1. Introduction
The university has many visitors including those from overseas. This document will help guide you and your visitor on which visa is best suited for the visit. If an international visitor requires a sponsored visa, there are responsibilities of the sponsored visitor’s manager to ensure they are compliant with UK Visa and Immigration legislation.

2. Definitions
Visitor: Not an employee or worker, not paid by the University through the payroll system. Includes, but not limited to: visitor, academic visitor, honorary contract, contractor, Emeritus Professor / Fellow.

Overseas Visitor: International visitor who requires a visa to enter the UK.

Temporary Worker: Sponsored by the University on a 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.

Manager/Host: Member of University staff who is responsible for their visitor or sponsored temporary worker. The manager or host ensures responsible use of university resources (including systems and equipment) and the security of information and resources as well as UK Visa and Immigration compliance for sponsored temporary workers.
3. Choosing a route for overseas visitor

Check current visa requirements on Home Office web pages: Check if you need a UK visa - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of visit</th>
<th>Visa type</th>
<th>Max stay</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undertake a lecture or series of lectures</td>
<td><strong>Permitted paid engagement (PPE)</strong></td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>No limitations on payment amount or source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cannot extend or switch to another visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in or chair selection panels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a meeting, seminar, conference, or interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate and sign deals and contracts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get work-related training if employed overseas and the training is not available in that overseas country</td>
<td><strong>Standard Visitor visa</strong></td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Must be self-funded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a one-off or short series of talks, as long as they’re not for profit or a commercial event</td>
<td><strong>Standard Visitor visa</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cannot receive any payment from UK source except reasonable expenses and subsistence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists and researchers:</td>
<td><strong>Standard Visitor Visa (Academic)</strong></td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Researchers and scientists: Remain paid and employed overseas and only carry out activities incidental to their job overseas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must intend to undertake one or more of the following activities if visiting for more than six months:</td>
<td><strong>Standard Visitor Visa (Academic)</strong></td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Cannot extend beyond 6 months except academic visitors who can hold a visa for a maximum of 12 months (where visa obtained in advance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To qualify for 12 months, the Academic Visitor must be highly qualified in their field, currently working in this field at an academic institution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Share knowledge and experience on their research overseas or provide advice on an international project led from the UK provided visitor is not carrying out research in the UK.
- Gather information and facts for a specific project which directly relates to the visitor’s employment overseas, or conduct independent research.

- 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.
- Carry out research for their own purposes if they are on sabbatical leave from their overseas institution.
- 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).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of visit</th>
<th>Visa type</th>
<th>Max stay</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Formal project or collaborative research under the direction of the University host which is funded by the host at the University, the visitor’s home employer, or a funding body.  
• Work-based training, work experience, internship, or placement.  
• Skill development or knowledge transfer.  
• Undertake a lecture or series of lectures, which does not amount to a formal teaching position.  
• Undertake external examinations. | **Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange visa** | 2 years  | Requires Certificate of Sponsorship (COS) from the University.  
Visitor must not be filling a vacancy at the University.  
Funding must meet National Minimum Wage (NMW) and must not be funded by the visitor.  
The work must be skilled at RQF Level 3 or above.  
Expected to remain in UK under sponsor’s supervision for duration of sponsorship (multiple UK entry must be reported to Home Office). |

**EU, EEA and Swiss nationals visiting for business such as:**  
• Attending meetings, conferences, seminars and interviews.  
• A leading academic presenting latest research.  
• A scientist sharing knowledge with colleagues on international projects.  
May not need a UK visa to enter the UK for certain activities when visiting for a period of 6 months or less.  
Visitors must check whether they require a visa for their activities before coming to the UK.  
Visitors must not take up employment.  
Refer to the following links for further information:  
• [Visiting the UK as an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen - GOV.UK](www.gov.uk)  
• [The UK’s points-based immigration system – Information for EU, EEA and Swiss business travellers](publishing.service.gov.uk)  
• [The UK’s points base immigration system: Information for EU, EEA and Swiss visitors](publishing.service.gov.uk)  
• [Check if you need a UK visa - GOV.UK](www.gov.uk)  

**Visiting Students**  
Visiting Students currently engaged with research at another University, either in the UK or overseas, where there is no formal exchange agreement in place, and who wish to undertake part of their research at the University of Southampton should be registered as a ‘Visiting Research Student’ and not with HR.  
The research the student wishes to complete at the University must contribute to or support their current research project(s) at their home university.  
Refer to UoS Student Services pages: [Visiting Research Students | Doctoral College | University of Southampton](www.southampton.ac.uk) or [Visiting Students | Student and Academic Administration | University of Southampton](www.southampton.ac.uk)
## 4. Visas that do not require University sponsorship

### Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suitable for:</th>
<th>Experts in their fields (including academics) who are coming to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give a lecture or series of lectures (but not undertake a formal teaching role),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Examine students, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Participate in or chair selection panels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Stay:</td>
<td>One month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must:</td>
<td>- Work scope and payment terms to be agreed prior to arrival in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Have a formal invitation from the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Work must relate to their expertise/qualifications and full-time overseas occupation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Intend to leave the UK at the end of their visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must Not:</td>
<td>Cannot be filling a normal vacancy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visa application and cost:** Check details and apply for via: [Visit the UK for a Permitted Paid Engagement: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk) Application must be completed prior to travel to UK. Includes biometric information.

### Standard Visitor Visa (Business visitor)

| Suitable for:                                                                 | People attending interviews (where prior arrangements have been made for the interview) |
|                                                                              | People attending a conference or meeting                                               |
|                                                                              | Speaking at a conference on a one-off, non-commercial basis                          |
|                                                                              | People receiving specific one-off training in UK techniques and work practices (but not on-the-job training) |
|                                                                              | Secondees from overseas companies who have a contract with a UK company, provided they are being paid by the overseas company. |
| Maximum Stay:                                                                | Six months. A multiple entry visa for 2, 5 or 10 years is available (each visit duration maximum is six months). |
| Payment:                                                                    | No salary. Only reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.                          |
| Must:                                                                       | - Intend to leave the UK at the end of each visit.                                   |
|                                                                              | - Be able to maintain themselves and any dependants without having recourse to public funds or work |
|                                                                              | - Be able to meet the cost of the return or onward journey from the UK              |
|                                                                              | - Apply for and obtain an [Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate](https://www.gov.uk), if applicable. |
|                                                                              | - Be registered as visitor via [Visitor Access Request](https://www.gov.uk), where the visit is at least 28 days. |
| Must Not:                                                                  | - 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). |
|                                                                              | - Intend to take employment or engage in any work other than the activity for which they are being admitted. |
- Cannot be filling a normal vacancy.

### Visa application and cost:
Check details and apply via: [Visit the UK as a Standard Visitor: Overview - GOV.UK](www.gov.uk) Some nationals require visa in advance of travel, check via: [Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: Visa national list - Guidance - GOV.UK](www.gov.uk)
Check [ATAS Condition](www.gov.uk) and apply via: [Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)](www.gov.uk)

## Standard Visitor Visa (Academic visitor)

**Suitable for:**
Academics who are highly qualified in their field (generally PhD or higher), currently working in that field at an academic or higher education institution overseas, and intend to undertake one (or more) of the following activities:
- Take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts (including doctors). 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. The salary must be paid by the academic’s 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.
- Carry out research for their own purposes if they are on sabbatical leave from their home institution, for example, to write a book or for their employment overseas (may include some collaboration with staff at the University or use of facilities, but **not primarily** for collaborative research).
- An eminent senior medical doctor or dentist, coming to take part in research, teaching or clinical practice which does not amount to a teaching position.

**Maximum Stay:** 12 months

**Payment:** No salary. Only reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.

**Must:**
- Intend to leave the UK at the end of their visit.
- Be able to maintain themselves and any dependants without having recourse to public funds or work.
- Be able to meet the cost of the return or onward journey from the UK.
- Apply for and obtain an **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate**, if applicable.
- Be registered as visitor via [Visitor Access Request](www.gov.uk), where the visit is at least 28 days.

**Must Not:**
- 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).
- Intend to take employment or engage in any work other than the academic activity for which they are being admitted.
- Be filling a normal post or a genuine vacancy.
- Be a current student overseas or a retired academic.
- Be entering to study for an academic qualification (these must come in on student visa route).
- Be on sabbatical leave from a private research company.

**Visa application and cost:**
Check details and apply via: [Visit the UK as a Standard Visitor: Overview - GOV.UK](www.gov.uk) Application must be completed prior to travel to UK.
Check [ATAS Condition](www.gov.uk) and apply via: [Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)](www.gov.uk)
5. Sponsored visitor on Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) visa

The GAE visa is a route for individuals to be sponsored to come to the UK to undertake certain activities outside of the standard visit visa route. As the sponsor for a worker, the manager and University have responsibilities to report certain aspects of the temporary worker's movements to the Home Office. As such the manager's supervision of, and responsibility for, the temporary worker lasts for the duration of the sponsorship; for this reason, the worker is expected to remain under the manager's close supervision for the duration of the sponsorship.

If it is planned that the worker should have multiple visits in/out of the UK and will not be constantly monitored by the manager, this sponsorship is unlikely to be suitable, as the Home Office obligations on the University cannot be met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Authorised Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suitable for:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Under the sponsored researchers authorised exchange scheme, 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Activities include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Giving a lecture / lectures above normal staffing requirements and <strong>not</strong> filling a vacancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Collaboration on University-hosted research above normal staff requirements and <strong>not</strong> filling a vacancy (i.e. research under the direction of a University of Southampton manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Act as an External Examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Work-based training, work experience, internship, or placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Skill development or knowledge transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsuitable for:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multiple visits in/out of the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Short, repeated visits into the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Stay:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payment:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funded and paid by their host, overseas employer, or an independent UK or non-UK funding body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Must comply with UK employment law, including the National Minimum Wage Act and Maximum weekly working hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of the funding must be provided confirming payment meets or is above National Minimum Wage for duration of the visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be sponsored by the University and meet eligibility criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be able to comply with Home Office maintenance requirements and be funded for the full period of the visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply for and obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, if applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adhere to UKVI reporting requirements:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o GUIDELINES - Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange Visitor Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o GUIDELINES - Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange Manager Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Must <strong>Not:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be self-funded e.g. savings or funded by family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fill a vacancy as part of normal staffing resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• To allocate a Certificate of Sponsorship (COS) from the University of Southampton. All the following must be attached to a completed International Sponsored Researcher (Visitor) Request:
  o Clear colour copy of the applicant’s passport and any current UK visas.
  o Copy of the up-to-date CV and qualifications to demonstrate the skills required to undertake the activities.
  o An official funding letter which states the dates/duration of the visit, the funding amount and that the funding will be paid for the duration of the visit.
  o Project plan (1-2 pages) including:
    ▪ The activities the visitor will undertake
    ▪ Why the work is supernumerary
    ▪ Why the activities are classed as RQF level 3 (or above)
    ▪ If the work is research, details of collaboration with the University of Southampton
    ▪ Visit dates
    ▪ Funding details
    ▪ University of Southampton supervisor details
  o Letter of invitation from the University host or application letter from the individual seeking to undertake research with the University.
  o Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange - COS Personal Details Form – completed by the applicant.

• Start date: To allow time for the HR Staff Visa team to assess eligibility and to ensure the applicant has time to apply for and obtain their visa, and plan for their visit, the department should submit an HR Request at least 10 weeks in advance of the planned visit start date. Once the visa has been granted, the start date cannot be delayed for more than 28 days.

• ATAS Requirement: If an applicant will be undertaking research at PhD-level or above in a relevant subject, is being sponsored in a relevant SOC (Occupation) code and is not an exempt national, they will be subject to the ATAS requirement. Applicants must obtain an ATAS certificate before HR will issue the COS. The HR Staff Visa team will be in contact as part of the COS process regarding the ATAS Requirement. Please see Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) for details.

Visa application and cost:
Requires Certificate of Sponsorship from the University of Southampton (charged to the hosting department).
Visa application required prior to travel.

Visa holders can:
• Study (Academic Technology Approval Scheme certificate is required for some courses).
• Work in the role described in their certificate of sponsorship.
• Undertake a second role for up to 20 hours per week.
• Undertake a role on the Skilled Worker shortage occupation list for up to 20 hours per week as well as their main role.
• Apply to switch to a Global Talent visa if they are in the government authorised exchange scheme for sponsored researchers.
• Bring a partner and children as ‘dependants’, if they’re eligible

Visa holders cannot:
• Take a permanent job
• Access public funds
6. Guidance flowchart

Indicative only, not to be used as immigration advice.

- **Student Overseas?**
  - **YES**
    - Research contributes/supports study at institution?
      - **YES**
        - Register with Student Service, not HR. See Visiting Research Student for details
      - **NO**
    - **NO**

- **Main purpose of visit?**
  - **NO**
    - Attend meeting, seminar, conference or interview, or sign/negotiate contracts
    - Gather information/facts for specific project related to overseas employment
    - Carrying out independent research or for own purposes
    - Take part in exchange arrangements with UK counterpart
    - Collaborative research with University of Southampton
    - Funding meets NMW?
      - **YES**
        - Activities at RQF 3 (or above)?
          - **YES**
            - Visitor to seek alternative visa
          - **NO**
            - Visitor to seek alternative visa
        - **NO**
      - **NO**
    - PhD & working in academic/HEI overseas?
      - **YES**
        - Standard Visitor Visa Academic (12 Months)
      - **NO**
        - 6 Month visit?
          - **YES**
            - Standard Visitor Visa (6 Months)
          - **NO**
            - Standard Visitor Visa (6 Months)
  - **YES**
    - GAE visa if not filling UoS vacancy

- **End**
7. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

ATAS is a serious condition for security of University and UK research. The ATAS condition may apply for visiting researchers coming to the University on a UK Visitor visa (Standard or Academic) who will be undertaking science and academic activities as part of a permitted activity.

A visitor will be subject to the ATAS requirement 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 an 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
- The visit activities include:
  - Gathering information and facts for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas, or to support independent research
  - Taking part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts
  - Carrying out research for their own purposes or as a group

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 being registered as a University visitor and before starting the research.

It is recommended that the visitor obtains an ATAS certificate prior to travelling to the UK. Once a valid ATAS certificate has been issued, the visitor must provide this to their University manager/host and the manager/host must attach this to the relevant Visitor HR Request. If an individual is subject to the ATAS condition, and the ATAS certificate is not provided, the request will not be able to be submitted and access to systems will not be granted.

For further details, please see the following links:

- Find out if you need an ATAS certificate - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Guidance on how to apply for an ATAS certificate - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) (sharepoint.com) – University of Southampton internal staff only
7.1 ATAS decision flow

*Activities include:
- Gathering information and facts for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas, or to support independent research.
- Taking part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts.
- Carrying out research for their own purposes or as a group.

Start

Visitor intends to come to UK and UoS

Exempt National? YES

Submit HR Request for IT access

NO

Academic or research activity* at postgrad-level or above?

YES

ATAS not required due to exempt nationality

NO

Relevant subject?

YES

ATAS not required due to not relevant activity

NO

Visitor to apply & obtain ATAS certificate

ATAS granted? YES

UoS host checks ATAS certificate

NO

Visitor not permitted to visit UoS for ATAS-relevant activity

End
8. UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)

The UK’s Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) is a scheme which is part of the government's transformation and 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 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. Check Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) for the fee.
- The scheme will be introduced in a phased approach based on nationality. Please check Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) for the list of nationals who will require an ETA and when.
- 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 Electronic Travel Authorisation? - YouTube