

## Focus on visas - Academic Technology Approval Scheme

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) is a UK government scheme which, since 2008, has provided 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.**

### Who needs an ATAS certificate

Everyone who is carrying out research in the UK (whether employed or visiting, including academics whose work involves an element of research), if they meet the following criteria:

1. applying for a new visa or to extend existing permission to stay in the UK under the Skilled Worker, Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) or Visitor immigration routes\*, and
2. not a citizen of an exempt country. and
3. researching in a relevant field.

\*Other visa routes, such as Global Talent and PBS dependent, do not currently require an ATAS certificate.

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

1. Under **which immigration route** are you coming to the UK? *If it is not one of the routes mentioned above, or you are not coming to the UK at all, you will not need an ATAS certificate*
2. Are you a citizen of an **exempt country**? *These are countries in the EEA, and 8 others.*
3. **Skilled Worker and Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) only**: is the SOC code under which your 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 but you should check with your School/Institute contact*
4. Does the job involve an **element of research**, even if it is not a ‘research role’?
5. Is the field of research on the list of **CAH3 codes**? *These are quite wide-ranging and would cover many areas of research in Arts, Humanities and Cultures, Biological Sciences, Engineering and Physical Sciences, Environment and Medicine & Health.*

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

### When and how to apply

The processing time for applications will be 10 working days between October and March, and 15 working days between April and September from the date the application is submitted. The application is free of charge.

- **Skilled Worker and Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5)**: you must provide evidence that you have applied for an ATAS certificate before we can assign a Certificate of Sponsorship to you. You will need to submit your ATAS certificate when you apply for your visa. If you need a certificate, but do not provide one, your visa application will be refused.
- **Visitors**: you will need to show your certificate to the University before you are permitted to carry out any activity. If you do not have a certificate when you arrive in the UK, you will not be allowed to start the engagement.

The application form will ask you for the following information:

1. A detailed description of your area of research - the University will provide you with a research statement which will give this description and other relevant information
2. Your personal details - please be careful completing this, as mistakes may affect or delay your visa application
3. Your spouse's information (if applicable)
4. Your contact details
5. Undergraduate/postgraduate studies
6. Other relevant studies
7. Published papers
8. Your employment history
9. Contact details for 2 referees who have known you for at least 3 years. At least one must be from the academic sector. If you have work experience, you should include a referee from your employment. A referee from your home country is preferable, but it is not essential if you have studied and/or worked in another country. Family members are not accepted as referees.
10. Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5): details of your financial sponsor

**You may find the links below useful.**

#### Points to note

An ATAS certificate is applicable to one university/research institute. If you are conducting research at more than one you will need to obtain an ATAS certificate for each, which details the research you will specifically undertake at each HEI/research institute.

Skilled Worker and Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) visa holders who are undertaking a course of study will need a single ATAS certificate for work and study, but it must detail both the research project and study activities.

If you are a student in the UK and you have an ATAS certificate which covers your studies, you cannot use it when you apply for a work visa. If you are switching in the UK into Skilled Worker or Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) you will need to apply for a new ATAS certificate.

#### Contact us

If you have any queries, please email [International HR](#).

#### Useful links:

[Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(gov.uk\)](#)

[Guidance on how to apply for an ATAS certificate](#)