

Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visas – Exceptional Talent eligibility criteria

The RIBA has agreed a memorandum of understanding with Arts Council England, setting out how we will work together on architecture applications for entry under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa. Arts Council England will receive all applications from individuals working in architecture in the first instance but will refer applications of this nature to the RIBA for a specialist assessment. The RIBA will then assess these applications in line with these criteria.

Applicants may apply for a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa if they have been endorsed in their field as either:

- a recognised leader (Exceptional Talent); or
- an emerging leader (Exceptional Promise)

The following criteria apply to architecture applicants making a Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) application under the Exceptional Talent route.

Eligibility criteria

If you wish to be considered as an Exceptional Talent applicant in the field of architecture, you must be able to demonstrate that you are established as a world-leading architect and/or an internationally recognised expert in your field.

You must be able to demonstrate:

- that you are professionally engaged in producing work of outstanding quality which has been published presented or exhibited internationally in more than one country;
- recent (within the last five years) and regular activity of being engaged professionally as a practitioner in your field; and
- a substantial track record in at least two countries, one of which can be your country of residence.

How to provide evidence of Exceptional Talent

Applicants for this visa must provide the following documents to support their application:

1. Evidence of Exceptional Talent
2. Letters of endorsement

1. Evidence of Exceptional Talent

This must consist of **no more than ten documents** in total to support **two or more** of the following areas of achievement.

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.

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.)

You must provide two or more of the following:

1) Two or more examples of recent (in the last five years) evidence of significant international media recognition, online or in print, such as features, articles and/or reviews from national publications or broadcasting companies or international architectural periodicals or journals, in at least one country other than the applicant's country of residence. Event listings or advertisements are not acceptable;

2) Proof of having, within the last five years from the year of application;

- won; or
- made a significant and direct contribution to winning;

at least one international award for excellence.

For example: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, RIBA International Prize, Pritzker Prize, Venice Biennale of Architecture Award, World Architecture Festival Award or another relevant major award.

Awards must be awards of merit, rather than monetary awards such as grants and bursaries.

3) Proof of having work published or exhibited in the last five years from the year of application, in contexts which are recognised as internationally significant in the field of architecture, for example monographs published by recognised international publishing houses, exhibitions at international exhibitions/festivals such as the Venice Biennale of Architecture and World Festival of Architecture, or in international galleries with curated architecture exhibitions, such as the RIBA Gallery, Canadian Centre for Architecture.

Proof must come from at least one country other than your country of residence and must demonstrate a minimum of two publications or exhibitions of your work.

To demonstrate you meet the requirements above:

If you are providing evidence of having won an international award for excellence, this must include:

- full details of the award, including category and year of award
- evidence of your involvement if the award was as part of a practice or group

- evidence of the credit you received for the award
- if you are claiming you made a significant and direct contribution to winning international awards for excellence, evidence is required from the named person on the award(s) which demonstrates that you significantly influenced or directly resulted in the award to the named person or practice

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

2. Letters of endorsement

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

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

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 – such as the President, Chair, Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Managing Director, Senior Partner or Editor.
- 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 demonstrated that you are a leader in your field;
- 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 or RIBA if required.

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