



Immigration Guidance

Applying for your ATAS certificate

What is ATAS?

If you are coming to the University to study certain Science, Engineering, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine courses, you may require an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before you apply for your visa. ATAS is one of the UK government's measures to prevent the spread of knowledge and skills used in developing weapons of mass destruction and associated technology.

Who needs ATAS?

The requirement for a student to get an ATAS certificate is determined by a code which represents your subject area – this is called a CAH3 code. The CAH3 code indicates the type of subject that you are studying. If you wish to confirm your CAH3 code is covered by ATAS requirement, please refer to Appendix 6 of the Immigration Rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-6-academic-subjects-that-need-a-certificate>

How do I find out my CAH3 code?

When you are given an unconditional offer of a place of study at the University for a course that requires ATAS clearance, your offer letter will indicate the CAH3 code of the course. It will also inform you if you need to obtain an ATAS certificate before applying for your visa.

ATAS Application Process

The ATAS application process begins when you receive an unconditional offer from your College. The letter will indicate that you need to apply for ATAS. You must use the details given in the unconditional offer to apply for the ATAS certificate. As the process can take up to 4 weeks, we recommend that you make the application for your ATAS clearance as soon as you have your unconditional offer. The resulting ATAS certificate can be used in an application for up to 6 months.

Extending your visa

You must apply for an ATAS certificate and enclose it with your visa application. You should therefore factor in the time it takes to apply into when you decide you start arranging any visa extension. If you are applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme, you only need a new ATAS certificate if you have postponed your programme end date by more than 3 months.



Applying for your ATAS certificate

How to apply In order to apply for ATAS clearance, visit the ATAS website at: <https://www.academic-technology-approval.service.gov.uk/>

1. Create an account online by entering an email address and password. You will need to know your CAH3 code to begin.
2. Complete the online application form. You will need two academic referees who have known you for at least three years.
3. Once your application has been considered, an email will be sent to your given email address. It will contain a PDF and should have the subject title: 'An ATAS certificate has been granted'.

What information do you need to apply for ATAS?

Proposed study	This section is about the programme you want to undertake or are currently studying. If applying to a research-led degree, your offer letter ATAS information must include a short abstract of the area of your studies. The proposal must be at least 5 sentences long, detailing what you are studying including any methodologies and research technologies you will be using. If you are studying a taught programme, you will need details of the optional modules (electives) you intend to take. You can either find these on the programme's website (under 'programme structure') or by contacting your School directly.
Personal details	This section asks for your personal details. Make sure the information matches the information on your passport
Spouse	This section will ask you about your partner/spouse. Only complete it if your partner/ spouse is either already with you in the UK or coming to join you as your dependant.
Contact details	If you are a new student and overseas use your overseas address. If you are in the UK use your UK address.
Undergraduate/postgraduate study	This section asks about your previous studies at a university either overseas or in the UK. Remember that this section is only for completed degrees.
Other studies	This section is about any studies to date that didn't take place at University e.g. professional training.
Published papers	Only complete this section if you have ever had any work published in an academic context.
Employment history	This section asks about your employment history. Approximate dates are fine for the start and end date of employment but try to be as accurate as possible.
Referees	For this section you need two referees. One must be an academic from an overseas institution: this can be a previous lecturer or teacher. For continuing students, an academic from your UK University will suffice as a second referee. As long as one referee is an academic from an overseas institution, the second referee can be an employer but cannot be a friend or family member.
Sponsors	Only complete this section if you are receiving official financial sponsorship for your studies in the UK. This is likely to be from your government or an international organisation. If you are receiving financial sponsorship from the University of Edinburgh, include the university's details. If you are self-funding your course then enter your own name and contact details.



How accurate must I be when completing the application?

When applying for ATAS, you must ensure that the information about your studies provided in your application form is exactly the same as the offer letter. In terms of the other details such as addresses, dates and so on, required by the application process, you must be as accurate as you possibly can. We advise that before you begin the process of applying, you should gather all the information together detailed above. This will reduce the possibility of problems in the visa application or if you have to extend your visa at some point in the future. Once you have started the online application process for the certificate, you need to complete it.

What happens next and how do I use the ATAS certificate in a visa application?

You will receive a receipt to your email once your application is submitted. This receipt gives the details of what information you have included in the application. This is not your ATAS certificate, but is only a confirmation your application has been made. Following that – normally up to 20 days later – and once approved, you will get an email entitled ‘An ATAS certificate has been granted’ which has a ‘pdf’ attachment. The attachment is your ATAS certificate. Print it off and enclose it with your visa application. You are strongly recommended to save the ATAS email and keep it for as long as you are studying the course – as you may need to use details from it at a later date.

Conditions of ATAS certification

1. The certificate is only valid for the person named on it
2. It is also valid for the University stated on it.
3. It is valid for use in a visa application for up to six months from the date issue, which can be found at the very end of the ATAS certificate.
4. If you decide to study at another University and/ or change your course/area of research, you will need to apply for another ATAS certificate.
5. If you need to apply to extend your visa, you will need a new ATAS certificate each and every time you do so.

ATAS Refusals

ATAS applications can be refused. The FCO will normally only refuse an application if they feel there are legitimate and substantive concerns for UK security in allowing you to study or research the area of studies. Note however, that FCO will not provide a full explanation of the reason for refusal as these will be for national security reasons. Therefore, if you are refused for ATAS clearance, the University will not be able to over turn the decision. If your ATAS is refused, please forward the refusal email to:

studentimmigration@ed.ac.uk

