

# **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) Brief**

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## **Overview**

On 29 January 2021, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) announced the expansion of the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) to international researchers as well as international students.

The subjects are those where individuals' knowledge could be used in programmes to develop Advanced Conventional Military Technology (ACMT), weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) or their means of delivery.

## **Extension of the ATAS from May 2021 to international researchers**

From 21 May 2021, the ATAS has been extended to cover researchers intending to work in the UK in areas of research which could result in the Intangible Transfer of Technology (ITT) to WMD and ACMT programmes of concern. Essentially, all subject areas requiring ATAS for students will now also be required for international researchers.

The ATAS requirements impact international researchers where **all four** of the following criteria are met (i.e. where even one criteria is not met, an ATAS certificate is **not** required):

## 1. Visa application type

All new hires and existing staff where applying for a visa in one of the following categories:

- Skilled Worker Visa (used for employees); or
- Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) or
- Standard/Academic visitor visa.

**No other visa type is in scope** (e.g. Global Talent Visas).

## 2. Nationality

Nationals of the following countries are **exempt** from the ATAS requirement:

- All EU countries, the European Economic Area (EEA), Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland and the United States of America.

All other nationalities are in scope.

### 3. Type of role

For **Skilled Worker visa** applicants and **GAE visa** applicants, roles defined by the following SOC codes are in scope:

- 2111 – 2119: Encompassing all postdoctoral research positions (including Research Assistants)

The following roles are also in scope, but **only** where the individual will undertake research at a PhD level as part of the role:

- 2150 Research and development managers
- 2122 Mechanical engineer
- 2123 Electrical engineers
- 2124 Electronics engineer
- 2127 Production and process engineers
- 2129 Engineering professionals not elsewhere classified
- 2311 Higher education teaching professionals
- 3111 Laboratory technicians
- 3112 Electrical and electronics technicians
- 3113 Engineering technicians
- 3114 Building and civil engineering technicians

For **visitors** to the University, applying for a **Standard/Academic Visitor visa**, the following activities are in scope:

- Where they gather information and facts for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas, or conduct independent research; or
- Where they share knowledge or advise on an international project that is being led from the UK; or
- Where they carry out research for their own purposes if they are on sabbatical leave from their home institution (i.e. "Academic visitors").

**No ATAS liability** for visitors attending conferences, meetings, interviews, workshops etc.

### 4. Research field

The field/programme of research must be one of those as listed in Annex A of this document. **If the field is not listed in Annex A, the role is not ATAS liable.**

## Key issues

The ATAS scheme is administered by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Individuals in scope for ATAS will be required to obtain an ATAS certificate before applying for either a Skilled Worker or GAE visa. As both of these are sponsored routes, they will require a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) issued by the University before making the visa application. The CoS will not be issued to the applicant until such time as the ATAS certificate has been uploaded to Immigr8.

There is no cost to either the individual or the employer/host to gaining an ATAS certificate. Currently, it is possible for the individual to apply for an ATAS certificate up to 9 months before entry, with a service standard of approximately 10 working days to gain the certificate. This timeframe must be factored into all future recruitments. **Please note** this time frame may be considerably longer during summer periods.

As part of the ATAS application, the individual must provide a research statement from the University and the appropriate 'CAH3' code which defines their programme/field of research. **The research statement and the CAH3 code should be provided by the department** (which mirrors the process for international students in scope for ATAS).

For visitors entering on Standard/Academic Visitor visas, where in scope of ATAS, they are **not** required to gain an ATAS certificate as part of the visa application, but they are required to obtain it before they undertake any research in the UK (within the confines of the activities outlined above).

**The University is required to check the ATAS certificate for visitors before allowing the research to start.** If this is not provided, the individual should not be permitted on-site or given access to secure laboratories.

Departments are asked to consider reviewing the risk assessments and protocols currently in place for their visitors, and incorporate the ATAS requirement into these, using the guidance above to determine who is in scope for ATAS.

The FCDO provide guidance on the scope and application process for ATAS:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme#academic-researchers>

**If an ATAS clearance is refused by the FCDO no other visa route should be explored to avoid the ATAS requirement.**

## Annex A: CAH3 Codes for 'ATAS liable' research programmes/fields

Subject	CAH3 Code
<b>Biological Sciences</b>	
Biology (Non-specific)	CAH03-01-02
Biomedical Sciences (Non-specific)	CAH02-05-03
Biosciences (Non-specific)	CAH03-01-01
Biotechnology	CAH10-03-05
Ecology and Environmental Biology	CAH03-01-03
Genetics	CAH03-01-07
Microbiology and Cell Science	CAH03-01-04
Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry	CAH03-01-08
Plant Sciences	CAH03-01-05
Zoology	CAH03-01-06
Others in Biological Sciences	CAH03-01-10
<b>Engineering</b>	
Aeronautical and Aerospace Engineering	CAH10-01-04
Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering	CAH10-01-09
Civil Engineering	CAH10-01-07
Electronic and Electrical Engineering	CAH10-01-08
Engineering (Non-specific)	CAH10-01-01
Mechanical Engineering	CAH10-01-02
Naval Architecture	CAH10-01-05
<b>Mathematics and Computer Sciences</b>	
Artificial Intelligence	CAH11-01-05
Computer Science	CAH11-01-01
Information Systems	CAH11-01-03
Information Technology	CAH11-01-02
Mathematics	CAH09-01-01
Operational Research	CAH09-01-02
Software Engineering	CAH11-01-04
<b>Medicine</b>	
Bioengineering, Medical and Biomedical Engineering	CAH10-01-06

Pharmacology	CAH02-02-01
Pharmacy	CAH02-02-03
Toxicology	CAH02-02-02
<b>Physical Sciences</b>	
Astronomy	CAH07-01-02
Chemistry	CAH07-02-01
Materials Science	CAH10-03-07
Natural Sciences (Non-specific)	CAH07-04-04
Others in Geographical Studies	CAH26-01-05
Physical Sciences (Non-specific)	CAH07-04-01
Physics	CAH07-01-01
Sciences (Non-specific)	CAH07-04-03
<b>Technologies</b>	
Maritime Technology	CAH10-03-04
Materials Technology	CAH10-03-02
Minerals Technology	CAH10-03-01
Polymers and Textiles	CAH10-03-03
<b>Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture and related subjects</b>	
Agricultural Sciences	CAH06-01-02
Others in Veterinary Sciences	CAH05-01-02