O-1 Extraordinary Ability Overview

The O-1 visa is a nonimmigrant employment based visa classification. In most cases, seeking an O-1 visa status is only recommended when H-1B or a J-1 visa is not applicable. Yale affiliates who can demonstrate sustained national or international acclaim and recognition for achievements in the sciences, arts, education, business or athletics can request O-1 sponsorship from OISS. OISS has the right to accept or decline requests depending on how well the individual's achievements meet the USCIS criteria. Yale only sponsors O-1 visas for full-time appointments. The process requires the employer to file a ‘Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker’ (Form I-129), along with 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. 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 [1]. 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.

Source URL: https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/o-1-extraordinary-ability-overview

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