



# National Innovation Visa

## Fact Sheet

The National Innovation Visa (NIV) is by invitation only and the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs has given States and Territories the opportunity to nominate selected candidates, that once nominated are prioritised by Home Affairs over other candidates.

The NSW National Innovation Visa framework targets individuals who meet the Australian Government's criteria of "exceptional and outstanding achievement" whilst also having a clear alignment with NSW's strategic interests – whether economic, scientific, cultural or sporting. NSW' approach is strategic and selective, aiming to nominate high-impact candidates whose contributions can create jobs, drive innovation, investment and enhance NSW' reputation.

The NSW NIV framework allows NSW to target high-calibre individuals across diverse fields while maintaining a consistent, transparent, merit-based selection methodology.

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## Criteria

There are five nomination pathways in the NIV. Each pathway corresponds to a distinct talent domain outlined in Ministerial Direction No. 112 and is structured to ensure NSW applies sector-appropriate evidence standards in line with Australian Government expectations.

- Academic and Researcher
- Entrepreneur
- Innovative Investor
- Sports Professional
- Creative Professional.

### Academic and Researcher Pathway

This pathway is for individuals with a distinguished record of achievement and significant potential in academic or research fields of strategic importance to NSW.

**Research Excellence:** The applicant must demonstrate a strong track record of original and impactful research relevant to NSW's current or future economic or social needs.

### Entrepreneur Pathway

This pathway is for individuals with a demonstrated history of entrepreneurial success and innovative, scalable business ventures with high growth potential for NSW.

**Track Record of Entrepreneurial Success:** The applicant should have a proven history of founding, leading, or significantly contributing to successful innovative businesses.

## Innovative Investor Pathway

This pathway is for individuals with a demonstrated track record of providing significant capital and expert insight into innovative ventures, contributing to their success and the growth of the innovation ecosystem within NSW.

**Significant Angel Investment Track Record:** The applicant must demonstrate a history of providing substantial “angel” investment in innovative ventures with a track record of supporting their success.

## Sports Professional Pathway

This pathway is for highly talented individuals in sports, including athletes, coaches, and other specialists, who will raise NSW's international standing and contribute to the development of the sports sector.

**Exceptional Sporting Achievement (for Athletes):** Athletes must demonstrate exceptional and outstanding achievements at the highest levels of their sport, with significant national or international recognition.

**Outstanding Coaching or Specialist Expertise (for Coaches and Specialists):** Coaches and specialists (e.g., sports scientists, high-performance managers) must demonstrate a proven track record of outstanding success and significant impact at a high level of sport.

## Creative Pathway

This pathway is for highly talented individuals in arts and cultural fields who have achieved national or international recognition and will enrich NSW's creative and cultural landscape.

**Exceptional Talent and Artistic Distinction:** The applicant must demonstrate exceptional talent and a high level of artistic distinction in their specific creative field (e.g., music, visual arts, performing arts, literature, design, film, digital media).

## NSW Selection Process

NSW will take an EOI-led selection process to assess and nominate candidates. This will ensure NSW's involvement is **efficient, merit-based, and aligned with the federal system**. It avoids open-ended applications by gating with an invitation. The process focuses on qualitative excellence rather than rigid quantitative cut-offs, in keeping with the spirit of the NIV program.

### 1. Expression of Interest (EOI) Submission

Prospective candidates for NSW nomination will first submit an EOI through an online portal, capturing key information about the individual's field, achievements, and proposed contribution to NSW.

### 2. Expert Review and Shortlisting

NSW nomination officers (with expertise across the pathways) will review EOIs. They will assess qualitative aspects – the significance of achievements, the credibility of the candidate's plans, and fit with NSW priorities – applying a **risk-based lens**. Rather than a points test, this review is holistic and judgement based. The Investment NSW - Business and Skilled Migration team will consult domain experts as needed.

### 3. Invitation to Apply for Nomination

Shortlisted candidates will receive a **formal invitation from NSW to submit a full application for state nomination**. Detailed documentation to substantiate claims (e.g. reference letters, evidence of awards, business plans) as per the criteria, will then be requested.

#### 4. Comprehensive Application & External Endorsement

Invited candidates will submit a complete application to NSW, addressing the relevant criteria in detail. In addition to an applicant's letters of support, NSW will seek an **independent expert endorsement** for each shortlisted applicant. This endorsement will come from a recognised individual or institution with national or international standing in the applicant's field, selected from a curated register of endorsers. This process ensures that every nomination is underpinned by **credible third-party validation** aligned with Home Affairs' expectations.

#### 5. NSW Nomination Decision

Final decisions on nomination will take an **"on balance" test** (echoing the language of MD112) – weighing the candidate's exceptional track record and the expected benefits to NSW, against any risks or uncertainties.

#### 6. Final Nomination (Form 1000 and Letter of Support)

For candidates approved by NSW, the state will lodge an official **Form 1000** nomination to the Department of Home Affairs, along with a formal letter of support. Form 1000 is the Australian Government-required nomination form where Investment NSW (as an "expert State government agency") certifies the applicant's credentials and the merit of their migration to Australia.

#### 7. Follow-Up

After nomination, NSW will maintain contact with nominees through the visa decision stage. While Home Affairs assesses visa criteria like health, character, and the overall "exceptional and outstanding" requirement, NSW can provide additional information if needed.

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## Priorities

The NSW NIV framework supports candidates with evidence of action, not just aspiration. Candidates must:

- Demonstrate past achievement – not just potential to deliver
- Clear alignment with NSW priorities
- Impact already underway – not speculative
- Credible, well-supported plans to contribute to NSW.

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## Contact:

[niv@investment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:niv@investment.nsw.gov.au)

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