O-1A EVIDENTIARY CRITERIA

O-1A immigration status is available to individuals with “extraordinary ability or achievement” in their field. You must be eligible for an Alabama medical license to obtain O-1A status. USCIS Vermont Service Center review of O-1A petitions is highly subjective and requires a substantial amount of supporting evidence.

USE OF OUTSIDE ATTORNEY

You are welcome to retain outside counsel to assist with support letter collection for the O-1A process. However, per institutional policy, outside counsel cannot file immigration petitions on behalf of UAB or affiliates and cannot file a Form G-28 as a representative of the institution. All letters and evidence assembled or prepared by outside counsel must be delivered to IFSIS in hard copy for review and signature. When your attorney is ready to mail the evidence on paper/in hard copy, they should mail it via USPS to: UAB IFSIS, Attn: Executive Director Catherine Crowe, 1720 2nd Avenue South, SL 248, Birmingham, AL 35294-0014. If your attorney wishes to ship the evidence via courier (UPS or FedEx), they should ship it to: UAB IFSIS, Attn: Executive Director Catherine Crowe, 917 13th Street South, SL 248, Birmingham, AL 35233. The institution will immediately withdraw any O-1 petition filed without the knowledge of IFSIS. Your attorney must coordinate all requests through the IFSIS office. We routinely work with several law firms around the country and are happy to coordinate with the attorney of your choosing, but they must follow our process.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR O-1A SPONSORSHIP

To be eligible for O-1A status, you must meet at least three of the following criteria:

- Receipt of nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor
- Membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought which require outstanding achievements, as judged by recognized national or international experts in the field
- Published material in professional or major trade publications, newspapers or other major media about you and your work in the field for which classification is sought
- Original scientific, scholarly, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field
- Authorship of scholarly articles in professional journals or other major media in the field
- A high salary or other remuneration for services
- Participation on a panel, or individually, as a judge of the work of others in the same or in a field of specialization allied to that field
- Employment in a critical or essential capacity for organizations and establishments that have a distinguished reputation
You can read more about the O-1A category directly from USCIS here.

**SUPPORTING EVIDENCE NECESSARY FOR EACH OF THE ABOVE CRITERIA**

Please upload pdfs of **ALL** of the following documents into a Dropbox, Box, or Microsoft OneDrive file and grant “editor” level access to cpcrowe@uab.edu. Create subfolders for each type of relevant evidence below. If you use Box, please allow access at a **collaboration level higher than “Viewer Uploader”** so that IFSIS can print directly from Box without having to download each individual file first. This will save considerable time processing the paperwork. **Do not** upload pictures or screen shots of the documents. IFSIS cannot file the O-1A petition without **ALL** necessary documents. It is extremely inefficient to continue to upload documents haphazardly after IFSIS begins the initial review. IFSIS will begin review after being notified that **ALL** documents have been uploaded. Please label the documents clearly for ease of review. IFSIS will contact you with additional questions if necessary.

1. **Receipt of nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor**

   Please upload the following documentation in a folder labeled “Awards.”

   Upload copies of the awards/prizes and a certified translation, if not in English. Tracy Maxwell in the ISSS office is a notary. Schedule an appointment with her for notary services [here](#). Also upload documentation from an authoritative source explaining the selection criteria for the awards/prizes and indicating the significance of the awards/prizes on a national or international level. For example, how many residents/fellows are selected for X award each year? How many residents/fellows are accepted into a particular training program each year? How many “Best Young Researcher” awards were presented at the conference?

2. **Membership in associations in the academic field that require outstanding achievements of their members**

   Please upload the following documentation in a folder labeled “Memberships.”

   Do NOT provide evidence of membership in organizations open to the general public simply by paying an annual membership fee, memberships at the student/trainee level, etc. Membership in the AMA or American Association of X which anyone can join out of interest or by paying dues do not “count.” USCIS wants to see **nominated/merit-based membership** in multiple associations (i.e., at least two). If you are FACP, that “counts.” Upload proof of membership in the form of a membership card, certificate, letter from the organization, etc. Upload the **criteria for membership**, including whether nominations and/or certain number of publications or years of experience are required, and the total number of members of each association from relevant websites.

3. **Published material in professional or major trade publications or major media written by others about the beneficiary relating to the beneficiary’s work in the academic field**

   Please upload the following documentation in a folder labeled “Publications about my work.”

   Upload copies of your Google Scholar citation index. Upload copies of the material (including any necessary translations) and categorize them according to (i) reviews of your work; (ii) research continuing from (or inspired by) your work; and (iii) footnoted acknowledgment of data from your publications. You can also upload copies of media coverage from easily recognizable, reputable scientific or news outlets.
4. Participation on a panel or individually as a judge of the work of others in the same or a related field

Please upload the following documentation in a folder labeled “Judge of the work of others.”

Upload emails confirming that you reviewed papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals (or a Publons report or certificate of review from the journal), letters from journal editorial review boards or the website where you are listed as a member of the editorial board, letters from universities attesting that you served on dissertation or thesis committees, and/or letters or emails attesting that you judged a scientific competition.

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

Please upload the following documentation in a folder labeled “Original Contributions.”

A template letter for this criterion is provided to you at the end of this document. Upload letters or affidavits from recognized experts commenting on your achievements in the field that clearly and completely demonstrate how your achievements establish you as having “extraordinary ability” in your field. The letters should include information about the writer’s qualifications for commenting on your achievements, including how long and in what capacity the writer has known you. Writers should NOT simply regurgitate your CV, and writers should NOT make general statements that you are “ethical,” a “pleasure to work with,” or an “up and coming young physician” or “rising star.” Writers should NOT repeat that you have published X papers in Y journals—USCIS will have your CV and other supporting evidence about your publication record.

There is no magic number of expert letters required. IFSIS recommends that you collect no more than five letters. USCIS very much expects to see quality over quantity. The more objective and international letters you can provide, from diverse institutions, the better. Please do not upload your recommenders’ CVs. The letters should speak directly to the impact and importance of specific research contributions/discoveries you have made, including direct references to how a particular journal article or conference presentation you made changed their outlook or their own practices, or otherwise influenced the field.

At least 3-4 letters must be from practitioners with whom you have never collaborated (i.e., objective recommenders), and at least 2-3 should be from practitioners not based in the US. This combination will allow USCIS to see a) the objective excellence of your contributions and b) the international scope of your reputation.

As many of the five letters as possible should be from objective recommenders. The letters should be addressed to USCIS, but do not mail them to USCIS! Ask your recommenders to provide the letters directly to you, and upload a clean scanned copy with the rest of the supporting evidence. Do not include more than one letter from someone employed by UAB. The letters need to be as objective and internationally-based as possible. IFSIS will not include more than one letter from UAB in the petition, and IFSIS will not include more than one letter from a former residency, fellowship, or thesis advisor, as these letters are incredibly subjective and carry extremely little weight with USCIS. You need letters that will show your national/international reputation for your achievements in the field, not generic support letters.

Please upload copies of any pending or approved patents as well, as this is direct evidence of an original contribution.
6. Evidence of scholarly books or articles in scholarly journals with international circulation in the academic field

Please upload the following documentation in a folder labeled “Publications.”

Upload the cover page of each paper, book chapter, or book (with certified English translations as appropriate) and the first page where the conclusion and end notes/references of the paper begins. IFSIS does not need copies of every paper ever written—please upload only the pages described above, and only for your top 10 papers/publications. Again, this is quality over quantity. USCIS only needs to see evidence that you have published in scholarly journals, period. Including copies of all 20-30 of your papers will not necessarily make the petition any stronger.

USCIS is interested in highly cited publications in high-impact journals. IFSIS generally only includes publications in journals that are either a) ranked in the top 20 by Google Scholar and/or b) are ranked in the first quartile (Q1) by Scimago (these also usually have a three-digit H index). As with recommendation letters, USCIS is looking for quality over quantity. Publications in obscure journals that require payment to be considered for publication are not helpful to an O-1A petition.

Please also upload native pdfs of both the Google Scholar publication ranking and the Scimago https://www.scimagojr.com/ ranking of each of the journals in which your top ten papers have been published, including the page of the Scimago ranking indicating the quartile of the journal.

ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATIVE DOCUMENTATION

You may have certain achievements that do not fit precisely into the evidentiary categories above. Feel free to upload additional evidence in a folder marked “Extra Documents” so that IFSIS can assess whether including the additional information will strengthen your case. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Proof of patents
- Online videos/case studies
- Curricula developed for training modules

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED:

You will receive an invitation to the Edge immigration database to upload relevant documents listed below related to your education and immigration history. Please follow the instructions in the email and label the documents clearly for ease of review. IFSIS will contact you with additional questions if necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biographical pages of your current, valid passport and all expired passports</td>
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<tr>
<td>All US visas in current, valid passport and any expired passports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most recent Form I-94, printed from <a href="https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home">https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current CV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diplomas and transcripts for ALL degrees (e.g., bachelor’s, master’s, PhD, MD, etc.) (with certified English translations, as appropriate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All prior immigration documents covering entire period of stay in US in any immigration status (e.g., Forms I-20, DS-2019, I-797, I-612 waiver approval, I-140, receipt notice for I-485, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Document Requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three most recent pay slips from current employer (if currently employed in the US). Include pay slips from BOTH UAB and HSF or Valley if you are dually-appointed clinical faculty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All EAD cards for non-H-1B employment (<em>e.g.</em>, OPT, H-4, J-2, DACA, TPS, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECFMG Certificate (if clinical faculty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1, 2 CS, 2 CK, and 3 USMLE Score Reports (OR USMLE Transcript of Scores) (if clinical faculty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama medical license, or letter from ABME stating that you have applied for a license (if clinical faculty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificates of completion of your residency and any fellowships (if clinical faculty)</td>
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**TEMPLATE RECOMMENDATION LETTER AND NOTARY FORM FOLLOW BELOW**
TEMPLATE RECOMMENDATION LETTER
(print on employer/department/institution letterhead, sign, and return a clean scanned copy to the requestor)

Dear recommender: thank you for supporting this O-1A “alien of extraordinary ability” petition. You can add the most value to the petition by speaking directly to specific achievements, publications, breakthroughs, etc. of the requestor rather than repeating items from a CV or providing character references. UAB encloses copies of the requestor’s manuscripts, degrees, CV, etc. with the petition. USCIS is most interested in your comments about the impact of the requestor’s work on the field and the requestor’s international reputation.

[Date]

USCIS Vermont Service Center
Attn: I-129O
38 River Rd.
Essex Junction, VT 05479-0001

RE: Non-Immigrant Visa Petition (O-1A) by the University of Alabama at Birmingham on behalf of [REQUESTOR’S FULL NAME]

Dear Immigration Services Officer:

I write to support The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)’s petition for Dr. _______________ to obtain O-1 work authorization in the United States. As this letter will show, Dr. _______________ possesses extraordinary ability in the field of ____________, and UAB is fortunate to have recruited him/her.

I am the Director of the _________ of the________ in [CITY, COUNTRY]. I am Professor of ________ at the School of Medicine of the ________. I am a member of academic societies for ______ (name them). I am a reviewer for the prominent peer-reviewed journals in the field of ___________, such as [name them]. Continue background/biographical paragraph of reviewer, including boards, appointments. I do/do not know Dr. ____ personally.

One of Dr. ___’s most important contributions was his/her publication in [journal] about [topic]. This research changed the field/caused me to rethink X/received international acclaim for/was heavily cited because . . . e.g., For the first time, because some phosphate metabolites were found to predominant in malignant tumors and others in benign tumors, it was possible to determine the biomedical characteristics of intraocular tumors. The ultimate goal of Dr. ___________’s research is to diagnose ocular tumors correctly so that eyes with benign tumors will not be treated or removed.

Dr. ___________ continued his/her studies on intraocular tumors while on the ocular oncology service of [INSTITUTION]. He/she is now perfecting the combination of MRI, gadolinium-DPTA, and fat suppression in the evaluation of intraocular and orbital tumors. He/she has already published significant papers on this subject. For example, he/she has shown that MRI can detect the presence of fibrovascular tissue in the orbital hydroxyapatite implants used to replace eyes removed because of untreatable cancers. This allows the physician to recognize that the implant is integrated into the orbit. As a leader in the field of these pioneering techniques, he/she has been asked to be senior author of the first atlas of magnetic resonance imaging of the eye and orbit.

In addition to his/her superb basic research, Dr. ___________ is recognized to be an outstanding clinician at [INSTITUTION]. He/she is routinely consulted on the diagnosis and management of intraocular,
orbital, and ocular adnexae tumors. His/her clinical research includes major papers on the predictive factors for metastasis and mortality after plaque radiotherapy of malignant melanoma of the conjunctiva and uvea.

Because of his/her outstanding research and international reputation, I strongly support UAB’s petition for Dr. _____ to obtain O-1 work authorization in the United States. We need more physician-scientists like him/her in the US. If I can help in any other way, please, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

[NAME, TITLE, DEPARTMENT/INSTITUTION]
Notarial Certificate of Translation

State of _______________
County of _______________

The attached documents entitled _____________________ were translated from ____________ to English by _____________________________.

I ___________________________ certify that I am fluent (conversant) in the English and __________________ languages, and that the attached document is an accurate translation of the document attached entitled _________________________.

Typed Name of Translator:
Address:

Date: 

Signature: __________________________________________________________________

Who appeared before me this _____ day of ________, 2022 in _____________ City, __________ State.

Notary signature:

Notary seal: