

FAQs

What is the Research and Innovation Talent Visa?

The Research and Innovation Talent Visa falls under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa route. It is aimed at those who are considered to be exceptionally talented individuals in fields of science, engineering, medicine, social science and humanities, and who wish to work in the UK. It is operated for relevant disciplines by the British Academy, Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society.

Am I eligible to apply for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa?

We invite potential candidates to refer to the [guidance for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa](#), in particular the section on initial eligibility and assessment criteria, and to consider whether and how they meet these criteria. Case studies of previous applicants might also be helpful.

Unfortunately we cannot provide advice to individual applicants beyond that contained in this document and the guidance.

Is this visa right for me?

Each potential applicant is best placed to assess whether the Research and Innovation Talent Visa is right for them, dependant on their circumstances. Unfortunately we cannot advise on the suitability of the Research and Innovation Talent Visa for individual applicants, beyond the general [guidance](#).

Please note that other visa options for researchers exist in addition to the Research and Innovation Talent Visa, with more information available on these on the Home Office website [here](#).

What is the application process?

An overview of the application process can be found in this [explanatory document](#) and further details of the process are set out in the guidance for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa. Further information, including the cost of applying, can be found on the [Home Office website](#) under Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent).

Do I need a job offer to be eligible?

No, you don't. However, you will need to provide evidence of your status as a leader or potential leader in your field. The visa 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.

If you have a job offer for a senior academic or research appointment or a specific peer-reviewed fellowship, you might be eligible for the accelerated process for this route; further details are later in this FAQ document and also available in the [guidance](#).

I am currently in the UK on a different visa, can I switch to the Research and Innovation Talent Visa?

You can apply to switch to a Research and Innovation Talent Visa if you are already in the UK on a different Tier 1 visa or a Tier 2 visa. If you are on a Tier 5 (Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange) visa on an exchange scheme for sponsored researchers you can also apply to switch.

All information on switching to the Research and Innovation Talent Visa, under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa route, can be found on the [Home Office website](#).

How long does it take to be assessed for endorsement?

The Home Office advises that Stage 1 of the application process (i.e. the application for endorsement) for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa can take up to eight weeks from the time the Home Office receives your application.

Within these eight weeks, the relevant Academy will have up to 25 working days to review your application. For applications eligible for the accelerated process for specific peer-reviewed fellowships or senior academic or research appointments, the Academy will make a recommendation on endorsement to the Home Office within 14 working days.

Please note that, if endorsed, Stage 2 of the application process for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa (i.e. the application for the visa) will still need to be completed. The Home Office advises that Stage 2 of the application process can take around three weeks if applying from outside of the UK, and up to eight weeks if applying from within the UK. 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). Please see the [Home Office website](#) for details. Please note however that it is not available for Stage 1 and if you submit a Stage 1 application at the PSC it will be rejected.

Would the Research and Innovation Talent Visa allow me to work in industry?

Yes, successful applicants are eligible to work in industry. Applications from candidates with an industrial background will be assessed accordingly.

Applicants who want to set up and run a business in the UK, may also want to consider the [Tier 1 \(Entrepreneur\) Visa](#).

What is Exceptional Promise?

The Exceptional Promise route is intended for applicants who have demonstrated potential to contribute significantly as a future leader in their research field in an academic or industry setting.

Applicants who choose to apply under this part of the route will typically be individuals/researchers towards the start of their career and on a steep career trajectory. As future leaders they will be outstanding researchers on a clear route to independence and/or leadership having already demonstrated the ability to innovate, and drive advances (and/or translation) in their field of research.

The route does not specify a minimum number of years of postdoctoral/research experience, in recognition of variations in career paths (including time away from research) and career progression. It is, however, unusual for applicants to be at a very early stage in their career as they should be either transitioning to or recently transitioned to independence and/or leadership. Case studies of previous applicants may be helpful in determining eligibility for the route. These are available on the relevant Academy websites.

Please note that the Academies cannot advise potential applicants on whether they should apply for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa.

Can the UK Academies advise me on my application or my supporting documents prior to submission?

We are unable to review your documents prior to submission. Please ensure that you read the Home Office guidance and supporting materials on the Academies' websites carefully. Sending your application to one of the Academies before submission will not increase your chances of endorsement.

What type of evidence should I submit to meet the eligibility and assessment criteria?

The Academies are unable to advise on the suitability of applicants' documents ahead of their application being submitted for review. Individual applicants are best placed to identify which evidence and documentation demonstrates their skills and experience in the best possible way.

What types of recommendation letters should I provide?

Please refer to Annex A of the [Research and Innovation Talent Visa guidance](#) for more information on what to include in the letters of recommendation. Please ensure that they are in line with the guidance and on letter headed paper.

The mandatory letter of personal recommendation (Exceptional Talent/Exceptional Promise) should be from an eminent person resident in the UK. The person must be familiar with your work and your contribution to your field, and qualified to assess your claim of Exceptional Talent or Exceptional 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.

Please ensure that the letter is as detailed as possible. The more detail that is provided the better in determining why the referee believes you meet the criteria for Exceptional Talent / Promise.

The qualifying letter of recommendation (for Exceptional Talent) should be 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, Director of Human Resources, or similar.

What do you mean by 'eminent' person for the letter of personal recommendation?

The letter of personal recommendation should be from an individual with internationally recognised expertise in the applicant's field.

Can I apply for accelerated endorsement if I am in receipt of a peer-reviewed research fellowship?

The UK Academies provide an accelerated endorsement process for international awardees of specific peer-reviewed research fellowships from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and its Councils, British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Wellcome Trust, Academy of Medical Sciences, British Academy, Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society. These have already undergone a stringent peer review process, considered to be equivalent to those of the Academies. If you hold one of the Fellowships named on the accelerated list, you can apply through the accelerated process and be assured of an endorsement.

The specific named fellowships included under the accelerated process are [here](#).

To apply for the accelerated process, you must select the relevant 'fast track' option on the stage 1 form.

Your fellowship awarding body may provide you with additional guidance to support your application and you are encouraged to contact them.

Holders of other fellowships or grants not on the list must apply following the standard process.

Which senior academic/research appointments can be considered for accelerated endorsement?

The UK Academies also provide an accelerated endorsement process for individuals appointed to senior academic or research positions at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI) or eligible research institutes. This process offers greater certainty for applicants who have received and accepted a job offer that they will be endorsed.

Eligible senior positions are Professor, Associate Professor or Reader in a HEI, or equivalent positions at a research institute, such as Senior Group Leader.

Eligible UK institutions are listed in the [guidance document](#).

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

Individuals being employed by an organisation not on the list, or appointed to a less senior role, may apply through the standard process.

Where do I send my application?

To submit your application, you will need to complete a Home Office 'Application For Endorsement For Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent)' form, available on the [Home Office website](#). Payment should be made to the Home Office when applying online.

How do I track the progress of my application?

You will receive an update from the Home Office when your payment has been processed. The relevant Academy will not provide you with any updates; all correspondence is via the Home Office.

For queries relating to the Home Office's processing of applications, please email exceptionaltalentend@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

I need my passport to travel to conferences, when do I need to submit it?

Stage 1 of the application process (i.e. the application for endorsement) for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa is not an immigration application. There is therefore no requirement to submit your passport at this stage and you can travel while it is under consideration.

If endorsed, you will then be required to submit your passport at Stage 2 of the application process (i.e. the application for the visa itself) when the Home Office will consider immigration aspects of your application. You must apply for Stage 2 within three months of gaining your endorsement.

What if I don't meet the requirements?

If you don't meet the requirements for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa then there are other visa routes available. All work visas are listed on the [Home Office website](#).

Does the Research and Innovation Talent Visa have any restrictions based on nationality?

There are no nationality-based restrictions for the Research and Innovation Talent Visa, which is open to all non-EEA citizens.

In addition, the UK has specific arrangements for Croatian citizens, who can apply for endorsement for a blue registration certificate using the same process as the Research and Innovation Talent Visa. More information is available [here](#).

I have a legal question, can you put me in touch with a lawyer?

The Academies are unable to put you in touch with legal representatives.