



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

## Visitor Visa Routes – International Visitors

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UNIVERSITY OF  
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DEPARTMENT OF PEOPLE,  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Lincoln are proud to welcome visitors from across the world to undertake a variety of activities, in some instances our visitors may require a visitor visa. As a Home Office trusted sponsor licence holder, the University has a duty to ensure those we employ or engage have a legal right to be in the UK and appropriate permissions for the engagement in question. The international visitor visa route is wide ranging, and this document will help guide you and your visitor on which visa is best suited for the visit.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Definitions Visitor:** Not an employee or worker, not paid by the University through the payroll system.

**Temporary Worker:** Sponsored by the University on a GAE (Government Authorised Exchange) they will be a supernumerary researcher or academic, collaborating with the University and based at the University during that period of collaboration.

## 3. ESTABLISHING WHO NEEDS A VISITOR VISA

If you are inviting an international visitor, it is important to contact [RTW@Lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:RTW@Lincoln.ac.uk) ahead of the visit and to establish what, if any, eligibility to be in the UK the visitor may already have and assess whether that covers the purpose of their visit i.e.

- i. Does the visiting academic - by way of personal/other circumstances- already have an established right to enter and/or work in the UK? For instance, those already in the UK on a visa which permits work (i.e. Global Talent or Skilled Worker visa or those with Pre-settled or Settled Status)? Where this is the case the ATAS condition may still apply (section 9).
- ii. International visitors without an existing permission will be required to gain entry to the UK under an immigration category appropriate for the agreed activity. A visitor's ability to enter the UK will depend on their nationality and whether they are considered a visa or non-visa national.
  - a. **Visa Nationals** - Those considered visa nationals will need to apply for a visa before they travel to the UK. A list of visa national countries can be found in Appendix 2 of Appendix V: Immigration Rules for Visitors. [visa national list](#)
  - b. **Non-visa Nationals** - Those considered non-visa nationals can travel to the UK without a visa (up to 6 months) but they must instead present the documents at the border to an immigration officer.

If they satisfy the conditions of the visa they are applying for, the immigration officer will permit entry under that visa route. They may or may not receive an entry stamp in their passport. If they receive an entry stamp this should show their entry date and the length of their permission to be in the UK, if they do not receive an entry stamp they will need to retain their boarding pass (or other evidence of when they entered the UK) so they know their entry date and from this the date they will must leave the UK six months later, if not before.

## 4. OVERVIEW OF VISITOR VISA CATEGORIES AND RESTRICTIONS

The activities which a visitor can carry out in the UK depend on the type of Visitor visa they hold and the sub-category which the activities/purpose fall under. Current visa options can be found here in full: [Check if you need a UK visa - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa) and in addition the UK Government has an [online tool](#) to check whether a visa is needed to travel to the UK.

### Visiting Students

Please note, if any of the following apply then the visitor will be classed as a Student Visitor and the Student Compliance team should be contacted in such instances:

- Visitor is a taught or research student at an overseas institution or other UK university
- Visitor will be studying or conducting research which is part of or relevant to a degree course elsewhere.

In instances whereby the Visitor is a salaried member of academic staff at another University, a student visiting visa would be appropriate where the above apply.

Purpose Of Visit	Visa Type
Attend a meeting, seminar, conference, or interview	Standard Visitor visa  Max visit: 6 months
Undertake a <b>Permitted Paid Engagement</b> within 30 days of their entry to the UK e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a lecture or series of lectures</li> <li>• Examine students</li> <li>• Participate in or chair selection panels</li> </ul>	
Negotiate and sign deals and contracts	
Get work-related training if employed overseas and the training is not available in that overseas country	
Give a one-off or short series of talks, as long as they're not for profit or a commercial event	

Purpose Of Visit	Visa Type
<p>Academic, scientist and researcher coming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts (including doctors);</li> <li>• Collaborate, gather information and facts, or conduct research, either for a specific project which directly relates to their employment, or independently.</li> <li>• If they are an eminent senior doctor or dentist, take part in research, teaching or clinical practice, provided this does not amount to filling a vacancy.</li> </ul>	<p>Standard Visitor visa</p> <p>Max visit: 6 months</p>
<p>Academic employed overseas and visiting for <b>more than six months</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take part in a formal exchange arrangement with UK counterparts and a UK academic will make a reciprocal visit to their overseas institution. This can include some collaborative research;</li> <li>• Carry out research for their own purposes if they are on sabbatical leave from their overseas institution;</li> <li>• Take part in research, teaching or clinical practice if they are an eminent senior medical doctor or dentist (must not amount to fulfilling a permanent teaching post).</li> </ul>	<p>Standard Visitor Visa (Academic)</p> <p>Max visit: 12 months</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal project or collaborative research under the direction of the University host.</li> <li>• Work-based training, work experience, internship, or placement.</li> <li>• Skill development or knowledge transfer.</li> <li>• Undertake a lecture or series of lectures, which does not amount to a formal teaching position.</li> <li>• Undertake external examinations.</li> </ul>	<p>Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange visa</p> <p>Max visit: 2 years</p>

## 5. STANDARD VISITOR VISA

Standard Visitor Visa (6 months)	
Suitable for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at a meeting, seminar, conference, or interviews (where prior arrangements have been made for the interview)</li> <li>Speaking at a conference on a one-off, non-commercial, unpaid basis</li> <li>Receiving specific one-off training in UK techniques and work practices (but not on-the-job training) which are required for their employment overseas and this training is not available in their home country (this could be receiving training in a research or analysis technique as long as they were not carrying out research during the visit)</li> <li>Seconded from overseas companies who have a contract with a UK company, provided they are being paid by the overseas company.</li> <li>Academics, scientists, and researchers coming to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate, gathering information and facts, or conducting research, either for a specific project directly related to their employment overseas, or independently.</li> <li>An eminent senior medical doctor or dentist, taking part in research, teaching or clinical practice not amounting to a teaching position.</li> <li>Take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><b>Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE):</b> Expert in their field (including academics) who have been invited to the UK to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give a lecture or series of lectures (but not undertake a formal teaching role),</li> <li>Examine students, or</li> <li>Participate in or chair selection panels</li> </ul> <p><b>PPE Visitors must complete the work within 30 days of their entry to the UK.</b></p>
Maximum Stay:	6 months. A multiple entry visa for 2, 5 or 10 years is available (each visit duration maximum is six months). Cannot extend in-country beyond 6 months.
Payment:	<p>No salary, must be self-funded. Only reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.</p> <p>For <b>PPE</b> activities only, payment is permitted if work is undertaken within the first 30 days of entry to the UK (no limitations on payment or source) but must be agreed in advance of travel to the UK.</p>

Must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intend to leave the UK at the end of each visit.</li> <li>• Be able to maintain themselves and any dependants without having recourse to public funds or work.</li> <li>• Be able to meet the cost of the return or onward journey from the UK.</li> <li>• Apply for and obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, ahead of the visit, if applicable (section 9).</li> <li>• Be registered as a visitor via 'Visitor Registration Form', where the visit is at least 30 days.</li> </ul> <p><b>In addition, PPE Visitors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The activity must relate to their expertise/qualifications and employment overseas, for this reason, applicants who are retired are not eligible under either the Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE) route or Academic visitor visa (below).</li> <li>• PPE Visitors must complete the work within 30 days of their entry to the UK.</li> <li>• Have a formal invitation from the University which details the agreed work scope and payment terms prior to arrival in the UK, in line with University template invitations and undertake a 'Right to Work Check' ahead of the work.</li> <li>• PPE Visitors will also be required to satisfy Immigration Officers that the pre-arranged engagement relates to their area of expertise and/or qualifications and to their occupation overseas.</li> </ul>
Must Not:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive funding for their work from any UK source (payments of expenses, including travel or honoraria or payments on an exchange basis to cover their needs whilst in the UK may be disregarded), unless meet the criteria for PPE.</li> <li>• Intend to take employment or engage in any work other than the activity for which they are being admitted.</li> <li>• Be filling a university vacancy.</li> </ul> <p><b>In addition, PPE Visitors:</b></p> <p>Home Office guidance makes clear that someone coming on a PPE Visitor visa must not be replacing the formal role of the course teacher, hence, they can deliver lectures as a 'guest slot' within a course of study but cannot be responsible for the design, delivery, marking, or review of a course etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The route relates to expertise/qualifications and employment overseas, for this reason, applicants who are retired are not eligible under the visitor route.</li> </ul>
Visa application and cost:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further details on visa requirements, application and permitted activities: <a href="#">here</a></li> <li>• Some nationals require visa in advance of travel, check via: Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: <a href="#">Visa national list - Guidance</a></li> <li>• Details and to apply for the ATAS Condition: <a href="#">Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)</a>.</li> </ul>

## 6. STANDARD (ACADEMIC) VISITOR VISA - 12 MONTHS

<b>Standard (Academic) Visitor Visa - 12 months</b>	
Suitable for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Academic, highly qualified in their field (generally PhD or higher), on sabbatical leave from an overseas academic institution who wishes to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather information and facts for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas.</li> <li>Conduct independent research which directly relates to their role or expertise overseas.</li> <li>Share knowledge or advise on an international project that is being led from the UK.</li> </ol>               (may include some collaboration with staff at the University, or use of facilities, but not primarily for collaborative research and must not conduct research on university hosted projects)             </li> <li>An academic (including doctors) taking part in an arranged exchange. For example, where the University is collaborating with an overseas university on research and exchange staff for some or all of the duration of the project (although any salary is paid by the academic's own overseas institution). The exchange must be agreed by both institutions and must lead to a reciprocal visit by a UK academic to their overseas institution</li> <li>An eminent senior medical doctor or dentist (considered to be at the top of their field of expertise), coming to take part in research, teaching or clinical practice which does not amount to a teaching position.</li> </ul>
Maximum Stay:	12 Months
Payment:	No salary. Only reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.
Must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be employed by academic or higher education institutions overseas in teaching or research roles.</li> <li>Be able to produce evidence that they are highly qualified in their own field of expertise (usually holding a PhD) and are currently employed and paid in that field at an academic or higher education institution overseas. It may also be possible for independent researchers who are unpaid to come to the UK under the Standard Visit visa route but they should expect to evidence substantial financial capability</li> <li>Intend to leave the UK at the end of their visit.</li> <li>Be able to maintain themselves and any dependants without having recourse to public funds or work.</li> <li>Be able to meet the cost of the return or onward journey from the UK.</li> <li>Apply for and obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, ahead of the visit, if applicable (section 9).</li> <li>Be registered as visitor via 'Visitor Registration Form', where the visit is at least 30 days.</li> </ul>



Must Not:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a current student overseas or entering the UK to study towards/ for an academic qualification.</li> <li>• Be a recent graduate not yet employed or who have only recently taken up an academic or research role</li> <li>• The route relates to expertise/qualifications and employment overseas, for this reason, applicants who are retired are not eligible under the visitor route.</li> <li>• Be an Academic coming to the University to collaborate with University staff on University-hosted research projects. Such activities are likely to be classed as sponsored researchers and would need to apply for a GAE Sponsored visa instead.</li> <li>• Receive funding for their work from any UK source (payments of expenses, including travel or honoraria or payments on an exchange basis to cover their needs whilst in the UK may be disregarded).</li> <li>• Intend to take employment or engage in any work other than the academic activity for which they are being admitted.</li> <li>• Be filling a normal post or a genuine vacancy.</li> <li>• Be on sabbatical leave from a private research company.</li> <li>• Be a named researcher on a grant.</li> </ul>
Visa application and cost:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further details on visa requirements, application and permitted activities: <a href="#">here</a></li> <li>• Details and to apply for the ATAS Condition: <a href="#">Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)</a>.</li> </ul>

## 7. SPONSORED VISITOR ON A GOVERNMENT AUTHORISED EXCHANGE (GAE) VISA

The GAE visa is a sponsored visa route for individuals to enter the UK to undertake certain activities outside of the standard visit visa route.

As the sponsor for a 'Temporary worker', the manager and University have strict compliance responsibilities to report certain changes/circumstances to UKVI. As such the manager's supervision of, and responsibility for, the individual lasts for the duration of the sponsorship.

### Sponsored Visitor on a Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) Temporary Work Visa

Suitable for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal project or collaboration which is funded by the host at the University, the visitor's home employer, or a funding body.</li> <li>• Sponsored researchers include academics, researchers, scientists, research engineers or other skilled research technology specialists who will be hosted by the University in a supernumerary role.</li> <li>• Individuals coming to the UK through approved schemes that aim to share knowledge, experience, and best practice through work placements, whilst experiencing the wider social and cultural setting of the UK.</li> <li>• Activities permitted under this visa route include:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Collaboration on University-hosted research, above normal staff requirements and <b>not</b> filling a vacancy/advertised position.</li> <li>ii. Work-based training, work experience, internship, or placement.</li> <li>iii. Skill development or knowledge transfer.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Unsuitable For:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple visits in/out of the UK.</li> <li>• Short, repeated visits into the UK.</li> </ul>
Maximum Stay:	2 years
Payment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded and paid by their host, overseas employer, or an independent UK or non-UK funding body.</li> <li>• Must comply with UK employment law, including the <a href="#">National Minimum Wage Act</a> and <a href="#">Maximum weekly working hours</a>.</li> <li>• Evidence of the funding must be provided to confirm payment that meets or is above National Minimum Wage for the duration of the visit.</li> </ul>

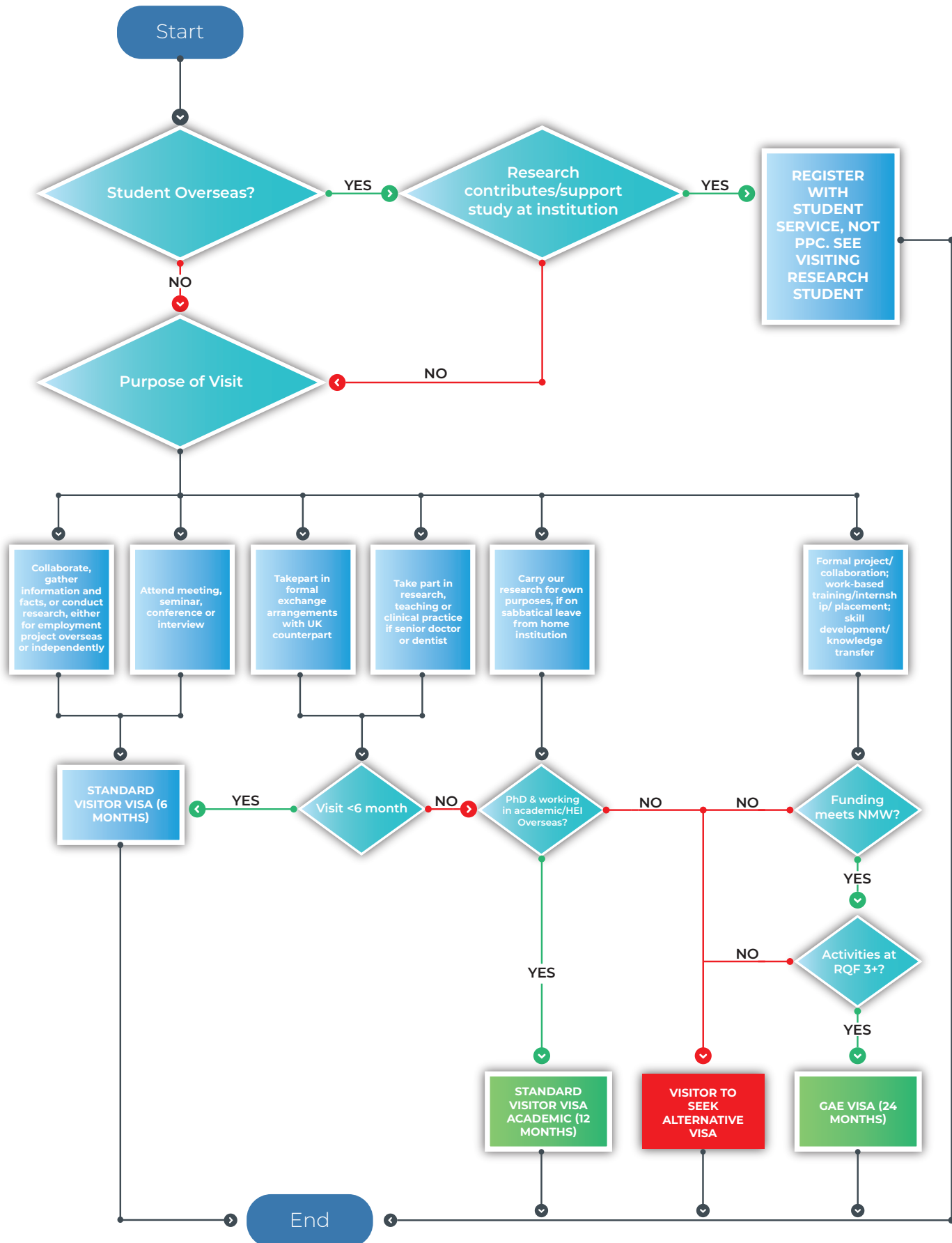
Must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sponsored by the University and meet eligibility criteria.</li> <li>• Funding must meet National Minimum Wage (NMW).</li> <li>• The work must be skilled at RQF Level 3 (A-Level) or above.</li> <li>• Remain in UK under sponsor's supervision for duration of sponsorship (multiple UK entry must be reported to Home Office).</li> <li>• Be able to comply with Home Office maintenance requirements and be funded for the full period of the visit.</li> <li>• Apply for and obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, if applicable.</li> <li>• Adhere to UKVI reporting requirements:</li> </ul>
Must Not:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be self-funded.</li> <li>• Fill a vacancy as part of normal staffing resources.</li> </ul>

Please note:

- There is currently no UK immigration route that permits the University to offer informal University visits that are purely for the purpose of undertaking a work placement or work experience.
- There is currently no UK immigration route to support academic/research visits of more than 12 months and where there is no funding/payment attached to the in UK activity.

## 8. GUIDANCE FLOWCHART

Indicative diagram only not intended for or used as immigration advice



## 9. ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY APPROVAL SCHEME (ATAS)

From 21st May 2021 an ATAS certificate has been required for any individual entering the UK under the Skilled Worker or Visitor routes to undertake research in programmes of concern/sensitive. A visitor will be subject to the ATAS condition where **all** the following apply:

- The visitor holds a UK Visitor Visa (Standard or Academic) or is sponsored by another institution under the Skilled Worker (SWR), Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) visa or Student/Tier 4 visa routes.
- The activities\* include any element of research at **postgraduate-level** (or above) in an Academic Subject relevant to ATAS (note the individual CAH subject areas, not just the subject headers)
- The visitor is not an [exempt national](#)

It is the University manager/host's responsibility to check whether the intended visitor is subject to the ATAS condition. If subject to this condition, the visitor must apply for and obtain a valid ATAS certificate before travelling and **before being registered as a University visitor and before starting the research**. P.P.C will support you with guidance to provide your visitor.

## 9. ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY APPROVAL SCHEME (ATAS)

The UK's Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) is a scheme which is part of the government's digitalisation of the UK border.

Visitors coming to the UK who do not require a visa for short stays or who do not have any other UK immigration permission prior to travelling to the UK will be required to apply for an ETA **in advance of travel to the UK**. Visitors should check [Electronic Travel Authorisation \(ETA\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for further details and to see if they will need an ETA.

### Key Points:

- The ETA is a digital permission to **travel** to the UK. It is not a visa and does not permit entry to the UK.
- There is a cost for the ETA, and children will need their own ETA.
- The scheme will be introduced in a phased approach based on nationality.
- Visitors are responsible for checking if they require an ETA in advance of travel to the UK. If they do not have one where required, they will not be able to travel to the UK.

For further details, please see the following links:

- [Electronic Travel Authorisation \(ETA\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [What is an ETA? \(video\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Getting started: applying for a UK ETA \(video\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Immigration Rules - Immigration Rules Appendix Electronic Travel Authorisation - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## 11. FURTHER REFERENCES

Guidance on supporting documents when applying for a Visitor visa can found in the [Home Office Guide](#)

[UKVI Caseworker Guidance relating to the Visit route](#)

[UKVI Temporary Work Caseworker Guidance](#)