**Template letter in support of application for UK visa/entry as an academic visitor is on page 3 of this document, please review the general information, and information on ATAS requirement on pages 1-2:**

General information on Permitted academic & research activities for those applying for / entering the UK under Standard Visit conditions:

**For visits up to 6 months maximum** Academics, scientists, and researchers may:

* take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts (including doctors); and
* collaborate, gather information and facts, or conduct research, either for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas, or independently; and
* 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 permanent teaching post.

**For total visits from 6 months to 12 month maximum** (academic visit visa*), including when applying for an extension to visa from 6 to 12 month from within in UK:*

* An academic applying for a 12-month entry clearance must:
* intend to undertake one (or more) of the following activities for up to 12 months:
* take part in formal exchange arrangements with counterparts (including doctors); or
* carry out research for their own purposes, if they are on sabbatical leave from their home institution; or
* 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 permanent teaching post;

**And must be:**

be highly qualified within their own field of expertise; and currently be working in that field at an academic institution or institution of higher education overseas; and if Appendix Tuberculosis applies, provide a valid medical certificate confirming that they have undergone satisfactory screening

* [**Overview of standard visit route**](https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa)
* [**Appendix Visitor Immigration Rules**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor)
* [**Activities permitted for standard visitors**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permitted-activities)
* **Electronic Travel Authorisation (gradual roll-out for specific** [**countries**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta)**)**

Dependent on the visitors nationality, and reason/length of visit to UK – these factors will decide whether or not a standard/academic visit visa must be applied for in advance of travel to the UK:

Useful tool to check whether individual will need to apply for visa, or can travel to UK and enter under standard visit rules: [**https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa**](https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa)

**Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) assessment:**

Where the visitor will be:

* undertaking research activities at PhD level or above
* in one of the Academic Subjects/Fields of Research relevant to ATAS; and
* is not an ATAS exempt national,

they will be required to obtain a free of charge [ATAS certificate](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/compliance-and-immigration/immigration/academic-technology-approval-scheme-atas/) before the College can issue a Certificate of Sponsorship and they can apply for a visa to work in the UK.

**Please review the questions below to determine if this individual requires an ATAS certificate.**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Is the individual an ATAS exempt national? – select from drop down list: Choose an item.   *If so, please skip questions 2, 3 & 4 as ATAS clearance is not required for exempt nationals.* |
| 1. Willthe role will include an element of research at PhD level or above? Choose an item. |
| Is the field of research in a subject set out in the list of Academic Subjects/Fields of Research relevant to ATAS – select from \*drop down list: Choose an item.  *Departments undertaking any research activities related to the listed subjects/fields* *will be expected to have all relevant researchers meet the ATAS requirement.* |
| 1. Please provide a research statement, 6-7 lines in length, summarising the research activities the individual will undertake. The individual will need to submit this information when they apply for their ATAS certificate. [Examples of research statements](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/international-student-support/public/FCO-examples-of-ATAS-proposals.pdf) are available for reference. |

**Where the visiting academic / researcher will require ATAS:**

* We recommend that where ATAS is required the application is submitted before any application for UK visa, and before travel arrangements are finalised. The earliest to apply being 6 months before intended start date.
* Where the research is in an ATAS required subject field, the above research statement and CAH code will need to be provided by the hosting department to the visiting researcher so they can make their ATAS application. This should be included in their invitation letter and the overleaf support letter.
* ATAS is **legal requirement under the Immigration rules** and condition for starting a research visit, rather than specifically being required for a UK visa application as supporting evidence. Therefore, if the visiting association and research may be largely undertaken remotely from the College, but there is potential for a UK visit to be required during the period of the association, in some instances the College may be required to request the ATAS certificate before allowing this research to start.
* The Department should retain the ATAS certificate evidence.
* Please contact the [Staff Compliance Team](mailto:hrcompliance@imperial.ac.uk?subject=Visiting%20Researcher%20-%20Immigration%20route%20enquiry) for advice/guidance where required

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PERSONAL To whom it may concern | |  | |
| Date: | |  | |
|  | |

# To whom it may concern,

# Letter in support of Standard Visitor visa application for <Name>

I am writing this letter in support of **<Name>**’s Standard Visitor visa application to visit Imperial College London from **<Month, Year>**.

**<Name>** is employed at **<details of overseas institute>** and will be visiting a UK Government approved organisation **<add in full name and location of institiute>** in the UK, under the remit of the **<XXXXXX>** [state funding stream if part of a Government initiative (i.e. GCRF etc)] *(Delete as appropriate).*

The purpose of the visit is to **<Activity>**

e.g *‘To attend a Conference on xxxxxxxx / To undertake independent hosted visiting research in xxxxxxxxx’.*

(Use wording in line with the permitted activities of the visitor rules on Page 1. The visit purpose should be in line with the permitted activities based on whether the visit will fall under the 6 or 12 month visit rules). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules>].

**Please keep the purpose description simple and don’t state ‘work or employment’**.

This visit will take place between **<date>** to **<date>.** *(Maximum of 12 months is permitted on this visa category)*

<Host name> is / <I am> fully supportive of this visit and can confirm that **<Name>** is required to undertake this <academic / research> visit which will be based at **<details of host institute/location>**.

**\*Use following paragraph if College expenses/accommodation support will be provided to the individual\*** *(Edit as applicable)*

Throughout the visit **<Name>** will be accommodated in a central <Location> hotel and will have the full support of <Host name> which will cover all expenses relating to <Name>’s travel, accommodation and living expenses whilst in the UK and alongside this will pay in full for the round trip return ticket from <Home country>. <Host name> takes full responsibility for the applicant’s maintenance and accommodation during their visit, within the parameters of paragraphs V4.3 and V4.4 of Appendix V of the Rules.

or

**\*Use following paragraph if College is not providing individual support w/expenses or accommodation\***

**<Name>** has confirmed they have access to sufficient funds to cover all reasonable costs for the duration of their visit without the need to undertake work or access public funds. This includes the cost of their return or onward journey, any costs relating to their dependants, and the cost of any planned activities such as private medical treatment. \***Where applicable\*** **<Name>** will continue to receive regular salary payments from their substantive employer, **<details of overseas institute>,** during this visit to Imperial College London.

**During the visit, the following conditions will be observed:**

1. the person will not be filling a normal post or a genuine vacancy;
2. except for the permitted activities listed above, the person will not undertake any form of employment in the UK;
3. the person will not receive funding for their work from any UK source, though appropriate payment of expenses including travel and subsistence may be made;
4. Any permitted paid engagement would be fully completed within 30 days of their UK arrival
5. the person will have no recourse to public funds;
6. the person will depart the UK at the end of their visit;

At the end of the visit, **<NAME>** will return to their full-time position as a **<POSITION TITLE>** at the **<details of overseas institute>** in **<Home country>.**

**[Remove one of two non-relevant ATAS paragraph as applicable]**

**Where ATAS Requirement applies:**

The above named has been advised that they will be required to provide an ATAS certificate before they can start undertaking research at the College.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CAH code and specialism** | Choose an item. |
| **Research Statement** |  |

**Where ATAS Requirement does not apply:**

The above named has been advised that they are not required to seek ATAS certificate for their visit. This is because EITHER <they are an exempt national> and/or <they will not undertake activity at a level/in a research subject field that requires ATAS clearance>.

I trust that you will look on this application favourably and I will be happy to assist you should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

**<Details of signatory>**

The information contained in this letter may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Unless the information is legally exempt from disclosure, the confidentiality of this correspondence, and your reply, cannot be guaranteed.

Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine