



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Tier 1 Exceptional Talent

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Guidance for current and prospective staff



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## Overview of Tier 1 Exceptional Talent Visa Route

The Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa route is available for people who are internationally recognised as world leaders or potential world-leading talent in the fields of science and the arts, and who require a visa to work in the UK. The visa comes with many benefits over its counterpart, the Tier 2 'skilled worker' visa:

- Greater flexibility in your employment. With a Tier 1 visa you can freely move between institutions, locations, jobs/roles. By contrast, a Tier 2 visa 'ties' you to a particular employer and job role, requiring you in most cases to apply for a new visa if you move jobs.
- A low cost, flat-rate visa (typically half the cost of an equivalent Tier 2 visa).
- Greater flexibility to undertake collaborations within the UK.
- Your choice in visa length (up to a maximum of five years) with the option to retain this visa category indefinitely.
- The route is intended as a route to settlement after 3 years (if you are endorsed as 'Exceptional Talent') or 5 years (if you are endorsed as 'Exceptional Promise'), which will exempt you from the requirement to hold a visa to work in the UK.

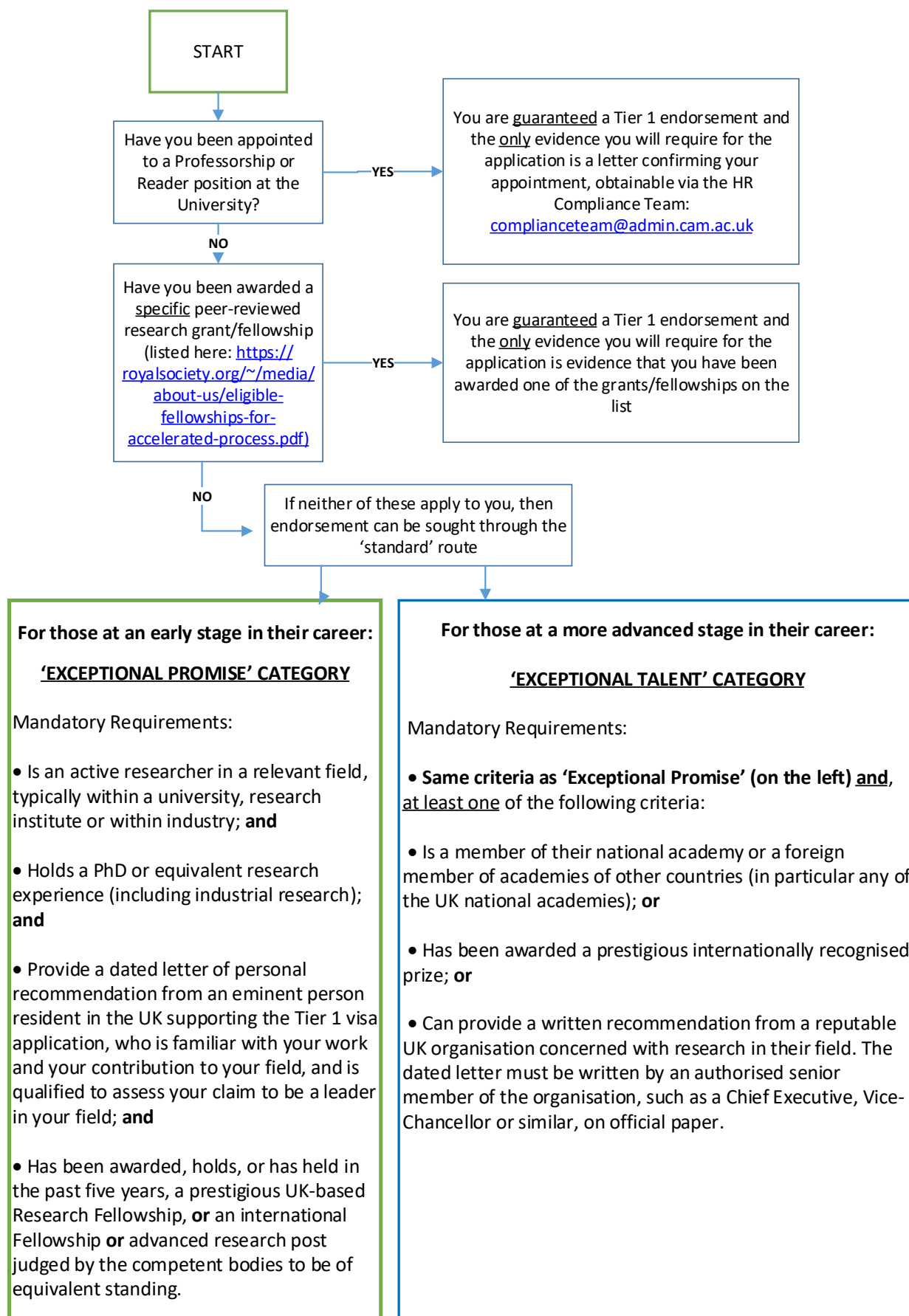
## How to apply

Applying for a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa is a **two stage** process. You must **first** apply to be endorsed by one of the Designated Competent Bodies who have been given authority by the Home Office to determine who meets the visa criteria:

- [The Royal Society](#)
- [The British Academy](#)
- [The Royal Academy of Engineering](#)
- [Arts Council England](#)
- [Tech City UK](#)

You may apply to enter the UK through this route if:

- You can demonstrate to a DCB that you are a leader in your field (known as '**exceptional talent**'); or
- You can demonstrate to a DCB that you have the potential to become a leader in your field (known as '**exceptional promise**').



## Stage 1 - How do I apply for endorsement?

### Application form

The first stage – the endorsement application – is not a visa application. It is an application to be recognised as a person of either ‘Exceptional Talent’ or ‘Exceptional Promise’ in your field of expertise.

This first stage will require the submission of an application form and relevant evidence of how you qualify for an endorsement. You do not need to submit your passport with the endorsement application.

The application must be completed online:

- <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-1-exceptional-talent-endorsement>

### Required Supporting evidence

#### Accelerated routes

- If you hold a specific peer reviewed fellowship which is eligible for ‘automatic endorsement’ under Tier 1 (see page 3), you only have to declare the name of the Fellowship within the application. **No other supporting documentation is required;** or
- If you have been made and accepted a job offer at Professorial or Reader level within the University, you will require a letter from the HR Division which confirms this. The letter must contain specific wording concerning your appointment and is only obtainable from the HR Compliance Team : [complianceteam@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:complianceteam@admin.cam.ac.uk)

Once you have been formally endorsed, please see the next steps under ‘Stage 2’ below.

#### ‘Standard’ application route

If you are ineligible for endorsement through the ‘accelerated routes’, you can still seek endorsement via the relevant competent body, and they will undertake a peer-review assessment your career to determine eligibility for the visa. For that, you will be required to submit the following documents:

Mandatory Documents you must submit:

1. Your most recent CV, no more than 3 pages in length
2. A letter of personal recommendation from an eminent person resident in the UK supporting your application. Once completed, the letter should be sent to you for inclusion in your application pack. There are no issues with you seeing and reading the letter yourself. The letter should be dated and **must** include the following:

- 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.
3. Where you are seeking endorsement as a person of 'Exceptional Talent' (as opposed to 'Exceptional Promise'), you must also include at least one of the following:
- Evidence of membership of a National Academy;
  - Evidence of a prestigious prize being awarded to you;
  - A written recommendation from the Vice-Chancellor (Please contact the [Compliance Team](#) directly to arrange this).
4. Finally, within the application you will be required to write a personal statement "outlining your case for qualifying for Tier (Exceptional Talent)." It should be of about two pages and no more than 7,000 characters.

Again, please note that if you qualify for endorsement through the accelerated route, **none of the above are required.**

## Stage 2 - How do I apply for the visa?

If/when your application is endorsed you will be notified via the e-mail address you provided in your application form.

You **must** apply for the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa within **three months** of notification. You must submit a copy of the endorsement letter that was emailed to you when your endorsement application was approved.

How to apply depends on where you are applying from:

I am applying from outside the UK	I am applying from inside the UK
<p>You must apply online: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent/apply">www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent/apply</a></p> <p>You can apply from <b>any</b> country in the world, even if you are only temporarily resident there (i.e. as a visitor)</p>	<p>You must apply online: <a href="https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-1-exceptional-talent-visa">https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-1-exceptional-talent-visa</a></p> <p>You can switch into Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) from your current visa whilst inside the UK if you hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any category of Tier 1 visa;</li><li>• Any category of Tier 2 visa;</li><li>• A Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) sponsored in the <b>Government Authorised Exchange</b> sub-category in an exchange scheme for sponsored researchers.</li></ul> <p>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 to your country of residence to submit the visa application.</p>

- For further information on how to apply, please see the published Home Office guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent>

## How much does the application cost?

	Stage 1 (Endorsement)	Stage 2 (Visa)
Individual	£456	£152
Individual from Turkey / Macedonia	£456	£97
Dependant (per individual)	£ -	£608

## Immigration Health Surcharge

The payment of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) is mandatory for all non-EEA nationals who are issued a visa of more than 6 months in length. It is an additional charge, over and above the visa fee and must be made up-front at the time of the visa application. Payment of the surcharge will ensure that you have full access to the NHS on the same terms as a permanent UK resident.

The surcharge will cost an additional £400 per person per year that your visa is valid. For example, if you apply for a three year visa, you will be charged an additional £1200. If you have dependants, the surcharge will also apply to their visa applications on the same basis. The full cost must be paid at the point of application.

If a visa application is refused or rejected the NHS Surcharge will be automatically refunded, however, there is no refund if the applicant obtains a visa and then decides not to come to the UK, if they leave the UK earlier than the end of their visa, or if their visa is curtailed by the Home Office ; nor is there any refund if they do not use the National Health Service.

- For further guidance, please see the UKVI webpages:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-health-surcharge-information-for-migrants>.

## Tuberculosis Testing

Individuals applying to enter the UK from one of the below countries are required to provide a valid medical certificate issued by a medical practitioner approved by the Secretary of State, confirming that they have undergone screening for active pulmonary tuberculosis and that such tuberculosis is not present in the individual.

Afghanistan	Algeria	Angola	Armenia
Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Belarus	Benin
Bhutan	Bolivia	Botswana	Brunei Darussalam
Burkina Faso	Burma	Burundi	Cambodia
Cape Verde	Central African Republic	Chad	Cameroon
China	Congo	Congo Democratic Republic	Cote d'Ivoire
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Djibouti	Dominican Republic	Ecuador
Equatorial Guinea	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Gabon
Gambia	Georgia	Ghana	Guatemala



Guinea	Guinea Bissau	Guyana	Haiti
Hong Kong or Macau	India	Indonesia	Iraq
Kazakhstan	Kenya	Kiribati	Korea
Kyrgyzstan	Laos	Lesotho	Liberia
Madagascar	Malawi	Malaysia	Mali
Marshall Islands	Mauritania	Micronesia	Moldova
Mongolia	Morocco	Mozambique	Namibia
Nepal	Niger	Nigeria	Pakistan
Palau	Papua New Guinea	Panama	Paraguay
Peru	Philippines	Russian Federation	Rwanda
Sao Tome and Principe	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Soloman Islands
Somalia	South Africa	South Sudan	Sri Lanka
Sudan	Suriname	Swaziland	Tajikistan
Tanzania	Thailand	Timor Leste	Togo
Turkmenistan	Tuvalu	Uganda	Ukraine
Uzbekistan	Vanuatu	Vietnam	Zambia
Zimbabwe			

More information on Tuberculosis screening can be found:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/321724/TB\\_screening\\_for\\_the\\_UK\\_factsheets\\_Dec\\_9.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321724/TB_screening_for_the_UK_factsheets_Dec_9.pdf)

## Dependants

Your dependants can apply at the same time as you to enter the UK. Alternatively, they can wait until you have entered the UK and started work before they apply. Dependants are not involved in any way with the first stage (the endorsement application.)

A dependant visa provides the right to work in the UK and/or study at any private or State-funded school, Further Education College or University.

We have comprehensive guidance concerning dependants available here:

<http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-services/immigration/visas-and-right-work-uk/time-limited-right-work/dependant-visas>

## On your first day of work

Your departmental administrator will contact you in advance of your arrival to make arrangements for your first day. Under UK legislation, as an employer we are required to check that you hold permission to live and work in the UK before you start work. You can evidence this with your passport and your 30 day vignette or your BRP.

You must bring your identity documents as above to your department for copying before work commences. If you have not yet collected your BRP before your first day, you can start work on the basis of your 30 day vignette provided it is still valid. You then must obtain your BRP from the Post Office as soon as possible and present this to your departmental administrator.

## Extension of Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa

If/when you are applying for an extension of your Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) leave which you already hold, you only need to make a single application and **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.

To be approved you must meet the following 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. **For practical purposes, a copy of your employment contract with University of Cambridge will meet this criteria.**
- Apply online here: <https://visas-immigration.service.gov.uk/product/tier-1-exceptional-talent-visa>

## Settlement

You are eligible to apply for settlement after **3 years** (if you are endorsed as 'Exceptional Talent) **or 5 years** (if you are endorsed as 'Exceptional Promise').

If you are successful in gaining settlement, you are no longer subject to visa restrictions in the UK and you will have the unlimited right to work.

- You are required to show you have knowledge of language and life in the UK (unless you are exempt), this can be demonstrated by passing both the life in the UK test and holding an English speaking and listening qualification at level B1 or above (if applicable).
- 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.

### Absence requirements:

- For any absences from the UK which occurred **before** 11 January 2018, you cannot have had more than 180 days absences in each 12 month period ending on the same date of the year as the date of the application for indefinite leave to remain; and
- For any absences from the UK which occurred/occur **after** 11 January 2018, you cannot spend **more than 180 days outside the UK in any 12 month rolling period**.

- Applications for ILR can be made up to 28 days prior to completing the 5 years residence requirement. Applications must be made before your Tier 1 visa expires.

The application and guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-settle-in-the-uk-form-seto>