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Government Authorised Exchange visa (Temporary Work)

AIM OF THE SCHEME
The Temporary Work – Government Authorised Exchange visa scheme enables researchers (including academics, scientists, research engineers or other skilled research technology specialists) to come to the UK on a temporary basis, where they are hosted by a UK higher education institution (HEI).

There are also a number of other specific categories of temporary worker, including the Youth Mobility Scheme visa category for young people from certain countries to come and experience life and work in the UK.

Each HEI is only licensed to offer a 'finite' number of GAE sponsorships each year, so careful consideration needs to be given as to whether this is the correct route. Should Faculties/Departments/Schools wish to host an individual they believe to be a sponsored researcher, they will need to contact the the Staff Immigration Team at the earliest opportunity to establish whether the GAE visa is the correct route.

Under the skilled worker scheme it is now possible to switch to this route from a GAE (temporary work) visa from within the UK.

CRITERIA FOR THE SCHEME
The Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) can be assigned for research placements of up to 2 years which cover the following activities:
- A formal research project or collaboration
- A period of work-based training/work experience/internship/placement
- Skill development/knowledge transfer
- A series of lectures, which doesn't amount to a formal teaching post
- External examinations

Specific funding for the visit **must** be in line with, or above, the National Minimum Wage (NMW), unless the role is part of the ERASMUS programme (which is not subject to the NMW), via the host, overseas employer, or an independent UK or non-UK funding body. The individual can be paid weekly/monthly/annually or in one lump sum. The researcher cannot be self-funded.

The researcher does not have to be employed overseas to be eligible for the scheme. If necessary, it is permitted for the host to issue an employment contract, provided the activity does not amount to a genuine vacancy role (i.e., the role must be over and above the organisation's normal staffing requirements, and **would not** automatically be refilled once the post holder leaves).

Roles are not normally advertised and recruited to in the conventional way, although processes must be undertaken to ensure equality of opportunity.

Any work undertaken within the scheme must be at or above RQF level 3.

Individuals sponsored under GAE may undertake courses of study, however this cannot interfere with the purpose of their engagement, as defined on their CoS, and must be ancillary.

Researchers sponsored under GAE will be considered for a visa for the time stated on the COS (usually plus an additional month) but for no more than a maximum period of 24 months.

Internal Criteria for Temporary Worker (GAE) route

Please refer to our webpage and the associated form as a tool for establishing which visa option is the most likely route.

Enquiries for potential student visas should be directed to the Student Visa Services Team.

Temporary Worker (GAE) versus other routes rationale

TW (GAE) Versus Academic Visitor route
If the visiting researcher is being directed by a PI (or equivalent) as to what research to undertake, and/or the PI benefits from said research, then typically GAE is the appropriate route providing the NMW is met.

If the visiting researcher will decide what to research and in what direction to take said research, and/or they will principally benefit from the outcome, then an academic visitor visa may be more appropriate.

TW (GAE) versus Student Visitor route
If the student will not remain registered as a student with their host institution during their visit to the UK HEI and their activities in the UK will not form part of their overseas degree, then they should be routed through GAE rather than Student.

Supporting Documentation for Temporary Worker (GAE) route
The Staff Immigration Team will require the following to make a GAE (Temporary Work) Certificate of Sponsorship application in order to comply with the University's sponsor licence with the UKVI and to adhere to Appendix D record keeping duties:

- Background information on the individual to include CV.
- Copy of evidence of the sponsorship arrangement under which the individual is coming to the University (i.e., agreement from overseas employer or university).
- Confirmation as to whether ATAS is required and the CAH code and supporting research statement and sponsor detail.
- Letter of invitation from the school and authority from the Head of School/Department or their representative to include name, period of visit, funder, detail of reason for the visit.
- Confirmation of maintenance funds and source of funds for the visit in question. Funding must exceed the hourly minimum wage in the UK.
- Scanned copy of personal details page of the passport and any current UK visa or BRP.

Erasmus mobility Students
These students can also come to the UK under GAE and, if their funding was secured after 2020, must be supported via a GAE CoS from the host HEI rather than British Council.

All Erasmus students are exempt from the national minimum wage requirements, thus there is no need for these to be met when sponsoring via the GAE route.

Process and Ownership

Honorary Team

- Honorary team receive honorary/visiting academic form.
- Honorary team direct to SIT if form indicate a TW GAE visa required.
- Honorary team 'hold' form in pending whilst decision is being made on appropriate visa by SIT.

Staff Immigration Team (SIT)

- SIT to determine if GAE (Temporary Work) Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) is appropriate and if so carry out the necessary tasks to assign a CoS.
- Set up an honorary staff applicant record for the GAE (Temporary Work) visa holder. The honorary staff appointment end date must be no later than the end date of the individual's visa.
- SIT inform the honorary team that the applicant record has been created so they can process the honorary/visiting academic form pending visa approval.
- Carry out a right to work check on the individual's arrival & inform honorary team this has been completed.
- Convert the applicant record to a resource record on MyERP.
- Upload details of their immigration status & right to work on MyERP (including ATAS certificate if applicable).

Individual (Temporary Worker (GAE) holder

- Individual to submit their visa application. The individual will need to quote the CoS number as part of the application process for seeking leave to enter or remain in the UK (a visa) from the UKVI, to help establish whether they have achieved sufficient points to qualify under this visa. As part of this process the UKVI will refer to the information the University has provided when obtaining the CoS.

Faculty/Department/School

The named sponsor (i.e. line manager) that the GAE (Temporary Work) visa holder reports to will then be responsible for undertaking the migrant tracking and monitoring responsibilities and informing SIT of any changes to the original conditions so they can carry out the necessary SMS reporting on the UKVI system.

HR Compliance Activities

- **SIT must be informed of any changes to circumstances of a GAE (Temporary Work) in order to maintain the reporting duties as required by the UKVI.**
- It is critical that the UOB adhere to Home Office sponsorship responsibilities, ensuring scheme criteria are met and maintaining relevant sponsorship requirements in accordance with Home Office guidance. Failure to do so may result in the sponsor licence for the UOB being revoked.