Outstanding Professor/Researcher Overview

All employment-based Permanent Residence (PR) sponsorship requests must be approved by the Provost. Effective January 1, 2007 a $2,000 fee is assessed at the time the PR dossier is submitted to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). All Outstanding Professor/Researcher petitions require a job offer and therefore must be submitted to USCIS by the office of International Scholar and Faculty Services (ISFS) or one of OSU’s designated attorneys.

Eligibility Requirements, employee must:
- be employed full-time as a permanent* employee at OSU
- have three years of experience in the field
- be internationally known and considered to be outstanding in their academic field

*Permanent defined in OSU PR policy, [http://oregonstate.edu/international/atosu/scholars/pr](http://oregonstate.edu/international/atosu/scholars/pr)

The PR application process is a three part process:

1. ISFS works with department and employee to prepare a dossier for the Outstanding Professor/Researcher category.
2. ISFS submits the employer’s petition, form I-140, to the USCIS.
3. The employee submits a personal petition, form I-485, to USCIS when eligible. Refer to Department of State Visa Bulletin for eligibility information.

PR dossier documentation

The employee must compile a PR dossier to present evidence to USCIS to support that they are internationally recognized and have outstanding ability in their academic field. While the regulations defining the Outstanding category are vague (8 C.F.R. 204.5(i)(3)) are vague, USCIS has provided additional information in the form of a Policy Memorandum that specifies acceptable evidence.

The employee should submit evidence that they meet at least three of the following categories and include a summary of evidence for each category. Documentation for additional categories may be submitted if the employee believes they qualify. The dossier should be organized from strongest points to the weakest.

USCIS accepts documentation that falls in these six categories, as defined by regulations:
- Published material about the scholar
- Participation on a panel, or, individually, as the judge of the work of others in the field
- Evidence of original scientific or scholarly research contributions to the academic field
- Authorship of scholarly articles or book
- Receipt of major (national or international) prizes or awards for outstanding achievement
- Membership in associations in the academic field that require outstanding achievements of their members
The following is an overview of the necessary documentation for the PR petition in the Outstanding Professor/Researcher category.

1. **Letters of testimony.** Letters of testimony from other scientists with solid international reputations are a significant part of the application and will form the first section (section A) of the application. The letters should be as detailed and specific as possible and should clearly state that the employee is **internationally known** and makes made significant, original contributions to their field. Specifically reference how the employee meets one or more of the six categories. Submit a minimum of 10 letters from a variety of sources, including:
   - independent experts in field, rather than advisors
   - academic and government institutions in the US and abroad
   - private industry who can comment on commercial applications of the your research
   - department head (this is in addition to the Letter of Nomination from College).
   - collaborators
   - editorial boards for journals you review and/or publish in
Include an abbreviated CV from each letter writer to demonstrate that they are qualified to assess the applicant’s work as outstanding in their academic field. *ISFS will provide a template for guidance for the letter writer, please customize.*

2. **Define academic field.** In the summary of evidences and letter of nomination discuss the academic field that the employee is in. It is important to accurately define the employee’s field as USCIS will gauge performance against peers in the field. It’s important to narrow the field of expertise when proving that the employee is recognized internationally as outstanding. As an example, an Assistant Professor in oceanography should define their field of expertise within the broad discipline so that USCIS can compare the employee to his/her set of peers, rather than all Oceanography professors.

3. **Evidence for 3+ categories.** Establish evidence that you have international recognition as outstanding in your specific academic area by providing documentation in at least three of the six categories listed on the following page. Organize the petition so that the strongest category is listed first and label as Section B, C, D etc. (Letters of Testimony will be Section A.) Write a separate summary of evidence for each category to be included, addressing each piece of evidence included in the section. Showcase the strongest pieces of evidence first, e.g. articles in top journals in field. If the employee has evidence that fits in more than one category, submit the same piece of evidence in each section. *ISFS will provide a template for writing Summary of Evidences for each of the categories (criteria).*

4. **Letter of nomination.** The letter of nomination should request that the USCIS grant permanent residence for the employee based on international recognition and outstanding achievements in the field. The employee should assist the department in preparing the letter as it should serve as a summary of the evidence that the employee will be submit in the application. *ISFS will provide a template for the letter of nomination.*

5. **Current curriculum vitae.** The CV should include detailed lists of publications, scholarly contributions, peer reviews, conference presentations, etc. Employee signs in blue ink.

6. **Copies of academic credentials** with attested translations, if needed. If a professional translator has translated the documents, a statement of their qualifications must be included. If the employee will be translating these documents, include this statement:

   *I certify that I am fluent in English and __________ (language) and have translated the (title of the document) completely and accurately.*
SIX CATEGORIES

The following six categories of criteria can be used to prove a scholar is “internationally recognized as outstanding in the in the academic field”. The following information is taken from the regulations that outline this particular employment-based permanent residence category, 8 C.F.R. 204.5(i)(3). The employee must submit evidence to support at least three of these categories.

Evidence of original scientific or scholarly research contributions to the academic field

Describe research and how it contributes to the academic field in detail, but avoid using overly technical jargon. Stress the definition of the field in this section (see item 2). List grants received and include evidence from granting agencies. Submit a history of citations of published articles and copies of articles as evidence (may also list in “Authorship” Section, see below) and explain the significance of the publications in which they appeared. List any patents, pending or acquired. Include conference presentations and indicate if peer-reviewed, include invitations to speak as supporting evidence. Letters from recognized experts (letters of testimony, see item 1 above) in the field are especially helpful in documenting this category. The author should be an individual easily recognized by someone in the same field as a prominent expert and should be aware of the details of the scholar’s work and it’s contributions to the field. Teaching experience should be mentioned here, include evaluations and course syllabi as evidence.

Authorship of scholarly articles or book

List all articles and book chapters and include copies. If the list of publications is long include reprints/copies of only the ten best. Evidence that those outside the scholar’s circle of colleagues and acquaintances consider the work important is especially valuable. Document the prestige and international circulation of major publications and conference (or symposium) proceedings; indicate whether these are peer-reviewed or refereed. See “General Information” below.

Participation, either individually or on a panel, as the judge of the work of others in the field

Evidence can include peer reviews of articles for a journal or judging of papers. Include a statement from the editor or editorial board of the journal describing the journal, its prominence or stature within the field, and the role of the individual as an occasional or regular reviewer or referee for the journal based upon his or her expertise in a particular field or discipline. Explain the criteria for selection as a panelist, reviewer, or judge in the summary of evidence. It’s especially helpful to point out that only experts in the field serve as reviewers. Include thesis direction, especially for a Ph.D. dissertation; in the summary of evidence state the importance of the research being conducted. Include judging competitions for awards or prizes. Again, it should be made clear how judges are selected for the competition and the prestige associated in being chosen. Can also include a letter of testimony as evidence for this section, see item 1 above.

Published material about the scholar

Include copies of articles and reviews in professional publications written by others about the scholar’s work. Document the prestige of the individual writing about the scholar’s work, such as publications, awards or honorary degrees received. Document the prestige of the journal that discusses the scholar’s work. Create a list of all citations of the scholar’s work using Web of Science or a comparable tool. Include a listing of all publications with the following information: year of publication, title of paper journal name, circulation, intended audience, impact factor, and number of times paper was cited.
Receipt of major (national or international) prizes or awards for outstanding achievement

This category is rarely used as the award must be highly prestigious and significant in the academic field. If this category will be used, the employee should obtain a statement from the conferring organization explaining the reputation of the organization, the significance of the award, and the criteria used to select the recipient. Include any available literature describing the award and the organization and any publicity about the recipient’s award. Ask someone who is writing a letter of support to include this award in their letter and discuss the criteria for the award and the importance of the award in the field. Postdoctoral fellowship and student awards are not considered sufficient for this category. Grant awards may be included here if the scholar is a PI or co-PI.

Membership in associations that require outstanding achievements of their members

A little used category as the regulations state that the association must require outstanding accomplishments of its members and members must be invited, rather than dues-paying. If this category will be used, submit evidence of the requirements that must be met for membership. The statement could be from the executive director of the organization or take the form of a copy of the by-laws if they state the requirements for membership. Leadership positions in professional organizations are especially useful. Memberships in organizations that are open to any dues-paying professionals are insufficient evidence for this category.

FINAL MERITS DETERMINATION

ISFS will prepare a “final merits determination” to serve as a conclusion to the PR dossier. This document serves to assist USCIS in a) making a final determination on if the evidence submitted proves that the applicant has made significant, original contributions to their field and b) proving that the employee is internationally known. You can read more about the concept of the “final merits determination” in the USCIS Policy Memorandum, see below.

GENERAL INFORMATION

USCIS issued a Policy Memorandum to provide guidance to USCIS adjudicators on evaluating evidence submitted to USCIS in support of I-140 petitions for the Outstanding Professor/Researcher category. Refer to pages 16 – 20 of the memo, available at this USCIS website: http://www.uscis.gov/USCIS/Laws/Memoranda/i-140-evidence-pm-6002-005-1.pdf

It is important to document the prestige and international circulation of your publications when building your lists of publications, peer reviews and citations. You should plan to discuss the impact factor of the journal (or other indicator of the importance of the journal), the international make-up of the Board of Directors, international circulation, and intended audience of the publication.

Consider using these tools in creating lists of citations:
GoogleScholar
SciFinder
Journal Citation Reports
Science Citation Index
Web of Science