Guidance on Guests/Visitors requiring a visa for entry to the UK.

When nominating a Guest/Visitor to the University who is from outside the EEA, it is likely that they will require an entry clearance visa for their visit. The individual may meet the UKVI criteria for either the ‘Standard Visitor’, ‘Permitted Paid Engagement’ or ‘Sponsored Researcher’ (Tier 5) routes. These visa routes are described below.

Standard Visitor visa (for Academic Visitors)

Academic Visitors must be able to evidence that they are highly qualified within their field of expertise i.e. they have been working as an academic in an overseas HEI (not a student), or in the field of their academic expertise immediately prior to seeking entry to the UK. They will be on sabbatical from their home institution and are visiting to either;

- Carry out research for personal benefit (for example for a book).
- Take part in formal exchange arrangements with UK counterparts.
- Take part in someone else’s research, teaching or clinical practice as long as this does not involve filling a permanent teaching post.

Examples of other permitted activities:

- To attend a conference, meeting or training.
- An academic doing research or accompanying students on a study abroad programme.
- A doctor or dentist taking a clinical attachment or observer post.
- To share knowledge or experience with UK counterparts.
- To take part in a single conference or seminar that is not a commercial or profit-making venture.

Academic Visitors must not:

- Receive funding for their work from any UK source (payments of expenses or honoraria to cover their needs whilst in the UK may be disregarded).
- Engage in any work other than the academic activity for which they are being admitted.
- Be filling a genuine vacancy.
- Be engaging on a course of study.

Maximum length of stay in the UK is 12 months.
Permitted Paid Engagement Visa

This visa enables the visitor to carry out specific paid work related to their main job or area of expertise, for example:

- Be a student examiner or assessor.
- Take part in selection panels for the education, arts or research organisation they are invited to as a highly qualified academic.
- Give guest lectures at a higher education institution.
- Do minor activities related to their work or business overseas, e.g. to attend meetings.

Maximum length of stay in the UK is 1 month.

Sponsored Researchers under Tier 5 (Government Authorised Exchange)

A Sponsored Researcher is a person who wishes to come to the UK to take part in a formal research project. This visa is only for those working on specific scientific, academic, medical or government research projects at UK higher education institutions or other research institutions operating under the authority and/or financial sponsorship of a relevant government department. Formal research projects are hosted but not necessarily funded by UK research institutions and the institution will itself benefit from the research.

The activities undertaken must be over and above normal staffing requirements and the route cannot be used to fill job vacancies.

Maximum length of stay in the UK is 24 months.

Assigning a Tier 5 Certificate of Sponsorship

Human Resources will assign a Tier 5 Certificate of Sponsorship (reference number) to the Sponsored Researcher once evidence of the individual meeting the UKVI criteria for this route has been received. Please note, the fact that a Certificate of Sponsorship has been issued by the University does not guarantee the applicant will succeed in obtaining a visa. The applicant must apply for their visa according to the UKVI guidance and await a decision before making travel arrangements.

A Tier 5 Certificate of Sponsorship currently costs £21 and this will be charged directly to the Academic Unit.

Deborah Graham
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