

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

If you work with PhD students, you may already be familiar with ATAS. It's 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:

- applying under the Skilled Worker, Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5) or Visitor immigration routes*, and
- not a citizen of an exempt country. and.
- 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** is the person coming to the UK? *If it's not one of the routes mentioned above, or they're not coming to the UK at all, they won't need an ATAS certificate.*
2. Are they 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 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.*
4. Does their job involve **an element of research**, even if it is not a 'research role'?
5. Is their 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 they need to apply

If an ATAS certificate is required, an application should be submitted as early as possible. The application will be free of charge, and the processing time will be 10-15 days from the date it's submitted. The certificate is valid for 6 months, during which time it must be used.

Skilled Worker and Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange (T5)

- Anyone sponsored by the University under these immigration routes will need to provide their ATAS certificate when they apply for a visa. If they need a certificate, but do not provide one, their visa application will be either be refused outright, or will not be granted until a certificate is received.

- When we apply to UK Visas and Immigration for a Certificate of sponsorship, we must tell them if an ATAS certificate is required. **We cannot issue a Certificate of Sponsorship to the person until they provide evidence that they have applied for an ATAS certificate.**

Visitor visa

- Visitors will need to show their certificate to the University before they are permitted to carry out any activity. **If they do not have a certificate they will not be allowed to start the engagement.**

What support can we provide?

We must provide a [research statement](#) to the employee/visitor which they'll need to submit with their application. The statement should include as much technical detail as possible, and should cover the whole of the employment/visit period. If the research expands outside the detail on the research statement, or changes focus, a new ATAS certificate will be required.

This page is publicly available, so please feel free to share it with prospective employees and visitors. There is further information for applicants in the [Staff Information section](#) of this website, and they can also [complete our online form](#) if they're not sure whether they need an ATAS certificate or not.

The links at the bottom of this page may also be helpful.

Important

Though it is the employee/visitor's responsibility to apply for an ATAS certificate, UK Visas and Immigration places responsibility for making sure it's in place squarely with the employer/host institution.

If you allow employment or a visit to begin without an ATAS certificate if it is required, both the University and the employee/visitor will be breaking the law. The employee/visitor may be forcibly removed from the UK, and the University could lose its licence to sponsor overseas employees, visitors and students.

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](#)

Downloads

[ATAS research statement proforma](#)

[CAH3-HECoS codes](#)