

Guide to completing the ATAS Online Application Form

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Exempt nationalities

If you are a UK national or a national of any of the following countries, you do not require an ATAS certificate: Australia; Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Canada; Croatia; Republic of Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Korea; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; United States of America.

How do I apply for ATAS clearance?

The ATAS scheme is managed by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK Government. In order to apply for ATAS clearance, visit the ATAS website at: <https://www.academic-technology-approval.service.gov.uk>

How much does an ATAS certificate cost?

There is no charge for an ATAS certificate even if you need to reapply for additional clearance if your course or research area changes.

When should I apply for ATAS?

You can apply for ATAS clearance up to 9 months before the start date of your course. The ATAS team at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCDO) is advising that it is currently taking at least 30 working days to process applications for clearance. Processing times may be slower at peak times (June-September).

Select the correct type of ATAS clearance

The [ATAS application](#) will ask you to declare whether you are a student or a researcher and your selection will determine the questions you are asked and the clearance you obtain. All students, including postgraduate research students and visiting research students, must apply for Taught / research student ATAS clearance.

Apply for an ATAS certificate



UK, EEA, Switzerland, United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan and Republic of Korea nationals do not need to apply for an ATAS certificate.

Before applying for an ATAS certificate, you'll need to read the [ATAS guidance](#).

Are you a **taught / research student** or are you a researcher? *

Taught / research student Researcher

Continue to Checklist

You will then be asked to select whether you will be studying a taught course or a research course.

Is my course Taught or Research?

Courses at the University of Manchester	
Taught courses	All MEng, MPhys, MSci and MSc courses
Research courses	All MPhil, MRes, and PhD courses

What is my CAH3 code?

Taught students in the Faculty of Science and Engineering will find their CAH3 code here: www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas/atas/science-and-engineering/

Taught students in the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health and in the Faculty of Humanities will be provided with the CAH3 code and module information by their admissions teams.

Research students in all faculties will be provided with the required information by their admissions team.

Selecting which university you will study at

When you begin your ATAS application you should select the University of Manchester from the drop-down menu. Your ATAS certificate must be linked to the University of Manchester and the correct course of study for the certificate to be valid for a visa application or to start your course of study or postgraduate research.

Which e-mail address should I use?

We recommend you use an internationally recognised email server such as Outlook, Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail or similar as ATAS have experienced difficulties with firewalls for local servers.

I am having problems registering on the ATAS website – what should I do?

Try registering online from a different computer (e.g. in a place of education or work) or with a new login email address. Alternatively, try using a different web browser; the ATAS website works best in Google Chrome and Internet Explorer version 5 and above.

The ATAS Team at the FCDO has reported that students using email servers 126.com, 163.com, sina.cn and qq.com may have difficulty receiving messages from them and recommend the use of Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail or similar commercial email providers, if possible.

How long will it take for me to get ATAS clearance?

It will take at least 20 working days (4 full weeks) to process a student ATAS application. Processing times will increase between April and September and can take 30 or more working days to complete. The processing time will only start at the point at which that the ATAS team receive a completed and correct application, so you should check your application carefully before submitting it.

If you have been waiting for a decision for more than 35 working days, please email visa@manchester.ac.uk with your ATAS application reference number, date of application, and estimated decision date (as given in the ATAS application portal).

How long is ATAS valid for?

If you need to apply for a visa, your ATAS clearance certificate is only valid to be used in a visa application for 6 months from the date of issue. Please make sure that you submit your visa application before the certificate expires.

Aside from the validity of the certificate in relation to a visa application, the clearance certificate will remain valid throughout your course / research unless your academic circumstances change, e.g.

you change your course modules / research focus or you extend your course or research programme by more than 3 months.

I will be applying for a new passport soon, should I apply for ATAS clearance now or with my new passport details?

As your ATAS application is linked to your passport, if you plan to obtain a new passport before applying for your visa you should wait until you have your new passport before applying for ATAS clearance.

I don't know what modules I'll be studying?

MSc students should list the modules available on your course and (if known) give a short description of your dissertation / project topic. Your admissions team will provide the module list for your ATAS application. MSc students in the Faculty of Science and Engineering will find the module information here: www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas/atas/science-and-engineering/

MEng, MPhys and MSci students should provide the full list of modules available to study in the final year of the course. This information will be provided by the Undergraduate Admissions team in your academic School or via the Faculty of Science and Engineering ATAS webpage: www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas/atas/science-and-engineering/ You should include all of the final year modules available so that you have clearance for any module combination that you take.

PhD students whose degree includes a taught element (e.g. Centres for Doctoral Training (CDT) programmes; Biotechnology Enterprise PhD; some Masters of Research programmes etc.) – should list the modules/units that are available to study as well as detailing their Proposed Area of Research. These modules/units should be listed on your *offer letter or can be obtained by contacting the admissions office in your Faculty.*

I'm a PhD student but I don't have a statement of research - where can I get this?

PhD students will also need to enter some information about their proposed area of research. This should be at least 5 lines in length and agreed with your PhD supervisor in writing (by email is fine) - it should also be listed on your offer letter, in the project title and project description section, and can be copied and pasted into your ATAS application form.

What if I change my research topic or course?

If your area of research or course is likely to change to one still affected by the requirement to have an ATAS certificate, then you should not register on the new course or start the new area of research until you have applied for a new ATAS certificate and it has been issued.

Is my programme a joint programme with another country?

If your course includes a year abroad, but your degree will only be awarded by the University of Manchester, then you should answer "No".

If your course includes study in two different countries, and will either be jointly awarded by the University of Manchester and another institution, or awarded solely by another institution, then you should answer "Yes".

What education history do I need to provide?

In the "Undergraduate / Postgraduate studies" section, the form will ask you whether you have "undertaken any undergraduate or postgraduate studies". This refers only to courses at university level that have been completed.

The application form only requires you to provide information on your education history related to professional qualifications from a college/university and previous undergraduate and postgraduate study. You are not required to provide information about your high school education.

How should I complete the 'Employment' section if I have never been employed?

You are required to provide details of employment since you left school that includes any paid work and any long-term voluntary (i.e. unpaid) work. You do not need to provide information about temporary jobs you have done during university vacations. If you have not undertaken any employment as mentioned above, select "No" in this section.

Who should I use as referees?

The ATAS guidance states that you need to provide details of 2 referees who have known you for a minimum of 3 years. At least one of the referees must be from the academic sector. If you have work experience, you should include a referee from your employment. A referee from your home country would be preferable, but it is not essential if you have studied and/or worked in another country. Family members are not accepted as referees. The ATAS team at the FCDO does not require that your referees must be able to speak English.

How should I complete the 'Sponsors' section?

This section is about any financial sponsorship or financial support that you have for your studies and living costs. This may be an organisation or the name of a person. If you are waiting for a funding decision, include this and note the decision is pending. If you are funding your own studies or research, include your name and address in the relevant boxes. If another family member is paying for your studies, include their details

The form asks if there are any "conditions of your offer". An example of a condition of your offer could be that you are required to return overseas after completion of course, or you must provide regular reports about your progress.

If you have more than one financial sponsor, make sure you include them all in this section.

Submission

When all the sections are marked "complete", then you are able to submit your application. Check your answers carefully before errors will delay the processing of your application and may result in you needing to apply for clearance again.

If the ATAS team need to contact you for further information then they will do so via email and ask you to log back into your account to provide further information in the relevant section.

What should I do if I submit my application and then realise that I have made a mistake?

For instances where an ATAS application has been made and is pending approval, you should contact the ATAS team at atas@fcdo.gov.uk with details of the change required and they will send the application back to applicant to make the changes and resubmit their application for the ATAS team to review.

Please be aware it will take at least 20 working days (4 full weeks) to process a student ATAS application. Processing times will increase between April and September and can take 30 or more working days to complete. The processing time will only start at the point at which that the ATAS team receive a completed and correct application.

How will I know if my ATAS application has been successful?

If your application is successful, you should receive an email from ATAS with the attached ATAS certificate to the email address that you used to register. You should check your spam or junk folders regularly to ensure the email has not been filtered out. You must read your ATAS certificate carefully to check that the details on it are correct; if any information in the certificate is incorrect, please contact visa@manchester.ac.uk for advice.

What should I do if I receive my ATAS clearance certificate but it contains an error?

If the error is yours then you will need to apply again for clearance. If you believe that there is an error in the certificate that is not as a result of information that you entered into the ATAS application form, please contact visa@manchester.ac.uk for advice.

What if my ATAS application is refused?

ATAS applications can be refused but this situation is not usual. The FCDO 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 proposed area of studies.

You can request that the ATAS team to review the decision if you think your application has been treated unfairly. If you are a research student, you can also discuss with your academic supervisor whether a modified research project could be considered and, if that is possible, to apply for clearance using the modified project description.

You will not be permitted to start your course, even remotely from outside the UK, without having ATAS clearance. If you are already a student and your clearance application relates to a visa extension application or reflects a change in research direction, you will be required to suspend your studies pending the outcome of your appeal or new application for clearance.

Should I send a copy of my ATAS certificate to the admissions office of the Faculty I am applying to?

If you are an applicant, you can upload your ATAS clearance certificate through your 'To Do' task file in your Applicant Self Service portal. Current students who have obtained a new ATAS clearance certificate, for a visa extension for the same course or to cover a change in research direction, should send a copy by e-mail to their course or department administrator.

Conditions of ATAS certification

1. The certificate is only valid for the person named on it.
2. The certificate is only valid for the University stated on it.
3. It is valid for use in a visa application for up to 6 months from the issue date as shown at the 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 if applicable.
5. If you need to apply for a student visa extension, you will need a new ATAS certificate.

Student Immigration Team
University of Manchester
visa@manchester.ac.uk