Information and Procedure for Inviting International Visitors for Academic Purposes

Procedure for Inviting International Visitors for academic purposes

There is now a standardised formal procedure in place across the College of Social Sciences for all four Schools which must be followed.

Follow procedure ensures compliance with current UK immigration law and allows our visitors to enter the UK and visit our University in the appropriate visa category with correct permissions to carry out certain activities (such as research, visiting Scholar, lecturing, teaching, examining, visiting etc).

Please note: Should a visitor come to the University with incorrect visa permissions for the activity they wish to pursue, the University reserves the right to refuse the visitor from taking part in such activities.

New procedure

With immediate effect, staff members wishing to invite any international visitors to CoSS should ensure they comply with the following:

1. Once a staff member has decided to invite a visitor to their School, they must complete the appropriate Visa Assessment Form (Visitor or Delegation). This form is contained in the links for each School and the link is located in right hand column.
2. The form and supporting documents requested should be forwarded to the School’s point of contact by e-mail – details including email contact are included in the individual School pages.
3. The information will be forwarded to the International Student Advisory Service (ISAS) point of contact and a visa assessment will be made, and as a result, the correct visa route will be advised and supporting documentation for the visa application (e.g. invitation letter) will be provided.
4. The letter will be forwarded to the Head of School or nominee by the School contact for signature.
5. The invitation letter will then be sent to the visitor for use when applying for a visa or permission to enter the UK.
6. When the visitor arrives at the University, the School will send a scan of the biometric (photo) page of the visitor’s passport and their visa to the ISAS contact.

Forms

- Visa Assessment form - This form should be completed where we have a visitor from outside of the EEA.
- Non-EEA Visitors Delegations form - This form should be completed where we have a delegation of visitors from outside the EEA e.g. attendance on a conference etc

Schools:

Birmingham Business School: Information and Procedure for Inviting International Visitors for Academic Purposes

Contact: Sandra McCalla and Cynthia Franklin
s.mccalla@bham.ac.uk
s.f.a.franklin@bham.ac.uk

Forms

- Visa Assessment form - This form should be completed where we have a visitor from outside of the EEA.
- Non-EEA Visitors Delegations form - This form should be completed where we have a delegation of visitors from outside the EEA

School of Education: Information and Procedure for Inviting International Visitors for Academic Purposes
Contact: Caroline Baxter, Danielle Wartnaby and Aidan Thompson
c.a.p.baxter@bham.ac.uk
d.l.wartnaby@bham.ac.uk
a.p.thompson@bham.ac.uk

Forms

- **Visa Assessment form** - This form should be completed where we have a visitor from outside of the EEA.
- **Non-EEA Visitors Delegations form** - This form should be completed where we have a delegation of visitors from outside the EEA.

School of Government and Society: Information and Procedure for Inviting International Visitors for Academic Purposes

Contact: Amanda Griffiths
A.griffiths@bham.ac.uk

Forms

- **Visa Assessment form** - This form should be completed where we have a visitor from outside of the EEA.
- **Non-EEA Visitors Delegations form** - This form should be completed where we have a delegation of visitors from outside the EEA.

School of Social Policy: Information and Procedure for Inviting International Visitors for Academic Purposes

Contact: Sue Abbey
abbeysf@adf.bham.ac.uk

Forms

- **Visa Assessment form** - This form should be completed where we have a visitor from outside of the EEA.
- **Non-EEA Visitors Delegations form** - This form should be completed where we have a delegation of visitors from outside the EEA.

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Frequently Asked Questions (see below)

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Frequently Asked Questions

How long does the visa assessment process take once I have completed the ISAS form and sent this to my School contact?
This will take one week. To make the process quick and efficient you should complete the forms and obtain supporting documents to send to your School contact as soon as you know you want to invite the visitor to the University.

What are the Forms?

- **VISA ASSESSMENT FORM**
  This form should be completed where we have a single visitor from outside the EEA.
- **NON -EEA DELEGATION**
  This form should be completed where we have a delegation from outside the EEA.

Which countries require visas to enter the UK?
At present any citizen or national of the following countries require a visa to enter the UK: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, People's Republic of China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Korea (North), Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Rwanda, Sao Tome e Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Swaziland, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, The territories formerly comprising the socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
This application is usually made at the local visa application centre: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/countries/

Citizens of USA, Israel, Brazil (etc) are not mentioned in the list above – do they still require visas to enter the UK? Citizens or nationals of any country not listed above are recognised as ‘non-visa nationals’ by the UK Border Agency meaning that they do not need a visa before flying to the country.

However, once non-visa nationals arrive at the airport and go through Border Control they still require permission to enter the UK, which is usually given in the form of a stamp in their passport.

As such upon arrival, the non-visa national will need to outline the reason for their visit to an Immigration Officer. Should the non-visa national fail to demonstrate that they are coming to the UK for a genuine visit the Immigration Officer can deny them entry into the country and request that they return home.

It is the visitor’s choice whether they wish to apply for permission to enter the UK before flying here; or simply travel to the UK without this – but in any event, we can issue an invitation letter to clarify the purpose of their visit to the University in case they are stopped and questioned at Border Control.

**What is an ‘Academic Visitor’?**

Academic visitors are:

1. A member of staff;
2. On leave from an overseas academic institution;
3. Conducting private research in the UK or exchange information on research techniques. This may include some collaboration with staff at the Host University or use of facilities.

These individuals must be able to provide evidence that they are, or recently have been, working in an academic institution overseas in the field of their expertise.

The term ‘Private research’ includes private research (such as research for a book), taking part in formal exchange arrangements with United Kingdom counterparts or collaborative research projects.

Academic Visitors also includes eminent senior doctors and dentists (that is, those considered to be top of their field of expertise) coming to take part in research, teaching or clinical practice.

Those who are on sabbatical leave from private research companies are not eligible for leave under the academic visitor provisions.

Where a UK University is collaborating with an overseas university on research, they may exchange personnel for some or all of the duration of the project. Any salary should continue to be paid by the academic’s own overseas institution.

**Who is not an Academic Visitor?**

The following are examples of those individuals unlikely to qualify for Academic Visitor visas:

- Researchers working on University-hosted formal research projects (a Tier 5 sponsored researcher visa will be required);
- An individual coming to give a lecture or series of lectures for which payment will be made (a Tier 1 or Tier 2 visa will be required). Please note that payment does not include reimbursement of travel costs or accommodation;
- Students coming to the University on internships or work placements (a Tier 5 sponsored researcher or Youth Mobility Scheme visa will be required);
- An individual whose title is University Visiting Professor – only if they are working on University-hosted formal research projects (a Tier 1 or Tier 5 visa will be required).

**What if the Academic is coming to the University for a University-hosted Formal Research Project?**

These individuals who are coming to the University to collaborate with staff on University-hosted formal research project are likely to be classed as sponsored researchers and would therefore fall under the Tier 5 route.

Please contact Adele Ashford for further information on this at ashforam@adf.bham.ac.uk

**How long can an Academic Visitor stay in the UK?**

Academic visitors can stay in the UK for up to 12 months.
Usually their visa is issued for either a 6 month period or a 12 month period depending on the length of their stay in the UK.

Is an English Language certificate required for those assessed as 'Academic Visitors'?
No. There is no such requirement for an Academic Visitor category.

Are Academic Visitors allowed to claim expenses or fees?
Yes. They are permitted payments of expenses or reasonable honoraria, and payments on an exchange basis. They cannot:

- receive funding for your work from any UK source (except payments of expenses or reasonable honoraria, and payments on an exchange basis); or
- engage in any work other than the academic activity for which you are being admitted; or
- fill a normal post or a genuine vacancy in the UK.

What is a 'Student Visitor'?
A Student Visitor visa is for non-EEA nationals coming to the UK for study or research for a period of less than six months. Student Visitors do not have to study full-time.

How long will a Student Visitor visa be granted for?
A Student Visitor visa is valid for six months.

Can you extend a Student Visitor visa?
No

Can you bring dependants to the UK on Student Visitor visas?
No

Can you work on a Student Visitor visa?
No. Individuals in this category are prohibited from working (including work placements or internships, paid or unpaid).

What category of visa would be issued to someone who is not on sabbatical leave?
This will most likely be a Student Visitor visa; although it is still important that a full visa assessment is carried out by the ISAS team in case there are other circumstances for the individual which will affect visa category.

Is an English Language certificate required for those assessed as 'Student Visitors'?
No. There is no such requirement for a Student Visitor category.

Is an English Language certificate required for those assessed as 'Tier 4 (General) Students'?
Yes.

The role of Admissions in these cases is to facilitate a student record being created for these individuals and issue a CAS. The student will need to complete a paper PG application form. If the School decides to accept they will need to send the form on to Admissions (marked VRS) with the following:

- Certified copies of the student’s qualifications
- Evidence of English the meets our minimum university requirement
- ATAS (should this be required)
- A copy of passport personal details page.
- Confirmation of the duration of the visit (start and end dates) and confirmation of any fees to be charged.

Admissions can then log the student into Banner, make them unconditionally accepted and issue a CAS.

How should I deal with international delegates attending a conference organised by the School?
Complete the ‘Non-EEA Delegation Form’. Guidance is provided on the form itself.

How long does the visa process take once an application is submitted to an Embassy or Consulate abroad?
Please see the following for the most update information: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/general-info/processing-times/
What do I do if I invite a visitor from another HEI in the UK who is currently here from abroad?
Please complete the ‘Visitors from other UK Institutions Form’.

We require information from the individual for the following reasons:
1. If the visitor is in the UK on a visa we need to know the **conditions** of this visa.
2. Should the visitor come to our institution and perform an activity which is not permitted on their visa, we will be assisting in breaching immigration laws

What if the visitor is a British Citizen?
You do not need to complete a visa assessment form and the ISAS Department do not need to be consulted further.
You may still want to inform your PA of the visit for Health & Safety and Insurance purposes.

What is an EEA national?
Citizens or nationals from any of the following **European** countries can travel to the UK **without** a visa:
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Although Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are not members of the European Union (EU), their citizens have the same rights as EU citizens to enter, live in and work in the UK.

Do I do if I have a PGR student who requires a Leave of Absence/Authorised Absence?
The student must complete a form which results in a letter being issued for their leave.
Leave of absence forms are available online. The forms and guidance for UG and GT students are located here: [https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/enquiries/leave-of-absence.aspx](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/enquiries/leave-of-absence.aspx)

The form and guidance for Postgraduate Researchers are located here:
[https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/graduateschool/rsa/leavesofabsence.aspx](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/graduateschool/rsa/leavesofabsence.aspx)

The Code of Practice on Leave of Absence Procedures can be found at:

An authorised absence would normally be approved for a maximum of 2 months duration.

In relation to PGR students and their entitlement to eight weeks holiday in each academic year, please note as follows:
‘For postgraduate researchers, supervision is expected to be carried out throughout the whole academic year including July and August. Postgraduate researchers may, with the prior agreement of their School, take up to eight weeks holiday in each academic year, including public holidays. The timing of holidays should be agreed in advance (not retrospectively) with your Research Supervisor and School. You should then submit a request for authorised absence.’

In practice, the student must complete the online form via the links above. The information automatically is sent to Registry who then arrange for a letter to be issued for the student to collect.