

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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OUTSTANDING PROFESSORS/RESEARCHERS (OPR)

Colorado State University may pursue the outstanding professor/researcher route to obtaining permanent residence for international faculty and other permanent staff when the individual is recognized internationally as outstanding in his or her academic field and has at least three years of work experience beyond a terminal degree. Teaching or research experience gained while working on an advanced degree might be acceptable in limited circumstances, but only if the teaching duties were such that the employee had full responsibility for the class taught, or if the research conducted while working on the degree has been internationally recognized as outstanding.

Generally, filing in this category follows these steps:

ISSS reviews the employee's qualifications to consider whether a good argument can be made that the individual meets the eligibility criteria and has the requisite experience.

The employee collects supporting documentation, including letters from experts in the field, to substantiate the employee's "outstanding" contributions and international reputation in the field. The collection of supporting documentation for this category is very time-consuming and requires significant contribution from the employee. This should be discussed with an advisor in ISSS.

After ISSS receives the administrative processing fee and confirmation from the employee's department regarding sponsorship, the University files an immigrant petition for the employee on Form I-140. Supporting documentation is also submitted with the petition.

Upon approval of the I-140, the employee is eligible to file an application to adjust status to permanent resident as the beneficiary of the approved immigrant petition. It is also possible for the employee to file the application to adjust status to permanent resident concurrently with the I-140 petition. However, this should be done only after consulting an advisor in ISSS regarding the pros and cons of this strategy.

NOTE: To start the process, we ask that the Department and the international employee meet with an adviser in ISSS to go over the procedures for permanent residency. We will also need a memo from the Chair of the Department to verify that the position offered is indeed a "permanent" position. An offer of permanent employment is one in which the position is tenured, tenure-track, or for research positions, those that are long-term and indefinite in nature.

A petition must include the following:

- The I-140 filing fee made payable to the Department of Homeland Security;

- A copy of the employee's contract or offer letter;

- A letter confirming the "permanent" nature of the employment;

- Evidence that the employee has at least three years of research and/or teaching experience in the field; and

- Evidence of at least two (preferably more) of the following:

 - Receipt of major prizes or awards for outstanding achievements in the academic field.

 - Memberships in associations in the academic field which require outstanding achievements of their members.

 - Published material in professional publications written by others about the employee's work in the academic field.

 - Participation on a panel, or individually, as the judge of the work of others in the same or an allied field.

 - Original scientific or scholarly research contributions to the academic field. These often take the form of letters of recommendation which discuss the employee in terms of his or her professional contributions to the academic field rather than those which reflect on the employee's stellar performance as a graduate student.

 - Authorship of scholarly books or articles, in scholarly journals with international circulation, in the academic field.