OUTSTANDING PROFESSOR/RESEARCHER

Instructions for Support Letters
Documentation of “Outstanding” Qualifications

Documentation should be submitted only for categories of evidence (A-F) that the applicant clearly meets. For each category, there should be letters of support from persons who are top experts in the field. As many letters as possible should be from individuals who have become familiar with the applicant’s work through professional publications and/or conference presentations, as opposed to those who are or were immediate colleagues. If the applicant is currently working at UW-Madison, letters from colleagues here are appropriate, but they must be supplemented by external documentation. Some of these letters must be from countries other than the US and the applicant’s home country. If at all possible, it is helpful to get letters from U.S. government agencies that have a particular interest in the applicant’s work, supporting the university’s statements that the person’s contributions are essential to the success of the project.

It is helpful to the adjudicating USCIS officer if each support letter, including those from government agencies, adheres to the following format:
- the writer should describe his/her credentials, in essence a paragraph that sets forth the major points of the person’s C.V.; refer to personal web page if appropriate;
- explain how the writer is acquainted with the applicant and the applicant’s work;
- describe in detail the applicant’s significant contributions to the field, why this research is unique and what unique skills the applicant brings to the research, what the ramifications are to the specific field currently and into the future, what impact this has in practical terms on humanity, and any other information that will demonstrate that the applicant is recognized individually as a researcher of international renown whose work is having and will continue to have a significant impact. The letters should emphasize the applicant’s past achievements and show how the work is already in use in the field. The letters should specifically address one or more of the six categories of evidence.

Place the original letters under the yellow divider entitled “evidence to show that the alien is recognized internationally as outstanding in the academic field.” Also, make copies of the letters, highlight the section relevant to each category of evidence, and place the copy in the appropriate section.

In the case of researchers who are relatively young and/or at an early stage of their career, it is best not to refer to that fact. USCIS officers have questioned how a person who is young can possibly be outstanding, so it is best to avoid calling attention to it.

For guidance on each of the six categories, see the preceding section “Part II Documentation of “Outstanding” Qualifications.”

OPR Support Ltrs 10/2012