

## **O-1 OVERVIEW**

The O nonimmigrant category is for the employment of persons who have achieved and sustained national or international acclaim for extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics. Extraordinary ability is defined by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services as ability that shows a “person is one of the small percentage who have arisen to the very top of the field of endeavor.”

O-1 is a category that is rarely used by the University of South Alabama because of the large amount of evidence necessary for approval of the O-1. In many instances, H-1B is a much more appropriate employment visa category. An O-1 will not be considered unless other options are not feasible. Final determination of whether or not to pursue O-1 sponsorship will be made by the Office of Immigration .

To be considered eligible for O-1, the international applicant must have a job-offer from the University of South Alabama. Only the University of South Alabama’s Office of Immigration may petition for the O-1 approval through outside, university-approved immigration attorneys. Employment approval is granted through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and is job specific as well as employer and department specific.

International applicants and employees who are subject to the 212(e) two-year home residency requirement may be sponsored for O-1, but if the applicant is currently in the US in J visa status, the applicant must travel outside of the U.S. and apply for an O-1 visa in order to obtain O-1 visa status, since J visa holders who have a 212(e) requirement cannot change status to O-1 within the United States.

The O-1 status may be granted initially for up to a three-year period, thereafter O-1s can be extended one year at a time with no maximum limitation. Workers in the O-1 category can fill permanent positions, but must leave the country at the end of their authorized period of stay. A person in O-1 status is considered to have dual-intent with regards to immigration. This means that while in O-1 status, workers may file for a change to another immigration category such as Permanent Residency if they are not subject to the 212(e) 2-year home residency requirement.

## **TIMING OF FILING – PLAN UP TO 1 YEAR IN ADVANCE**

At the earliest, the Office of Immigration may submit an O-1 petition to US Citizenship and Immigration Services 1 year before the intended beginning effective date of the O-1. Due to the long evidence collection process, it is recommended that departments begin any new O-1 application as close to 1 year in advance of the intended start date as possible. Extensions and amendments may be filed 6 months in advance. The minimum time needed to prepare an O-1 case after submission of all evidence to International Education is 1 month.

If timing is a critical issue such as with a new professor hired in the summer months who must begin work at the beginning of the fall semester, departments have the option of filing for Premium Processing. Premium Processing guarantees a decision on an O-1 petition within 15 days of the receipt by US Citizenship and Immigration Services of the I-129, O-1 application. The cost of Premium Processing is \$2805 in addition to the regular \$460 application fee and legal fees for O-1 applications.

## **FILING FEES**

All O-1 Applications require an I-129 filing fee of \$530. Because the sponsorship of the O-1 is by Office of International Education OIIA, the department which is sponsoring the O-1 application must pay the \$530 fee. Additionally, if Premium Processing is being sought for an expedited service, there is an additional filing fee of \$2805. All legal fees for outside, university-approved counsel must be incurred by the sponsoring department.

## **CHANGE OF O-1 EMPLOYER – TRANSFER TO USA OR CONCURRENT O-1 EMPLOYMENT**

If a hiring department wishes to sponsor an individual who is already in the U.S. in O-1 status with another employer, Office of Immigration must file a petition for change of employer with USCIS. In order for the individual to remain in the U.S. in O-1 status, USCIS must receive the new petition, with \$530 filing fee, before the individual's last day working for the previous employer. Furthermore, in order for the O-1 employee to start working at the University of South Alabama, the university must receive the final I-797 Approval Notice for O-1 employment from USCIS. Work may not begin until the final approval notice is received. The documentation required from the department and employee for the change of employer petition is the same as that of a new petition.

## **CHANGES IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT OR EARLY TERMINATION**

Departments *must* consult with Office of Immigration prior to changing an O-1's terms of employment (including changes to job duties or department) to determine whether an amended petition is required.

Please inform the OIIA immediately if an O-1 worker's employment is terminated so that the OIIA can notify USCIS, effectively withdrawing the O-1. Because O-1 status is an employment-based status, the worker's visa status ends immediately upon termination. If the department terminates employment, the department must pay the reasonable cost of return transportation to the O-1 employee's last place of foreign residence. **The department will continue to be liable for paying the individual's full salary and benefits if the O-1 is not withdrawn.**

## **EXTENSION OF O-1 EMPLOYMENT**

The process for requesting an extension of O-1 status is the same as for the initial period of O-1 employment; however, beyond the initial 3 years of O-1 sponsorship, extensions are limited to 1 year at a time. The extension petition must be filed prior to the current approved O-1 status end date to avoid interruptions in employment. The employee may continue to work for a period of 240 days while an extension petition is pending, as long as it is timely filed before the current end date. (*Please note:* An extension of O-1 status allows the employee to continue working in the U.S.; however, it does not extend his or her O-1 entry visa, which is required for re-entry into the U.S. after traveling abroad. If the O-1 employee wishes to travel outside the U.S. after the expiration date of his or her current entry visa, he or she must apply for a new entry visa at a U.S. consulate.)

## **O-1 TRAVEL AND POSSIBLE VISA DELAYS ABROAD**

O-1 employees should contact OIIA for information on travel requirements. O-1 visa application requirements can vary by consular location, therefore, please refer to the particular United States Consulate/Embassy that you will visit. A list of embassy websites is available at <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. Employees and departments should be aware that security checks, which are part of visa processing, may delay an employee's return to the U.S.

## **ESTABLISHING EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY**

Any applicant for O-1 must meet three basic requirements:

1. The applicant has extraordinary ability within one of the five broad fields: the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics.
2. The applicant's ability has been demonstrated by sustained national or international acclaim.
3. The applicant is coming to the U.S. to continue working in his or her area of extraordinary ability.

## **ESTABLISHING EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY IN SCIENCE, EDUCATION, BUSINESS, AND ATHLETICS:**

**Basis A: Receipt (not just a nomination) of an award with the caliber of the Nobel Prize.**

**Basis B: Documentation showing extraordinary ability:** An O-1 applicant can also establish extraordinary ability by submitting documentation in at least three (preferably four) of the categories listed below:

- Receipt of major prizes or awards for outstanding achievement in the field of endeavor;
- Membership in associations in the field in which the O-1 applicant claims extraordinary ability. Membership must require their members to demonstrate outstanding achievements;
- Published material in professional publications written by others about the alien's work in the field in which the O-1 applicant claims extraordinary ability;
- Participation, either on a panel or individually, as a judge of the work of others in the same or allied field in which the O-1 applicant claims extraordinary ability;
- Original scientific, scholarly, or business-related contributions in the field (as shown by letters of attestation and support from colleagues and other experts in the field);
- Authorship of scholarly books or articles (in scholarly journals with international circulation) in the field or in other major media;
- Evidence that the applicant has been employed in a critical or essential capacity for organizations and establishments that have a distinguished reputation;
- Evidence that the applicant has either commanded a high salary or will command a high salary or other remuneration for services, as shown by contracts or letters of employment.

## **ESTABLISHING EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY IN THE ARTS:**

**Basis A: Receipt (not just a nomination) of an award with the caliber of the Academy Award, Grammy, Emmy, or Director's Guild Award.**

**Basis B: Documentation showing extraordinary ability:** An O-1 applicant can also establish extraordinary ability by developing and submitting documentation in at least three of the categories listed below:

- Evidence that the applicant has and will perform services as a lead or starring participant in productions which have a distinguished reputation;
- Evidence that the applicant has and will perform in a lead, starring, or critical role for organizations and establishments that have a distinguished reputation;
- Published material in major newspapers, trade journals, magazines, or other publications written by others about the applicant's achievements and national or international recognition;
- Evidence of major or critically acclaimed successes as evidenced by such indicators as title, rating, standing in the field, box office receipts, motion picture or television ratings, and other occupational achievements reported in trade journals, major newspapers, or other publications;
- Evidence that the applicant has received significant recognition for achievements from organizations, critics, government agencies, or other recognized experts in the field in which the applicant is engaged. (as shown by letters of attestation and support from colleagues and other experts in the field);
- Evidence that the applicant has either commanded a high salary or will command a high salary or other remuneration for services, as shown by contracts or letters of employment.

## **ESTABLISHING EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY CONTINUED: ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE NEEDED FROM THE DEPARTMENT:**

The University of South Alabama immigration counsel must also seek the advisory opinion of an appropriate U.S. peer group and obtain a written advisory opinion regarding the nature of the work to be done and the O-1 applicant's qualifications for the position. OIIA and the immigration attorney will assist with meeting this requirement.

## DEPARTMENT PROCESSING PROCEDURES

- 1. Request O-1 processing** (please complete [Appendix A](#)): To initiate the O-1 process, the department should complete the Appendix A section of this packet, providing details on the job position and a copy of the appointment letter (if already prepared).
- 2. Complete the Deemed Export Form** (please complete [Appendix B](#)). In support of your request for O-1 sponsorship, OIIA is now required to certify on the USCIS I-129 petition whether or not a license for export controlled technology or technical data is necessary for the professor/researcher being sponsored. To facilitate this requirement, all host departments are required to complete an attestation as to whether or not the O-1 worker will require a license for export controlled technology or technical data.
- 3. Complete the letter of O-1 support** (please see [Appendix C template](#)). Please note that the maximum length of time for which an O-1 can be requested at initially is three years, and extensions are limited to 1-year per request.
- 4. Process Direct Deposit Request for USCIS and legal Fees (DO NOT SUBMIT TO FINANCIAL AFFAIRS)** (please see [Appendix D](#)).
- 5. Send documents to the OIIA:** The O-1 Request (Appendix A), the Deemed Export Form (Appendix B), and the letter of support (Appendix C) may be sent as soon as they are complete. Please send all documents to OIIA, Meisler Hall 2200.

## PROSPECTIVE O-1 EMPLOYEE PROCEDURES

- 1. Provide immigration information and history** (please complete [Appendix E](#)): Once the department initiates the O-1 sponsorship process by submitting the Appendix A forms and Appointment Letter, OIIA will contact the O-1 beneficiary to obtain the biographical information, immigration documents, proof of qualifications (diploma, CV, licenses), and family information (if applicable) required for the O-1 petition.
- 2. Evidence of Extraordinary Ability** - The international applicant must submit significant evidence of their extraordinary ability, detailed on pages 3 and 4 of this packet.
- 3. O-3 Dependent Sponsorship.** If a prospective O-1 employee has dependent family members (spouse or children) whom the O-1 employee would like to sponsor for O-3 visa status, the O-1 employee will need to consult with OIIA about processing the O-3 visa support. For sponsorship of dependents who are already in the US to either extend or obtain O-3 status, the prospective O-1 employee will need to submit documents for concurrent filing with the O-1 petition. For dependents that are currently outside of the US and will enter the US in O-3 status at a later date, OIIA can advise on how they may obtain O-3 status abroad.

## OIIA PROCESSING

Once OIIA receives the required materials from the department and applicant, we will confer with the immigration attorney to complete the necessary forms and send the petition to the USCIS for processing. Prior to submission of the O-1 Petition to the immigration attorney's office, OIIA will evaluate all submitted materials for the O-1 Application.

When the O-1 petition is approved, USCIS will send the I-797 Approval Notice to the Office of International Education. The applicant and the department will be notified of the approval. The original O-1 I-797 Approval Notice will be given to the applicant, and copies will be kept on file at IE. The applicant will be responsible for updating Human Resources and Payroll of the approval of their petition.

Upon receiving the Approval Notice (I-797) from the USCIS, the OIIA will notify the employee and ask him or her to come to the office to receive the official approval notice. If the individual is abroad awaiting the approval notice in order to apply for an O-1 entry visa at a U.S. consulate, OIIA will contact the department to discuss mailing options in order to supply the O-1 worker with the necessary materials for the visa interview.

ATTN: Office of Immigration | Meisler Hall Room 2200

Phone: 251.460.6050 | E-mail: [immigration@southalabama.edu](mailto:immigration@southalabama.edu) | <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/international/immigration/index.html>

**O-1 Packet  
 Appendix A:  
 Position & Wage Info**

**PART 1: POSITION INFORMATION – TO BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT**

**PLEASE ENTER INFO ABOUT POSITION MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS, NOT EMPLOYEE'S QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Salary: \_\_\_\_\_  Per calendar year OR  Per academic year

3. Hours/ Range of hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. FTE (.50 – 1.00): \_\_\_\_\_  
\*if below 1.00, see Part4, #5 of the Acknowledgement of Responsibility

5. Dates of proposed O-1 sponsorship (3 years allowed initially, with 1-year extensions):

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

6. List all worksites for this position:  The University of South Alabama Main Campus, Mobile, AL  
 Building and Room #: \_\_\_\_\_

Other location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Description of basic job duties - please list the absolute minimum duties/tasks to be performed, using non-technical terms  
**(For non-teaching, staff positions, please also attach the HR Job Posting):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Absolute **MINIMUM** qualifications required to perform the duties/tasks of this position:

a. Level of higher education required:  Bachelor's  Master's  Doctorate  Other \_\_\_\_\_

b. State license or certificate required?:  Yes or  No

c. Degree major(s)/specialty(ies) required: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Absolute **minimum** number of years of employment experience required for the position: \_\_\_\_\_

e. Other minimum requirements, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

f. Position's **minimum** required training and experience (other than that which would or could have been obtained during the normal course of the degree program listed above) Please quantify required training and experience in number of months/years (if none please write none): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. **MINIMUM** number of employees (not including students or grad assistants) the alien must supervise: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Is travel required?  Yes or  No

11. Are there any other working conditions that affect the rate of pay?  Yes or  No

If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Occupational title of the alien employee's immediate supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_





**O-1 PACKET  
 APPENDIX B  
 EXPORT CONTROL FORM**

**OVERVIEW OF EXPORT CONTROL REQUIREMENT FOR O-1**

In support of your request for O-1 sponsorship, OIIA is required to certify on the USCIS I-129 petition whether or not a license for export controlled technology or technical data is necessary for the professor/researcher being sponsored. To facilitate this requirement, we ask your assistance in completing the questionnaire below, which will allow International Education to begin filing O-1 support. In addition, the Office of Research Compliance and Assurance will review the form and if necessary will confer with the sponsored-individual and appropriate supervisor or administrator to determine whether a license under EAR or ITAR would be required. The license acquisition process would be initiated in parallel to O-1 sponsorship. Any future changes or extensions of the sponsored O-1 worker's employment must also be reviewed for compliance.

**SECTION 1: PROSPECTIVE O-1 EMPLOYEE AND DEPARTMENT DETAILS**

O-1 Employee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employee's Country of Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee's Country of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PI/Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School/Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 2: EXPORT CONTROL QUESTIONS**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1.</b> Is the nature of the O-1 Employee's work confidential/proprietary (i.e. the results of the work/research projects <i><b>are not</b></i> intended for teaching, publication, or to be otherwise shared broadly with the interested public and within the scientific community)?</p>   | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO   |
| <p><b>2.</b> In the course of his/her employment, do you anticipate that the O-1 Employee will be provided access to:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">a. any USA-owned technical data or technology that is considered proprietary or confidential to the University of South Alabama?</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">b. any third party-owned technical data or technology that is considered proprietary or confidential to the third party owner? This includes U.S. government furnished technical data with dissemination controls or other restrictive markings, as well as ITAR-controlled software, and information restricted under an NDA.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">c. equipment specifically designed or developed for military or space applications? (see U.S. Munitions List under <a href="#">22 CFR § 121</a>).</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

Please sign and submit to Office of Immigration (OIIA) with the H-1B application packet. While OIIA can begin processing H-1B support with this form, please be aware that OIIA will send this form for a secondary review to Dusty Layton in the Office of Research Compliance and Assurance, CSAB 120 251-460-6625, [dlayton@southalabama.edu](mailto:dlayton@southalabama.edu).

**REQUIRED SIGNATURES**

*We attest that the information being provided at this time is true. If at this time no export license is required and, during the course of his/her employment at USA, there are any changes to the O-1 Scholar's work that would require a license, we will contact the Office of Research Compliance and Assurance and OIIA.*

**PI/Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chair/Director or Dean:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

A license for Export Control is not required for this scholar.  
 A license for Export Control is required for this scholar, and that process has been initiated.  
**Research Compliance Office:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

ATTN: Office of Immigration | Meisler Hall Room 2200

Phone: 251.460.6050 | E-mail: [immigration@southalabama.edu](mailto:immigration@southalabama.edu) | <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/international/immigration/index.html>

**O-1 PACKET  
APPENDIX C  
TEMPLATE FOR SUPPLEMENTAL DEPARTMENT**

**[PRINT ON DEPARTMENTAL LETTERHEAD]**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Vermont Service Center  
75 Lower Welden Street  
St. Albans, VT 05479

Re: Petition for O-1 Nonimmigrant Worker  
Petitioner: University of South Alabama  
Beneficiary: Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter is written in support of the University of South Alabama's petition to qualify Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ as an O-1 nonimmigrant worker.

We currently have an opening for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ to perform the following duties: **include job duties/responsibilities here.**

The minimum requirements for this position are a (*insert degree PhD, Master's, Bachelor's etc*) or related field. **Include next sentence only if appropriate.** In addition, the candidate must have # of years of experience in field of study or a similar field.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ is an ideal candidate for the position. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ has (*detail degree and qualifications here*)

In the event that Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ is dismissed prior to the end of the period requested for O-1 visa status, I verify that the University of South Alabama will be responsible for reasonable costs of the return transportation abroad.

It is our intention that Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ be able to accept the position of \_\_\_\_\_ and start employment pursuant to the O-1 visa on appointment start date or date on which O-1 visa will start, for a period of **period of time up to three years** years. I respectfully request that the petition to qualify him/her as an O-1 professional be approved.

Sincerely,

Department Chair



**O-1 PACKET  
APPENDIX D:  
FILING FEE REQUEST**

**Instructions for USCIS Fee Payment**

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**Required fees:**

\$530.00	Form I-129, O-1 petition
\$5,500.00	Attorney Handling Fees
\$2,805.00	Form I-907, Premium Processing, if applicable and requested

\*It is highly recommended that the department pay all fees regarding the O petition, as it is employment based. However, the scholar may pay partial or all of fees associated with this petition.

**Below are the procedures for requesting USA checks or direct deposit to be issued for fee payment:**

- Invoice will be issued to department from International Education
- Check made payable to Klari B. Tedrow or Direct Deposit processed for vendor Klari B. Tedrow – J00424930.
- **Do not submit** payment request to Accounts Payable without proper invoice from OIIA.
- Please ask Accounts Payable to notify our office when a direct deposit has been issued.



### PART 3: IMMIGRATION INFORMATION & HISTORY

Passport # : \_\_\_\_\_ Passport Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Issue Date (Month/Day/Year): \_\_\_\_\_ Passport Expiry Date (Month/Day/Year): \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Social Security Number (If any): \_\_\_\_\_

A/Alien/USCIS # - if any. (A/Alien/USCIS # is listed on EAD Cards and on any I-140 or I-485 Notices) :  
\_\_\_\_\_

At which consulate will you apply for your O-1 Visa stamp, either now or the next time you travel abroad?

City (outside of the U.S.): \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

#### US VISA HISTORY INFORMATION:

Have you ever been in the United States in any non-immigrant status?  YES or  NO.

If YES, please list all time in the US in non-immigrant visa status. If more space is needed, please attach a separate page:

1. Immigration Status (i.e. F-1, J-1, H-4): \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Stay (M/D/Y): \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

2. Immigration Status (i.e. F-1, J-1, H-4): \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Stay (M/D/Y): \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been in the United States on a J Visa (J-1 or J-2)?  YES or  NO.

Are/were you subject to the 212(e), 2-Year Residency Requirement (if currently/previously on J-Visa)?  YES or  NO.

If subject to 212(e), what is the current status? (Please check one):

- Applied for waiver
- Received waiver (Please Include Proof of Waiver)
- Completed requirement in home country
- None of the above

Have you ever been denied an O-1?  YES or  NO.

Do you have any pending immigrant petitions (Permanent Residency Application)?  YES or  NO.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED TO OIIA

- Copy/Scan of Current CV/ Resume
- Copy/Scan of all university-level academic degrees, diplomas, and transcripts/mark sheets.
  - Diplomas and transcripts/mark sheets do not have to be originals
  - Documents not in English must be translated by someone competent to do so
  - Degrees or documents issued by non-U.S. institutions will have to have a foreign credential evaluation
- Copies/Scans of 3 most recent pay stubs/ paycheck notifications if currently employed in the United States
- Copy/Scans of ALL current and previous immigration documents:
  - Passport Identification Pages\*\*
  - Current/ most recent Visa Stamp \*\*
  - I-94 record printout from \*\*
  - All previous I-20s, DS-2019's, and H-1B/H-4/O-1 I-797 Approval Notices, etc.\*\*
  - Employment Authorization Card (e.g. EAD Card for F-1 OPT or J-2 EAD Card)\*\*
- Supporting Evidence for O-1 Qualifications (outlined on pages 3 & 4 of this packet)

**Include the above starred (\*\*) items for your family members**

ATTN: Office of Immigration | Meisler Hall Room 2200

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