About O-1 Extraordinary Ability

The O-1 visa is a nonimmigrant employment-based visa classification for individuals of extraordinary ability in sciences, education, business, arts or athletics; or individuals of extraordinary achievement in the motion picture and televisions industries. The O-1 application requires a preponderance of evidence that the individual has extraordinary ability. The evidence submitted must demonstrate that the individual is one of a small percentage who have risen to the very top of the field of endeavor.

At Yale, O-1 sponsorship is for a full-time salaried Yale employee with an academic faculty appointment of Associate Research Scientist or higher, with at least 3 years of funding. Yale affiliates who can demonstrate sustained extraordinary national or international acclaim and recognition for achievements in their field can request O-1 sponsorship from OISS. OISS will review how well the individual's achievements meet the USCIS criteria and decide whether Yale sponsorship is possible.

If approved for O-1 sponsorship, the process requires the employer to file a 'Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker' (Form I-129), along with all the supporting documentation that the individual meets the O-1 eligibility criteria. In many cases even if the O-1 application is approved, the individual must travel home, get the O-1 visa, and return to the U.S. before being able to work in O-1 status.

Two General Categories of O-1

- For sciences, education, business and athletes
- For the arts and performing arts

Qualifications

- Evidence that the applicant is recognized nationally or internationally as extraordinary in their academic field. This evidence must consist of at least three categories of achievements. In addition each piece of evidence must be accompanied by supporting explanations from independent objective sources.
- Evidence that the employment requires the skills of someone with 'extraordinary ability' as detailed in a faculty support letter and peer group letters.

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Links
[1] https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/other-visa-options/o-1/o-1-eligibility-criteria