

# USCIS Updates Guidance on EB-1 Extraordinary Ability Criteria

Article By:

Miriam C. Thompson

---

On Oct. 2, 2024, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released updated [policy guidance](#) clarifying the evidence that may be considered for EB-1A extraordinary ability immigrant visa eligibility. The EB-1A category is designed for applicants who possess extraordinary ability in science, the arts, education, business, or athletics, as demonstrated by sustained national or international acclaim and recognized achievements in their field.

## Key Updates to EB-1A Criteria:

- **Consideration of Team Awards:** USCIS will now consider an individual's participation in team awards under the criterion for lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence. Even if an applicant has not won a personal award, USCIS may consider their contribution to a team that has achieved recognition. This change may offer increased flexibility, particularly for individuals in fields where team efforts often play a central role in success.
- **Inclusion of Past Memberships:** USCIS will now consider applicants' past and present memberships in associations that demand outstanding achievement. Previously, USCIS only considered current memberships. This shift may benefit applicants who have previously been affiliated with prestigious professional groups or associations, potentially broadening the scope for recognition of their expertise and accomplishments.
- **Relaxed Published Material Criterion:** USCIS removed language requiring that published materials about the individual must explicitly highlight both the value of their work and their contributions to the field. This adjustment may simplify the process for some applicants, allowing published material that discusses the individual without the added requirement of demonstrating the work's significance.
- **Clarification on Exhibitions and Showcases:** The new guidance clarifies that non-artistic exhibitions or showcases will only be considered as part of the comparable evidence criterion, not as evidence of artistic exhibitions or showcases. This expands opportunities for certain applicants in non-artistic fields where public exhibitions may still demonstrate extraordinary skill, recognition, or reputation.

## Impact of the Updated Guidance

These updates, effective immediately, are part of USCIS's ongoing efforts to provide clarity and transparency regarding the types of evidence that can be used to establish eligibility for the EB-1A classification, and build upon a previous [policy update from September 2023](#).

By refining EB-1A criteria, USCIS may offer greater flexibility and acknowledges the diverse ways in which individuals can demonstrate extraordinary ability. Please also refer to [USCIS's policy manual](#) for more information on evidence that may be considered for EB-1A petitions.

©2025 Greenberg Traurig, LLP. All rights reserved.

---

National Law Review, Volume XIV, Number 286

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/uscis-updates-guidance-eb-1-extraordinary-ability-criteria>