

## Quick guide: Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

### Background

ATAS is a UK government scheme which provides a vetting service for students from certain countries who have an offer to study at a UK HEI in certain, sensitive subjects. The aim is to prevent technology research/knowledge from being used to support military programmes “of significant concern” overseas.

The Home Office has decided to extend the scheme to workers and therefore, from 21 May 2021, it will be a legal requirement for relevant individuals to hold an ATAS certificate. Based on guidance to date, it will be the University’s responsibility to ensure compliance.

### Who it applies to

All researchers (whether employed or visiting) and academics whose work involves an element of research, if they are (a) applying under the Skilled Worker, Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) or Visitor immigration routes<sup>1</sup>, (b) researching in a relevant field and (c) not a citizen of an exempt country.

Existing staff who meet the criteria do not need to apply for an ATAS certificate unless/until they are applying to extend their permission to stay in the UK, or to switch into one of the above immigration routes from another route.

### How to decide whether an ATAS certificate is required

Fundamental questions are:

1. **Skilled Worker and Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) only:** is the SOC code under which their job is classified on the list? Our ‘usual’ codes are 2119 for research roles, and 2311 for teaching – both of these are on the list.
2. Does their job involve an element of research, even if it is not a ‘research role’?
3. Is their field of research on the list of CAH codes? These are quite wide-ranging and would cover most areas of research in Engineering and Physical Sciences, Environment, Biological Sciences and Medicine & Health.
4. **Skilled Worker and Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5):** will the visa application be submitted on or after 21 May 2021 OR **Visitors:** will the visit begin on or after 21 May 2021?
5. Are they a citizen of an exempt country? These are countries in the EEA, and 8 others.

You can check whether an ATAS certificate will be required by completing [our form](#).

### When they need to apply

ATAS will open to workers on or around 10 May 2021 (exact date yet to be confirmed by the Home Office). The Home Office advises that application will be free of charge, and the processing time will be 10-15 days from the date the application is submitted.

**People who are sponsored by the University under Skilled Worker and Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) will need to provide their ATAS certificate when they apply for their visa.** If they need a certificate, but do not provide one, their visa application will be refused.

**Visitors will need to show their certificate to the University before they carry out any activity.** If they do not have a certificate they should not be allowed to start the engagement. If you allow them to start, you risk the University losing its licence to sponsor/employ overseas citizens.

### Contact us

If you have any queries, please email [InternationalHR@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:InternationalHR@leeds.ac.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> Other visa routes, such as Global Talent and PBS dependent, do not currently require an ATAS certificate.