

Visa Routes for International visitors

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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. Overview – Main purpose of visit and visa types

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

Purpose of visit	Visa type
Attend a meeting, seminar, conference, or interview	Standard Visitor visa Max visit: 6 months
Undertake a Permitted Paid Engagement within 30 days of their entry to the UK e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a lecture or series of lectures • Examine students • Participate in or chair selection panels 	
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	
Academic, scientist and researcher coming to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts (including doctors); • Collaborate, gather information and facts, or conduct research, either for a specific project which directly relates to their employment, or independently; • 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. 	
Academic employed overseas and visiting for more than six months to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in a formal exchange arrangements 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). 	Standard Visitor Visa (Academic) Max visit: 12 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal project or collaborative research under the direction of the University host. • 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 Max visit: 2 years

Purpose of visit	Visa type
<p data-bbox="203 180 443 209">Visiting students</p> <p data-bbox="203 221 1977 320">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.</p> <p data-bbox="203 357 1977 421">The research the student wishes to complete at the University must contribute to or support their current research project(s) at their home university.</p> <p data-bbox="203 458 1977 521">Refer to UoS student pages: Visiting Research Students Doctoral College University of Southampton or Visiting Students Student and Academic Administration University of Southampton</p>	

4. Standard Visitor Visa (6 Months)

Standard Visitor Visa (6 months)	
Suitable for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending interviews (where prior arrangements have been made for the interview), a conference or meeting. • Speaking at a conference on a one-off, non-commercial basis. • 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. • Academics, scientists and researchers coming to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborate, gathering information and facts, or conducting research, either for a specific project directly related to their employment overseas, or independently. ○ An eminent senior medical doctor or dentist, taking part in research, teaching or clinical practice not amounting to a teaching position. ○ Take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts. • Permitted Paid Engagement (PPR): Expert in their field (including academics) who have been invited to the UK to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give a lecture or series of lectures (but not undertake a formal teaching role), ○ Examine students, or ○ Participate in or chair selection panels <p>The above must relate to their expertise/qualifications and employment overseas and must be completed within 30 days of their entry to the UK.</p>
Maximum Stay:	<p>6 months.</p> <p>A multiple entry visa for 2, 5 or 10 years is available (each visit duration maximum is six months).</p>
Payment:	<p>No salary, only reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.</p> <p>For a PPE activities only, payment is permitted (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"> • 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. • Have a formal invitation from the University if coming to undertake a PPE which details the agreed work scope and payment terms prior to arrival in the UK.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for and obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before starting their visit, if applicable. • Be registered as visitor via Visitor Access Request, where the visit is at least 28 days.
Restrictions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) unless coming to the UK as part of a PPE. • Must not intend to take employment or engage in any work other than the activity for which they are being admitted. • Must not fill a normal vacancy.
Visa application and cost:	<p>Check details and apply via: Visit the UK as a Standard Visitor: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Some nationals require visa in advance of travel, check via: Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: Visa national list - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Check ATAS Condition and apply via: Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)</p>

5. Academic Visitor Visa (12 Months)

Standard Visitor Visa – Academic (12 Months)	
Suitable for:	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 before starting their visit, if applicable. • Be registered as visitor via Visitor Access Request, where the visit is at least 28 days.
Restrictions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). • Must not intend to take employment or engage in any work other than the academic activity for which they are being admitted. • Must not fill a normal vacancy. • Must not be a current student overseas or a retired academic. • Must not be entering the UK to study for an academic qualification (these must come in on student visa route). • Must not be on sabbatical leave from a private research company.
Visa application and cost:	<p>Check details and apply via: Visit the UK as a Standard Visitor: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Application must be completed prior to travel to UK.</p> <p>Check ATAS Condition and apply via: Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)</p>

6. Sponsored visitor on Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) visa

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

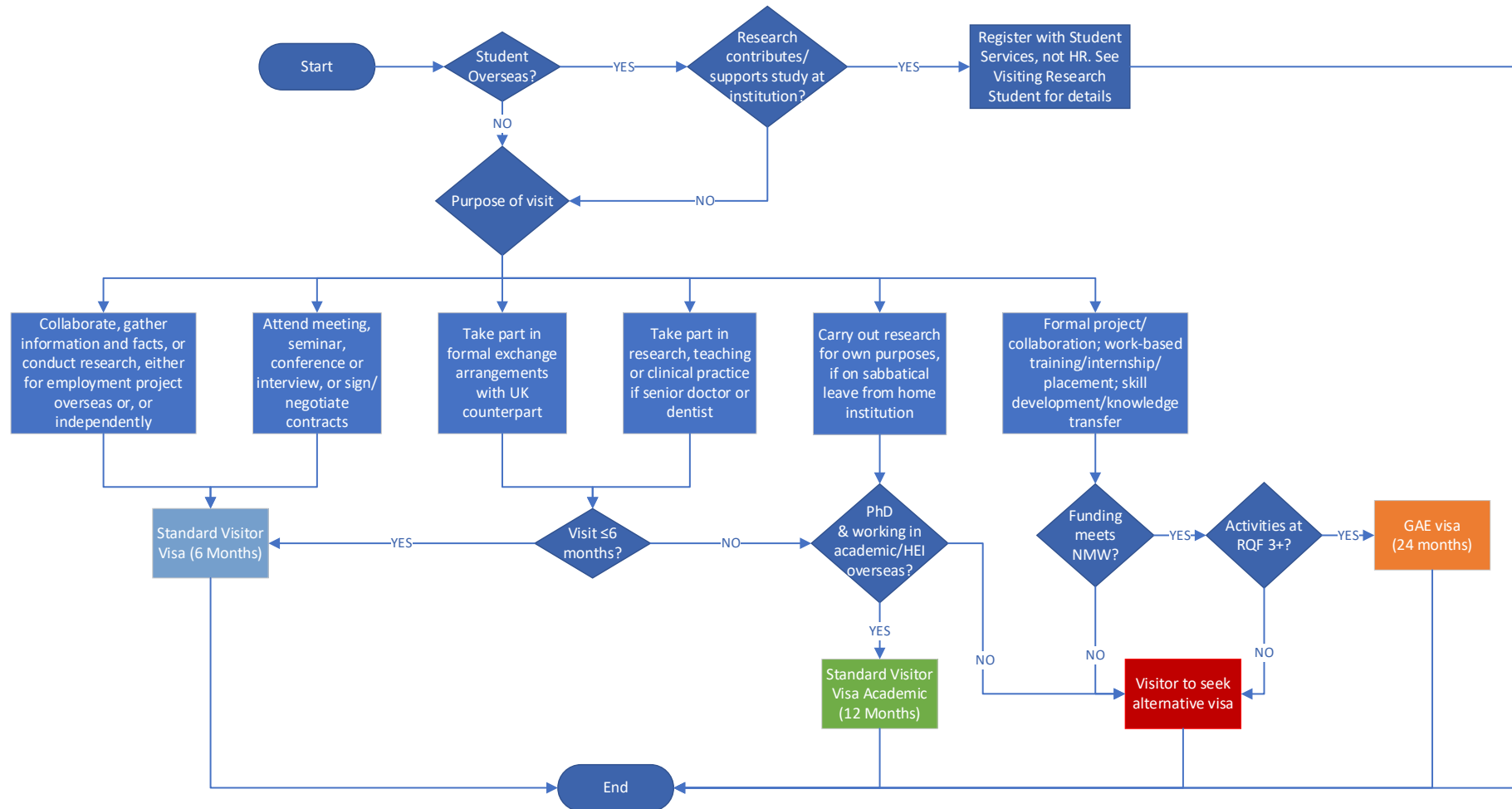
As the sponsor for a worker, the manager and University have [responsibilities](#) to report certain changes/circumstances to UKVI. As such the manager's supervision of, and responsibility for, the individual lasts for the duration of the sponsorship; for this reason, the worker is expected to remain under the manager's close supervision for the duration of the sponsorship.

Government Authorised Exchange	
Suitable for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • The University operates 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. • Activities permitted under this visa route are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Giving a lecture / lectures, above normal staff requirements and not filling a vacancy ○ Collaboration on University-hosted research, above normal staff requirements and not filling a vacancy (i.e. research under the direction of a University of Southampton manager) ○ Act as an External Examiner ○ Work-based training, work experience, internship, or placement. ○ Skill development or knowledge transfer.
Unsuitable for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple visits in/out of the UK. • Short, repeated visits into the UK.
Maximum Stay:	2 years
Payment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be in receipt of funding paid by their host, overseas employer, or an independent UK or non-UK funding body. Funding must be in place for the full duration of the visit. • Must comply with UK employment law, including the National Minimum Wage Act and Maximum weekly working hours. • Evidence of the funding must be provided confirming payment meets or is above National Minimum Wage for duration of the visit.
Must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sponsored by the University and meet eligibility criteria. • Apply for and obtain an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, if applicable. • Adhere to UKVI responsibilities and reporting requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GUIDELINES - Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange Visitor Responsibilities ○ GUIDELINES - Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange Manager Responsibilities

Restrictions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must not be self-funded e.g. savings or funded by family. • Must not fill a vacancy as part of normal staffing resources. • Must not take a permanent job • No access to public funds
University process	<p>To allocate a Certificate of Sponsorship (COS) from the University of Southampton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the following must be attached to a completed International Sponsored Researcher (Visitor) Request: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear colour copy of the applicant’s passport and any current UK visas. ○ Copy of the up-to-date CV and qualifications to demonstrate the skills required to undertake the activities. ○ 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. ○ Project plan (1-2 pages) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 manager details ○ Letter of invitation from the University manager or application letter from the individual seeking to undertake research with the University. ○ 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, 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:	<p>Requires Certificate of Sponsorship from the University of Southampton (charged to the hosting department).</p> <p>Visa application required prior to travel.</p> <p>Check details and apply via: Government Authorised Exchange visa (Temporary Work): Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

7. Guidance flowchart

Indicative only, not to be intended for or used as immigration advice.



8. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

ATAS is a serious condition for security of University and UK research. This condition may apply to visiting researchers coming to the University on a UK Visitor visa ([Standard](#) or [Academic](#)) if they are going to be undertaking science and academic activities as part of a permitted activity.

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](#)

*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

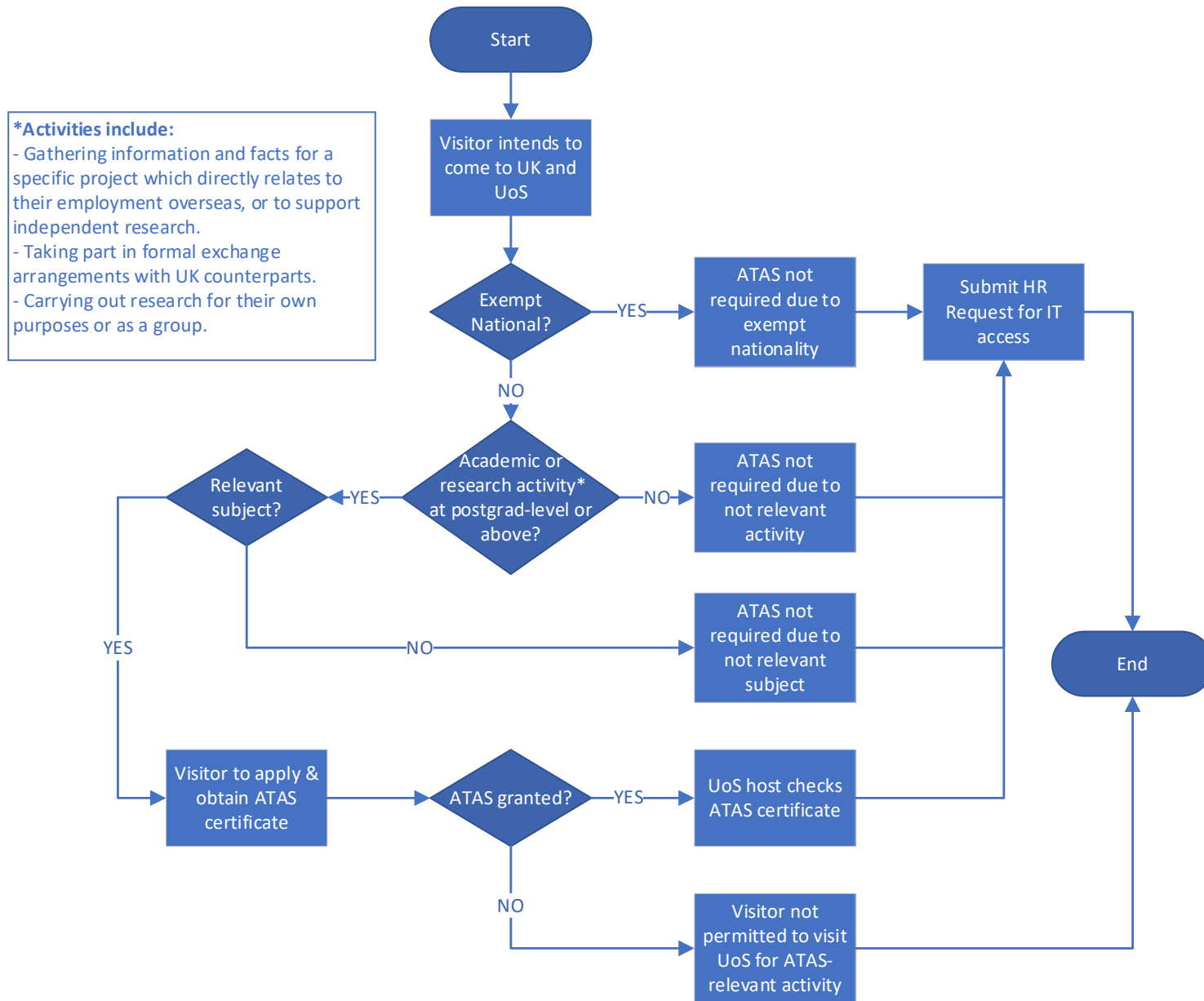
It is the University manager/host's responsibility to check whether the intended visitor is subject to the ATAS condition. If subject to this condition, the visitor must apply for and obtain a valid ATAS certificate **before being registered as a University visitor and before starting the research.**

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 cannot be submitted and access to systems will not be provided.

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

8.1 ATAS decision flow



9. 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 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)