Film Festival • Location Managers Guild Awards • London Film Critics Circle • London International Awards (LIA) • Los Premios MTV Latinoamérica – Previously known as MTV Video Music Awards Latinoamérica (MTV) • Louis Delluc Prize Lux Style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards • Raindance Film Festival • Rolf Schock Prize in Musical Arts • Rotterdam International Film Festival • Royal Television Society Awards • Sanremo Music Festival (Italy) • Sao Paulo International Film Festival • Satellite Awards • Saturn Awards • Scream Awards • Screen Actors Guild Awards • Screenwriters Choice Awards • SFX Awards • Shorty Awards • Shots Awards • Sibelius Prize • Siggraph Awards • Society of Camera Operators Awards • South by Southwest Film Festival • Sports Emmy • Stockholm International Film Festival • Student Academy Award • Sundance Film Festival • Suntory Music Award (Japan) • SXSW Interactive Awards • Sydney Film Festival • Technology and Engineering Emmy • Television Critics Association • Televisual Awards • The Annime Awards • Toronto Film Critics Association • Toronto International Film Festival • Tribeca Film Festival • TV Choice Awards • UKMVA UK Music Video Awards • USC Scriptor Awards
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<p>the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directors Guild of America Award • Distinguished Service to Music Medal (Kappa Kappa Psi) – For exceptional service to American bands and band music • Echo (German Phonographic Academy) • Edinburgh International Film Festival • Ernst von Siemens Music Prize • Eurobest Awards 	<p>Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makeup Artist and Hair Stylist Guild Awards • Man Booker Prize • Melbourne International Film Festival • Mercury Prize • Monte-Carlo Television Festival • MTV Music Awards (MTV) • National Film Awards (Bangladesh) • National Film Awards (India) • Nebula Awards • News and Documentary Emmy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venice International Film Festival • Visual Effects Society Awards • Webby Awards • Women in Film and Television Awards • World Soundtrack Awards • Writers Guild Awards of Great Britain • Writers Guild of America Awards • Young Artist Awards • Young Hollywood Awards
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To demonstrate that you meet the requirements, for each award you must provide:

- Full details of the production nomination or award, including category and year of nomination or award;
- Evidence of your involvement if the nomination or award was as part of a group;
- Evidence of the credit you received for the nomination or award; and
- If you are claiming credit for an award where you made a significant and direct contribution, evidence of your direct and significant contribution to the win or nomination.

Documents should be sent to the Home Office in hard copy once you have submitted your stage 1 form online. Authorised English translations must be provided for all documents which are not originally written in English.

Each Designated Competent Body will undertake checks on the information you provide if they consider it appropriate. If the Designated Competent Body finds that you have submitted false or fraudulent evidence, your application will be ineligible for consideration and the Home Office will be informed immediately.

Fashion Design Applicants

You must be able to demonstrate that you:

- are professionally engaged in producing work of outstanding quality which has been sold or exhibited internationally, either through catwalk presentation or exhibitions (if you are applying under Exceptional Talent criteria) or which has had recognition with leading industry players (if applying under Exceptional Promise criteria)
- can show recent (within the last five years) and regular activity of being engaged professionally as a practitioner in your field; and
- can show a substantial track record in more than one country (if applying under the Exceptional Talent criteria) or developing track record in at least one country (if applying under the Exceptional Promise criteria), one of which can be your country of residence.

The evidence you must provide varies depending on the speciality you are applying to be considered under and whether you are applying under Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise.

Any evidence submitted must be paper based. Evidence cannot include other objects, digital versatile discs (DVDs) or compact discs (CDs), digital files or documents that only show web links. (If you wish to use the content of a webpage as one of your ten permitted supporting documents, you must provide a printed copy of the page which clearly shows the uniform resource locator (URL) for the page.)

If you wish to be considered as an Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise applicant within the fashion industry through operation of leading fashion design businesses you must provide the following evidence:

Exceptional Talent (within the field of fashion)	Exceptional Promise (within the field of fashion)
<p>The applicant must provide two or more of the following:</p> <p>1) Two or more examples of recent (in the last five years) evidence of significant international media recognition for the applicant's work in the industry: online or in print such as features, articles and/or reviews from national publications or broadcasting companies, in at least one country other than the applicant's country of residence. Event listings or advertisements are not acceptable;</p> <p>2) Proof of having, within the last five years from the year of application, won; OR, having received a nomination for, OR having made a significant and direct contribution to winning or being nominated for international awards for excellence, for example The Fashion Awards, Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) Fashion Awards, Elle Style Award, GQ Award, LVMH Prize, ANDAM Prize, Hyères Prize or another relevant major award or nomination.</p> <p>Awards must be awards of merit, rather than monetary awards such as grants and bursaries.</p> <p>3) Proof of catwalk shows, presentations and/or exhibitions in the past five years in</p>	<p>The applicant must provide two or more of the following:</p> <p>1) Two or more examples of recent (in the last five years) evidence of UK or international media recognition for the applicant's work in the industry: online, in print such as features, articles and/or reviews from national publications or broadcasting companies, or on social media of the applicant's collections. These must be from independent sources, and social media articles must be from prominent bloggers or key opinion leaders. Event listings or advertisements are not acceptable;</p> <p>2) Proof of having received, within the last five years from the year of application, support and sponsorship through the British Fashion Council's support schemes; OR, having received support and sponsorship through the Fashion East support scheme; OR having received support and sponsorship through the Sarabande Foundation; OR having been supported by Centre for Fashion Enterprise; OR having received similar support from an international counterpart to the British Fashion Council.</p> <p>3) Evidence of one or more orders placed</p>

<p>contexts which are recognised as internationally significant in the applicant's field, or evidence of extensive international distribution and sales of the applicant's collections.</p> <p>4) Proof of international distribution and sales (within the last five years) through internationally renowned retailers and boutiques, or through applicant's own physical retail outlets or their ecommerce platform.</p>	<p>by UK or international luxury retailers and boutiques.</p> <p>4) Evidence of recognition by leading industry players (within the last five years) – for example internationally renowned fashion designers, fashion media, retailers, brands, Graduate Fashion Week - of an exceptional graduating collection;</p>
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The evidence you supply must consist of **no more than ten documents** in total to support the above.

Please note: a 'document' is defined as a single piece of evidence (article, review, letter etc). If more than the permitted ten documents are submitted, only the first ten documents listed will be looked at and the additional evidence will be disregarded.

To demonstrate you meet the requirements in the table above:

- if you are providing evidence of having won or being nominated for an international award for excellence, this must include:
 - full details of the nomination or award, including category and year of nomination or award;
 - evidence of your involvement if the nomination or award was as part of a group;
 - evidence of the credit you received for the nomination or award.
 - if you are claiming you made a significant and direct contribution to winning or being nominated for international awards for excellence, evidence is required from the named person on the award(s) or nomination(s) which demonstrates that you significantly influenced or directly resulted in the award or nomination to the named person;
- if you are providing evidence of having been given support or sponsorship, this evidence must include full details of the support or sponsorship including:
 - the name and details of the scheme;
 - the dates the support or sponsorship were received; and
 - the organisation that awarded it.
- if you are providing evidence of a catwalk, presentation or exhibition, evidence of participation in one or more reputable UK-based or international trade show or commercial showroom must be cited. The British Fashion Council will judge whether a particular trade show or commercial showroom provides appropriate evidence of recognition in the applicant's field;
- if you are providing evidence of international distribution and sales, evidence must be provided regarding:
 - the current number of outlets or stockists of the business's products,
 - the top five stockists and when these sales were achieved; and
 - where you have sold through your own retail channels, a breakdown of sales and when these sales were achieved.
- if you are providing evidence of orders placed by UK or international luxury retailers, evidence must be provided naming the buyer or stockist and stating when the order was placed.

The British Fashion Council will conduct independent assessment as to whether the evidence you provide appropriately and adequately supports your claim that you meet the relevant requirements.

A9. Letters of Support – Arts Council England

Your letters of support must:

- be written on headed paper, dated and signed by the author who must be a senior member of the organisation
 - for arts and culture or film and television, such as a member of the senior management team or board, the Chief Executive, Artistic Director, Principal or Chair
 - for fashion industry applications, such as the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Creative Director, Buying Director, Fashion Director/Editor or, for Exceptional Promise applicants who have commercialised their graduating collections only, a 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 your achievements in your specialist field and how, in the opinion of the author, you have either:
 - demonstrated that you are a leader in your field (Exceptional Talent); or
 - demonstrated that you have the potential to become a leader in your field (Exceptional Promise).
- describe how you would benefit from living in the UK and the contribution you could make to cultural life here. They should also provide details of any of your future professional engagements in the UK that the author is aware of; and
- include full contact details of the author, including personal email address and direct telephone number, so that personal contact can be made by Arts Council England, PACT or BFC if required.

Letters of endorsement must be written specifically for this purpose, must reference your application for Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise and must include all of the information detailed above. A general all-purpose reference letter is not acceptable.

The type of letters you must provide will differ different dependent on your discipline.

Arts, Culture, Film and Technology Applicants

You must provide **three** letters of support:

- The first letter must be from a UK based arts or cultural organisation, institution or company which is well-established nationally and/or internationally and widely acknowledged as possessing expertise in its field.
- The second letter must be from another arts or cultural organisation, institution or company which is well-established nationally and/or internationally and widely acknowledged as possessing expertise in its field. This second organisation may be UK or overseas based.
- The third letter may be **either** from a third arts or cultural organisation, institution or company (UK or overseas based) which is well-established nationally and/or internationally and widely acknowledged as possessing expertise in its field **or** from an eminent individual with internationally recognised expertise in your specialist field.

At least one of the three letters must be from a UK based organisation; only one of the three letters can be from an individual. These letters must be from separate organisations, institutions, companies or individuals.

Fashion Design Applicants

You must provide **three** letters of support from established organisations, institutions or companies with a national or international reputation and recognised expertise in fashion.

If applying under Exceptional Talent criteria, at least one of these letters must be from a UK organisation.

Acceptable organisations would be those which are well established nationally or internationally, work with many international designers and industry experts each year and are widely acknowledged as possessing expertise in fashion.

Tech Nation

A10. Specialisms – Tech Nation

Tech Nation’s criteria are designed for applicants with the technical and business skills listed below. Please note that this list is not exhaustive but gives you an indication of the type of applicants assessed by Tech Nation.

Technical skills	Business skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DevOps / SysOps engineers • Principal software engineers/developers • Experienced data scientists/data engineers • Artificial Intelligence, Natural Language Processing and Machine Learning experts (AI, NLP, ML) • Cybersecurity experts • Hardware engineers • Experienced front-end developers • Operating systems engineers • Experienced graphics programmers • Experienced UX/UI designers • Experienced Mobile App developers • Experienced back end developers leading development of or contributing heavily to major new technologies or open source projects (e.g. blockchain, Scala, Golang, Elasticsearch etc) • CTO or VP engineering experience managing teams of in house employees at a growing digital business • Virtual and augmented reality developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of taking a tech company through IPO • Experience as a commercial / business lead (P&L, growth, sales and distribution strategy) in a digital business • Experience of scaling a digital product internationally • Sector-specific experience e.g. payment infrastructure in FinTech / international expansion in EdTech • Solution sales experts • Experienced Product Manager • SaaS or enterprise sales leadership for digital services • Solution sales skills performed for a growing B2B digital business (i.e. not big-company experience) • Performance marketing experts, performed in house for digital businesses • Experienced VC or PE analysts with track records of leading investments in digital businesses • Experience as C Suite in a SMEs + (CEO, CMO, CIO) or head of operations for a digital business

A11. Criteria – Tech Nation

There are two options for applicants applying for endorsement by Tech Nation: Exceptional Talent and Exceptional Promise. The criteria for both Talent and Promise can be found below.

Applicants must meet at least one of the key, and at least two of the qualifying, criteria from the relevant column in the table below. Applicants cannot mix criteria from the Exceptional Talent and Exceptional Promise columns interchangeably.

Exceptional Talent	Exceptional Promise
Key	Key
<p>1. Have a proven track record of innovation in the digital technology sector as a director / founder of a digital technology sector company or an employee working in a new digital field or concept that must be clearly evidenced (e.g. patent application)</p> <p>2. Proof of recognition for work outside your immediate occupation that has contributed to the advancement of the sector (e.g. evidence that you have gone beyond your day to day profession to engage in an activity that contributes to the advancement of the sector)</p>	<p>1. Provide two or more examples of innovation in the digital technology sector as a founder of a digital technology sector company or an employee working in a new digital field or concept that must be clearly evidenced (e.g. patent application)</p> <p>2. Proof of recognition for work outside your immediate occupation that has contributed to the advancement of the sector (e.g. evidence that you have gone beyond your day to day profession to engage in an activity that contributes to the advancement of the sector)</p>
Qualifying	Qualifying
<p>1. Have made significant technical, commercial, or entrepreneurial contributions in the digital technology sector as either a founder, entrepreneur or employee of a digital technology company</p> <p>2. Have been recognised as a leading talent in the digital technology sector</p> <p>3. Have undergone continuous learning / mastery of new digital skills (commercial or technical) throughout your career</p> <p>4. Have demonstrated exceptional ability in the field by making academic contributions through research published or otherwise endorsed by a research supervisor or other expert</p>	<p>1. Have made significant technical, commercial, or entrepreneurial contributions in the digital technology sector as either a founder or entrepreneur of a digital technology company</p> <p>2. Have been recognised as having the potential to be a leading talent in the digital technology sector</p> <p>3. Have undergone continuous learning / mastery of new digital skills (commercial or technical) throughout your career</p> <p>4. Provide two or more examples of exceptional ability in the field by making academic contributions through research endorsed by a research supervisor or other expert</p>

In meeting these criteria, you **must** demonstrate proven commercial or technical expertise in building, using, deploying or exploiting a technology stack and building technical infrastructure.

You must specify on the Tech Nation (Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent)) application form if you are applying as an Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise candidate.

Applicants who choose to apply under the Exceptional Promise criteria are likely to be earlier in their career, and therefore have yet to establish a track record in innovation. This means that they might not have the same levels of experience as those that would be endorsed via the Exceptional Talent criteria, however they will need to be able to demonstrate the potential to be a leader in digital technology through their skills and achievements thus far.

Tech Nation experts will establish whether you meet the necessary criteria to be endorsed for Exceptional Talent or Exceptional Promise. This is not determined solely by objective criteria. If the eligibility criteria are satisfied, Tech Nation's independent panel of experts will determine whether, overall, they consider that you should be endorsed. It is at Tech Nation's discretion to assess each application on its own merits and make a recommendation for or against endorsement.

A.12 Fast Track Applications – Tech Nation

Tech Nation provides a fast track option if you meet one of the following criteria:

1. Regional location - You can provide evidence that you intend to settle and work outside of Greater London and you are able to demonstrate how this is linked to your plans for employment or entrepreneurship; or
2. Experience of scale – You can provide evidence that you are an existing member of a senior management team or C-suite (CEO, CTO, CFO, COO, CMO etc) and are able to demonstrate extensive experience in scaling a digital technology business (ideally this company will have a headcount in excess of 50 staff). This fast track option only applies if you are applying under the 'exceptional talent' criteria (not 'exceptional promise'); or
3. Accelerator participant – You can provide evidence of being accepted onto a recognised UK accelerator programme. The evidence in your visa applications should provide clear details regarding your plans in UK outside of your involvement in the accelerator programme.

The following listed accelerators are currently eligible for this fast track:

- Barclays Accelerator
- Bethnal Green Ventures (BGV)
- Collider
- CyLon
- Entrepreneur First (EF)
- Founders Factory
- GCHQ Cyber Accelerator
- Ignite Accelerator
- Microsoft Accelerator
- SETsquared
- Startupbootcamp
- TechStars
- Wayra.

To confirm that you wish to apply under any of the fast track routes above, you must select the relevant fast track option on the [Tech Nation application form](#).

If you are applying as a fast track applicant, you must meet the relevant Exceptional Talent key and qualifying criteria outlined to be endorsed. Whether your application is eligible to be fast tracked will be at the discretion of Tech Nation. Applications which are not accepted under a fast track option will still be considered, but will not be expedited.

Tech Nation will aim to fast track applications for endorsement and provide a decision within 18 working days to the Home Office. Please note that the 18-day period does not include the time the Home Office need to complete administrative tasks. Applicants will not be informed if their application is being processed under fast track.

A.13 Evidence you must provide – Tech Nation

To allow your application to be assessed, you must provide the following documents:

- 1. A completed Tech Nation (Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent)) application form** which is available on Tech Nation's website at: <https://technation.io/visa-scheme/>. This includes a personal statement (maximum 7000 characters in length) written by you to explain the contribution that you will make to the UK digital technology sector. The statement should include answers to the following questions and any other information you deem relevant:
 - Why do you want to come to the UK?
 - What is your planned occupation in the UK?
 - Which region or city of the UK are you planning to live in?
 - How will the UK digital technology sector benefit from your work? (Examples of this might include the technological advances you will bring, the creation or new markets, the planned growth of a company, the activities you will take part in outside of your direct occupation.)
- 2. A short curriculum vitae** outlining your career and publication history (of no more than two A4 sides in length).
- 3. Two letters of recommendation from two different recognised experts** who are familiar with your work and contribution to the digital technology sector. They must be qualified to assess your claim to be a potential leader in the field and be able to recommend you with confidence. Letters of recommendation should be written in support of your application by two different senior members of two different established organisations in the digital technology sector. These could be institutions or companies with a well established national or international reputation and recognised expertise in your field. They do not need to be based in the UK. Acceptable organisations would be those that work with industry experts and are widely acknowledged as possessing expertise in this field.

The letters should be written on headed paper (wherever possible), be dated and include

 - the signature of 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. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list but that the more reputable the author, the stronger the letter of recommendation will be considered to be;
 - details of the author's credentials (for example, a CV/resume). Tech Nation reserve the right to refuse your application or request more information, which could significantly delay your application, if evidence is not provided that the author is a credible referee;
 - how the recognised expert knows you (personal relationship or reputation);
 - your achievements in the specialist field;
 - how in the opinion of the recognised expert you have demonstrated that you are a leader, or demonstrate significant potential, in your field;
 - how you would benefit from living in the United Kingdom;
 - details of the contribution you would make to the UK digital technology sector;
 - details of any of your future professional engagements in the UK; and

- full contact details of the author, including personal email address and direct telephone number, so that personal contact can be made.

Letters of recommendation must be written specifically for this purpose and include all of the information detailed above. A general all-purpose reference letter is not acceptable.

4. Evidence in relation to the one of the key criteria and at least two of the qualifying criteria listed above (see [Criteria – Tech Nation](#)). Examples which may assist you in determining what evidence you can supply is available in the next section of this guidance (see [Examples of Relevant Evidence – Tech Nation](#)).

The evidence you supply to demonstrate you meet the key and qualifying criteria (see Criteria – Tech Nation) must consist of **no more than ten documents** in total, with each piece of evidence (i.e. document) comprising maximum 2 sides of A4 paper. For documents longer than this, please summarise or condense the document to the most important aspects, e.g. key terms of employment for an employment contract.

If you have had any active or dissolved digital technology businesses in the last five years or evidence of share ownership through business in a digital technology sector company, you must include evidence of this as part of these documents.

5. If you are applying for the ‘Experience of scale’ fast track option, you must provide your employment contract detailing job title, details of employment and any remuneration such as salary, fees or other options (e.g. equity).

Documents should be sent to the Home Office in hard copy once you have submitted your stage 1 form online. Authorised English translations must be provided for all documents which are not originally written in English.

Each Designated Competent Body will undertake checks on the information you provide if they consider it appropriate. If the Designated Competent Body finds that you have submitted false or fraudulent evidence, your application will be ineligible for consideration and the Home Office will be informed immediately.

A.14 Examples of Relevant Evidence – Tech Nation

When assessing your application, Tech Nation will take into consideration:

- 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);
- The strength of the supporting statements in the letter of personal recommendation, and evidence in relation to qualifying criteria; and
- The expected benefits of your presence in the UK in terms of the contribution to the UK digital technology sector.
- Factors including but not limited to, your academic track record and salary level if employed, the company you are being hired by if an employee, the amount of money raised if you are an entrepreneur.

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

It remains for Tech Nation to judge whether a particular piece of documentation provides appropriate evidence of Exceptional Talent.

Key criteria

1) How do I demonstrate that I have a proven track record of innovation in the digital technology sector as a director / founder of a digital technology sector company or an employee working in a new digital field or concept?

You can demonstrate this by providing evidence of any digital technology businesses you have established as a director or founder which is currently active or has dissolved in the last five years.

- Evidence of innovation / product development, proof of product in market and associated traction through revenue.
- Evidence for each business should include your last set of audited accounts, projections for current financial year and articles of association.
- Evidence should also be provided regarding the current number of outlets or stockists of the business' products.
- Evidence of employment contract and history of earnings.

If you are an employee working in a new digital field or concept, this must be clearly demonstrated (for example by providing a patent application).

OR

2) How do I demonstrate that I have been recognised for my work outside of my immediate occupation that contributed to the advancement of the sector?

You can demonstrate this by providing evidence that you have gone beyond your day-to-day profession to engage in an activity that contributes to the advancement of the sector. Examples may include mentoring, advising, organising interest groups, leading on policy, teaching if at university or participating in clubs or societies for the furthering of the field.

Examples of relevant evidence include:

- Evidence of contributions to an Open Source project;
- Your GitHub profile demonstrating active participation in a collaborative project;
- Your Stack Overflow profile showing significant contribution to discussions around code
- A link to one or more videos of talks or conferences that have had a significant viewership;
- An op-ed or news article that exemplifies thought leadership, evidence of mentorship.
- Evidence of sharing or teaching skills, such as mentoring if at a workplace.

AND

3) You must fill at least two of the qualifying criteria: examples of evidence for these criteria are below.

Qualifying criteria

1) How do I demonstrate that I have made a significant technical, commercial, or entrepreneurial contribution in the digital technology sector either as an entrepreneur, director, or founder of a digital technology company?

Here Tech Nation will assess whether you are a technical applicant (whether your occupation requires you to write code or manage developers) or whether you are a business applicant (any occupation within a digital technology company that doesn't require you to write code):

Technical examples of a "significant contribution" include:

- Having led in the development of high-impact digital products or services;
- Starting or contributing to open source projects in a way that has been acknowledged by peers as advancing the field;
- Having worked as a key engineer in the core product of a start-up, showing evidence as to how you have contributed to its success.

Documents that will be considered as acceptable evidence include (please provide at least two pieces of evidence. The list below contains suggestions – other types of documents can be submitted):

- Employment contract if relevant (although you will have to demonstrate how you have gone beyond your day-to-day activities to demonstrate that you have made a significant impact in the sector);
- Headed letter from an employer wherever possible, in addition to the required letter of endorsement, to be written by another individual;
- Documentation on product designs or architecture diagram clearly showing your contribution. Please ensure this evidence is no more than two A4 pages long and demonstrates your personal work, not that of the company or team of individuals;
- GitHub account that contains lines of code clearly showing your continuing contribution.

Business examples of a “significant contribution” include:

- Having led or played a key role in the growth of a digital technology company, such as influencing investment and strategy or delivering major products or releases;
- Having founded a successful company or other organisation and leading it.

Documents that will be considered as acceptable evidence include (please provide at least two pieces of evidence. The list below contains suggestions – other types of documents can be submitted):

- Employment contract;
- Letter from an employer in addition to the required letter of endorsement, and written by another individual;
- Documents detailing your significant contribution towards innovation (such as evidence of sales pipeline built and delivered, growth generated, leads generated, processes developed and implemented).

2) How do I demonstrate that I have been recognised as a leading talent in the digital technology sector?

The following examples may demonstrate that you meet this criterion:

- You have authored a well-reviewed book on digital technology or on programming or published material in a professional or major trade publication. You must include the title, date and evidence that you are the author of such published material and any necessary translation;
- You led the growth of a company or product, as evidenced by a letter from a co-founder, supervisor or eminent colleague describing your work, or as evidenced by news clippings, lines of code or similar evidence of your choice.

3) How do I demonstrate continuous learning / mastery of new commercial or technical digital skills throughout my career?

- Evidence of having continuously updated technical or commercial skills showing clear progression and achievement. This can be in the form of various projects or courses completed (whether at university or independently), which demonstrate a clear progression either in depth or breadth;
- Evidence of experimenting with new technologies, coding libraries or languages, or tools, as evidenced for example on your GitHub or Stack Overflow profile;
- Evidence of learning processes or tools such as Agile or Scrum or of an up-to-date knowledge of your sector trends, as shown for example by a relevant qualification, or by a talk in a prestigious conference.

Evidence you provide in relation to continuous learning will be considered based on how recent it is, with the most recent evidence of learning carrying more weight in assessment than evidence of learning undertaken further in the past.

4) How do I demonstrate that I have exceptional ability in the field by making academic contributions through research?

Documents that will be considered as acceptable evidence include:

- Evidence of at least one significant contribution to the field in the form of a paper published in a top tier journal;
- Evidence of outstanding applied work in the form of awards received for an outstanding project or thesis, supported by excellent academic achievement (a first-class degree or distinction);
- A letter of endorsement from a research supervisor or other expert in your area of expertise affirming their potential world-class standard, in addition to the required letters of endorsement, and written by another individual.
- Evidence of an award or prize that has been granted by an organisation of a similar standing and distinction to the Royal Society, as well as the selection criteria for this award or prize.

Annex B – General application information

B1. Date of application

How you determine your date of application will vary depending on where your application was submitted:

You are outside the UK	You are inside the UK
The date of application is the date that you pay your application fee, which is the date shown on your payment receipt.	The date of application is the date the online application is submitted.

B2. Considering your application

We aim to consider applications quickly. However, we must be confident that applications meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules, and that the information you provide is a true reflection of your background.

If we have doubts about an application or the documents sent with your application, we may carry out verification checks and/or other checks. Please see **Annex D** for further information.

You, or any member of the public, can report illegal immigrants and other immigration offences via our website: www.gov.uk/report-immigration-crime.

B3. Overstaying in the United Kingdom

Applications for leave to remain will fall for refusal if you have overstayed beyond the end of the last period of leave to enter or remain you were granted. The only exceptions are where your application is made:

- within 14 days of your previous leave expiring and we consider there is a good reason beyond your / your representative's control, details of which are provided in or with the application, why the application could not be made in time; or
- within 14 days of:
 - the refusal of the previous application for leave; or
 - the expiry of any leave which has been extended by section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971; or
 - the expiry of the time-limit for making an in-time application for administrative review or appeal (where applicable); or
 - any administrative review or appeal being concluded, withdrawn or abandoned or lapsing.

If there are good reasons beyond your control which prevented you from applying in time, you must submit evidence of these with your application. All cases will be decided on their merits.

B4. Documents we require

You must ensure you provide all of the necessary supporting documents at the time you send us the application. We will only accept the documents specified in the Immigration Rules and covered in this guidance.

If you have submitted specified documents in which:

- some of the documents within a sequence have been omitted (for example, if one page from a bank statement is missing) and the documents marking the beginning and end of that sequence have been provided; or
- a document is in the wrong format (for example, if a letter is not on letterhead paper as specified); or
- a document is a copy and not an original document; or
- a document does not contain all of the specified information;

we may contact you and/or your representative in writing, and request the correct documents. We will only make this request once.

We will not ask for additional documents where:

- you have not provided a specified document at all; or
- requesting the missing or correct document will not lead to your application being granted, because it will be refused for other reasons

You must provide the requested documents at the address specified in the request within 10 working days of the date of the request. Working day means any day other than Saturday or Sunday, a bank holiday, Christmas Day or Good Friday.

Any documentary evidence that you provide must be the original (not a copy) unless we say otherwise.

Where any documents provided are not in English or Welsh, you must provide the original and a full translation that can be independently verified.

The translation must show **all** of the following:

- confirm that it is an accurate translation of the original document;
- be dated;
- include the full name and original signature of the translator or an authorised official of the translation company;
- include the translator or translation company's contact details; and
- if you are applying for leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain, be fully certified and include details of the translator or translation company's credentials.

We only need evidence that is directly relevant to the application, as set out in this guidance. We will not consider unrelated evidence when calculating the points score.

B5. Studying in the United Kingdom

You are permitted to study, but you will need to obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate for your course/research and present it to your education institution before you start your study if:

- (a) you are over age 18 (or will be over 18 by the time your leave expires); and
- (b) your course is one of the following:
 - (i) a Doctorate or Masters degree by research in one of the disciplines listed in paragraph 1 of Appendix 6 of the Immigration Rules, or
 - (ii) a taught Masters degree or other postgraduate qualification in one of the disciplines listed in paragraph 2 of Appendix 6 of the Immigration Rules, or

(iii) a period of study or research in one of the disciplines listed in paragraphs 1 or 2 of Appendix 6 of the Immigration Rules at an institution of higher education where this forms part of an overseas postgraduate qualification.

Appendix 6 of the Immigration Rules can be found on the gov.uk website at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-rules-appendix-6.

If your course (or research) completion date is postponed or delayed for more than three calendar months or there are any changes to the course contents (or the research proposal), you must apply for a new ATAS certificate within 28 calendar days, and must provide a print-out of the new certificate to your institution promptly.

B6. Change of circumstances

<p>To change your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contact details; or• details of your criminal convictions; or• representative's details; or• dependants' details; <p>complete a change of circumstances form which is available on our website at: www.gov.uk/change-circumstances-visa-brp.</p> <p>We will confirm that we have noted your change of circumstances in a letter. You should keep this letter with the original documents from your application.</p>	<p>If your current grant of leave is a biometric residence permit (BRP), to change your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name;• date of birth;• nationality;• gender; or• appearance <p>a new application must be sent on form NTL or TOC, see related link: changes to BRP www.gov.uk/transfer-visa.</p>
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B7. Police Registration

Once you have been granted entry clearance or leave to enter or remain, you may be required to register with the police, if this is required by paragraph 326 of the Immigration Rules. You will be advised whether this requirement applies to you when your leave application is approved.

B8. Curtailment

The Home Office may curtail your Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) leave to enter or remain if the Designated Competent Body that endorsed the application which led to your current grant of leave withdraws its endorsement of you.

Annex C Endorsement Review (stage 1 only)

C1. What is an Endorsement Review?

This is the mechanism for reviewing refusal decisions made under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) application for endorsements, where an applicant believes an error has been made in the decision. The Endorsement Review is only available for a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) application for endorsement. It is free of charge.

An Endorsement Review is an entitlement but the request must be made within 28 days from the date we send you the refusal email.

The Endorsement Review is a non-statutory scheme; there is no legislation setting out what it covers or who is eligible to apply. The policy is contained in this guidance.

C2. What if the Endorsement Review request refers to matters outside the scope of the Endorsement Review?

Where this occurs, the matters should be dealt with under the normal complaints procedure. In such cases, you will be advised in writing.

C3. Who conducts the Endorsement Review

Once a request for an Endorsement Review is received, the Home Office will forward this to the relevant Designated Competent Body which considered your original application. The Home Office will provide a response following this consultation.

C4. Who can apply for Endorsement Review?

Anyone refused an endorsement under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route, where they believe that the Home Office has made an incorrect decision.

C5. How does the applicant apply?

On the Endorsement Review Request form, available on the Home Office website on www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-endorsement-for-tier-1-exceptional-talent-visa.

C6. What is the deadline for applying for Endorsement Review?

You have 28 days from the date of receipt of the refusal email, to submit a request for Endorsement Review.

C7. What if an application is submitted late?

Where an Endorsement Review request is received outside the 28-day period, the endorsement reviewer will consider if there are exceptional circumstances to accept the application outside of the deadline.

If the Endorsement Review request is late and the endorsement reviewer decides not to perform the Endorsement Review, we will email you with an explanation of why it is not being accepted.

C8. How many times can you request an Endorsement Review?

You may request only one Endorsement Review per refusal decision. Any further review requests received for the same refusal decision will not be accepted. They will be returned to you.

If you have new or further information, documents or other paperwork that you failed to submit with your original application, you will need to make a new application and pay the appropriate fee.

C9. How long will the Endorsement Review take?

The endorsement reviewer will complete their review and notify you in writing of their decision

within 28 days from the date of receipt of the Endorsement Review request form.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the endorsement reviewer is unable to complete the Endorsement Review within the 28 days, they will notify you in writing as to when to expect a decision.

C10. What will the endorsement reviewer look at?

The endorsement reviewer will examine the original application. You are not required to resubmit information.

You are not allowed to provide new evidence. Any new evidence you submit will be returned to you together with the outcome of the Endorsement Review. New evidence can only be considered with a new application and will require a fee for consideration.

C11. How are Endorsement Review decisions made?

The endorsement reviewer should focus on the areas which you have asked to be reviewed. They will check that documents have been correctly passed on to the Designated Competent Body, and that the correct processes have been used.

The endorsement reviewer may recommend that the refusal should be reconsidered if they find that the Home Office:

- failed properly to pass on evidence submitted with the original application;
- made a mistake in processing the application;
- failed to pass on correctly the reasons for refusing the endorsement.

In this case, the endorsement reviewer will recommend serving a new refusal letter giving a full explanation for the refusal.

Where the endorsement reviewer recommends in line with the above, that the reasons for refusal are incorrect, you may still be refused but with new grounds for refusal.

The endorsement reviewer will not recommend that the original decision is overturned simply because you claim there is a fault with the Home Office's underlying processes or policies.

C12. How are you informed of the result of the Endorsement Review?

Decision upheld and the reasons for refusal remain the same:

- the endorsement reviewer will notify you by email. You will not be entitled to a further Endorsement Review as the grounds for refusal has not changed.

Decision upheld but with revised reasons for refusal:

- a new refusal letter will be served along with the Endorsement Review letter from the endorsement reviewer stating why the refusal has still been upheld. If there are fresh reasons for refusal which were not notified originally, you will be able to submit a further Endorsement Review request limited to those fresh reasons.

Decision overturned and endorsement to issue:

- the endorsement reviewer will notify you by email.

Annex D: Verification and other checks

D1. What may be checked?

We may want to check the supporting documents you send with your application. Therefore, you must ensure that all the evidence comes from a source that can be clearly identified and that it can be independently confirmed as being genuine.

These checks may delay our decision on an application so we will only make them when we have clear reasons to do so.

D2. When will verification checks be made?

Where we have reasonable doubts that a specified document is genuine, we may want to verify the document with an independent person or government agency.

What we consider to be a reasonable doubt will depend on an individual application. However, our judgements will be based on the facts we have.

The purpose of these checks is to ensure that the document provided is genuine and accurately reflects statements made in the application. If the document is being used as evidence to score points, we also want to ensure that it entitles you to claim those points.

D3. When will other checks be made?

We will make other checks where, for example, we have doubts about an application or the documents sent with the application but these are not serious enough for us to make a verification check.

This may be because previous verification checks have found that some supporting evidence is invalid and some is genuine, or where evidence provided contradicts information we already have. In these cases, we may carry out more checks.

D4. What are the possible outcomes of checks?

There are four possible outcomes of a check:

- **Document confirmed as genuine.** If we conclude that the document is genuine, we will consider the application as normal.
- **Document confirmed as false.** If we conclude that the document is false, we will refuse the application, whether or not the document is essential to the application. If a document is confirmed as false we will normally refuse the application for more than one reason. For example, if you send us a bank statement to show that you have enough funds available, and we have evidence that the statement is false, we will refuse the application because you do not meet the funds requirement and because you have sent a false document. Where we confirm that a document is false, it will be retained by the Home Office and is likely to jeopardise any future application.
- **Check inconclusive (verification checks).** If we cannot verify that the document is either genuine or false, then we will ignore it as evidence for scoring points. If you have sent other specified documents as evidence for scoring the relevant points, we will consider these as normal. If you have not sent any other documents, we will award zero points in that area.

- **Check inconclusive (other checks).** If we cannot verify that the document is either genuine or false, then we will consider the application as if the document is genuine.
- **Check gives us cause to have reasonable doubt about the genuineness of a specified document (other checks).** If we cannot determine that the document is either genuine or false but, as a result of the checks, we find other reasons to doubt the genuineness of a particular specified document, we may decide to make a verification check.

D5. When would an application be refused without making verification checks?

We may refuse an application without making verification checks where:

- we are concerned about a piece of evidence but would, in any event, refuse the application for other reasons. Those reasons will form the basis of the refusal. We will not make verification checks in these circumstances. However, we will always verify passports if we doubt they are genuine.
- there is evidence that proves a particular document is false without verification checks.

D6. What is the procedure for verification and other checks?

The procedures for both verification checks and other checks will vary from case-to-case, but they may involve:

- checking the details or genuineness of documents with employers, the relevant embassy or high commission, other government departments (in the UK and overseas); and
- checking the accuracy and authenticity of documents with banks, universities and professional bodies.

We record the results of our enquiries.

If we cannot obtain an immediate answer to enquiries, we will normally wait for up to a maximum of four weeks for the necessary information.

Our compliance team may visit your employer or educational institution (if you are a student) before we make a decision on the application.

Annex E – Isle of Man Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent)

The Isle of Man has separate Immigration Rules and a separate immigration service. It operates a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route which is broadly similar to the UK's Exceptional Talent route. Part of the application process is managed by the UK. However, there are some differences that applicants should be aware of.

E1. How do I apply for endorsement (stage 1)?

Applying for stage 1 is identical regardless of whether you are applying under the UK's or Isle of Man's Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) rules. The application is handled in the UK.

E2. How do I apply for entry clearance (stage 2)?

Applications for entry clearance are made online via Visas4UK, in the same way as for UK entry clearance. However, your case is considered by an Isle of Man caseworker.

E3. How do I apply if I am already in the Isle of Man? Can I switch?

For details on how to make an application from inside the Isle of Man or for specific details on the Isle of Man Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) requirements, please see the Isle of Man Government website: www.gov.im/categories/travel-traffic-and-motoring/immigration/.

E4. Does the Isle of Man have a separate Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) limit?

No. If you are endorsed under the Isle of Man's route, you fill a place in a joint UK and IoM limit as laid out in the UK's Immigration Rules.

E5. I have a question about the Isle of Man's Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route. Who should I contact?

You should contact the Isle of Man's Immigration Services: www.gov.im/categories/travel-traffic-and-motoring/immigration/contact-us/.