

INVITING OVERSEAS ACADEMIC COLLEAGUES TO VISIT LEEDS BECKETT – VISA CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

Academic colleagues from overseas universities may visit Leeds Beckett for their own research purposes, to provide guest lectures and other collaborative activities. Individuals who hold a British or Irish passport may work in the UK without restriction. It is important to be aware that where Leeds Beckett invites a someone who does not hold a British or Irish passport to visit the University, we are facilitating their entry to the UK. At the point of arranging the visit, and prior to issuing the invitation, the School must be satisfied that the planned activities are compliant with the Home Office's visitor visa regulations (or an alternative appropriate visa is in place).

This short guide (including flowchart) summarises relevant Home Office rules around visitor immigration categories to assist Schools with the visa requirements linked to inviting international academics to Leeds Beckett. If the activities are being undertaken from overseas (and the individual is not travelling to the UK), then no visa is required. Any intended research activity must also adhere to Leeds Beckett health and safety regulations and have appropriate ethical approval.

If the individual is an overseas student (e.g. a PhD student wishing to visit Leeds Beckett to undertake research in the UK), please see www.gov.uk/standard-visitor/visit-to-study and seek advice from the Student Immigration Advice and Compliance team (SIAC@leedsbeckett.ac.uk).

If it is proposed to award the individual a visiting academic title of Visiting Professor or Visiting Fellow, please also refer to the [Guidance on Emeritus and Visiting Academic Titles](#).

Visitor Visa

There are three main types of visitor visa. All require a letter of invitation from the School in advance of the visit. This letter must correctly reflect the activities which will be undertaken and we must ensure that these are compliant with the visa route selected. Otherwise we are at risk of breaching Home Office immigration and prevention of illegal working rules.

You are strongly advised to use the template letter provided in Appendix 1 to support individuals entering the UK under the standard visitor route (either business visit or academic visit).

Visa Type (and link to more information)	Maximum length of visit	Main Relevant Permitted Activities	Action required prior to visit
Standard Visitor - Business Visit	6 months	Attend meetings, conferences, seminars and interviews; Give a one-off or short series of talks (provided these are not commercial events and will not make profit for the organiser) – see also permitted paid engagement below. Gather information for their employment overseas.	Letter of invitation from the School (see Appendix 1). Depending on the individual's nationality, they may need to apply for the Visitor visa in advance of travel to the UK.

Visa Type (and link to more information)	Maximum length of visit	Main Relevant Permitted Activities	Action required prior to visit
Standard Visitor - Academic Visit	12 months	Collaborate, gather information and facts, or conduct research, either for a specific project which directly relates to their employment overseas, or independently (the individual must be <u>employed</u> by an academic institution overseas and on sabbatical to visit the UK) For visits of 6-12 months, individuals must be highly qualified within their field of expertise (and normally hold a PhD).	Letter of invitation from the School (see Appendix 1). For visits of 6 months or less, it depends on the individual's nationality whether they need to apply for the Visitor visa in advance of travel to the UK. All academic visits lasting longer than 6 months require a Standard Visitor visa in advance of travel to the UK.
Standard Visitor - Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE)	6 months (paid activity must take place during the first month in the UK)	The individual must be <u>employed</u> by an academic institution overseas. They can be paid to deliver a lecture (or series of lectures) in their subject area, or to be an examiner. The engagement must specifically relate to their profession/field of expertise. The individual can come to the UK under a standard visitor visa for up to 6 months, but the paid engagement must take place during the first month in the UK. Payment will be made via the Visiting Lecturer or External Claims form .	Letter of invitation from the School (to be written with support and advice from HR Services). Depending on the individual's nationality, they may need to apply for the visa in advance of travel to the UK. If they do not need to apply for a visa in advance, they <u>should</u> get a stamp from a Border Force Officer on entry to the UK (and not use the ePassport gates). If their passport is not stamped on arrival in the UK, then a boarding pass/travel ticket can be used to demonstrate arrival date in the UK.

European Visitors

Whilst European nationals visiting for less than 6 months do not need to apply for a visitor visa in advance of travel to the UK, they are still restricted to the visitor activities (as listed in the above table).

When to seek advice from Human Resources

If you have any questions regarding academic visitors and letters of invitation, advice may be sought from [Julia Gaskin](#) (HR Policy Adviser) on a case by case basis.

Please get in touch in advance of visits where any of the following apply:

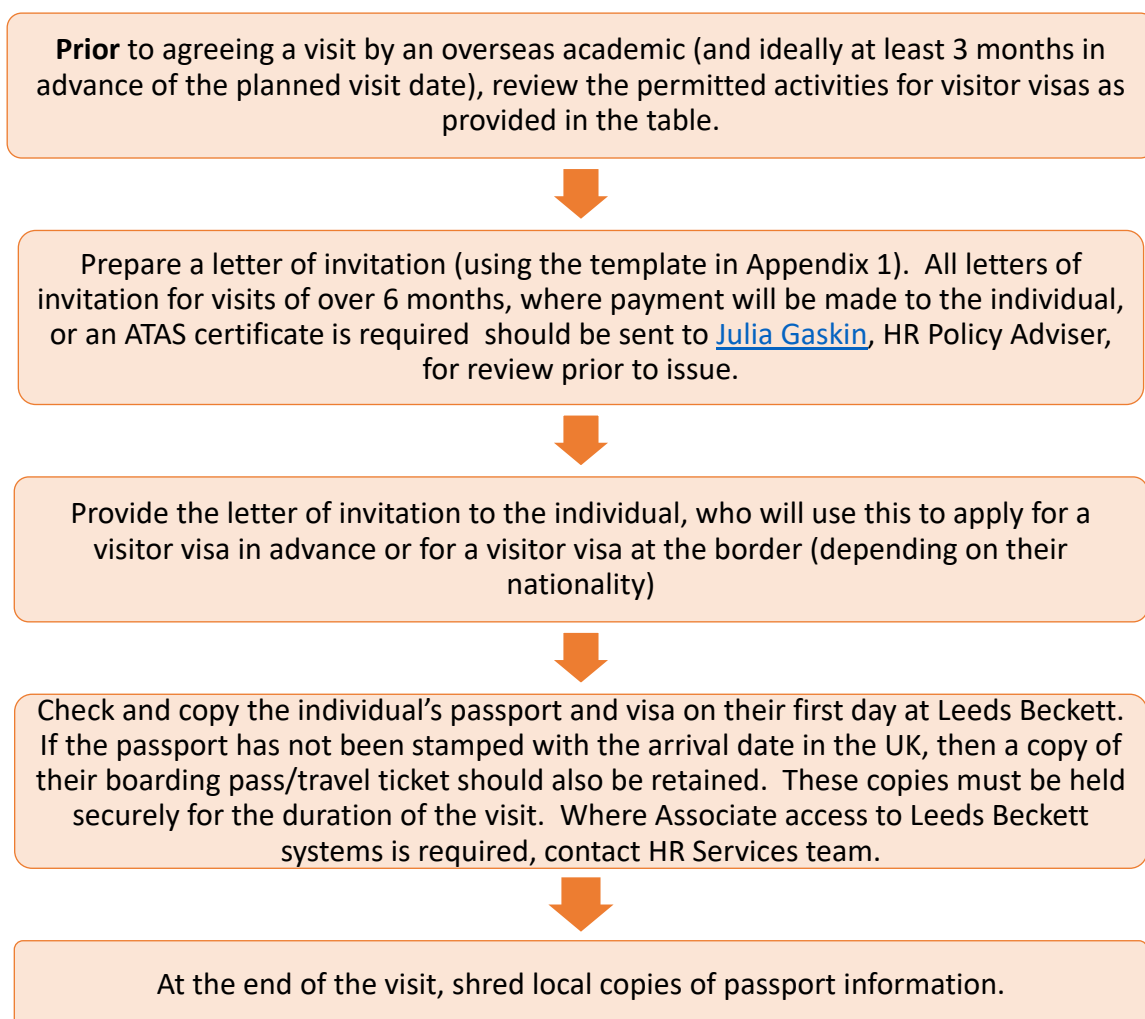
- The planned activities do not fall within the permitted activities (as provided in the above table), or if the individual is not employed by an overseas university. There may be a different immigration route which is more appropriate;
- The visit is for over 6 months;
- It is intended to pay the individual;

- During their time in the UK, the individual will be undertaking research in an academic subject which requires an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate, and the individual is not exempt from the ATAS requirement due to their nationality (nationals of EU countries, Australia and USA are exempt). Academic subjects which require an ATAS certificate include computer science and engineering – a full list is available on [Home Office webpages](#).

Where advice is needed, please seek this at the point of arranging the visit (a minimum of 3 months in advance of planned visit date, wherever possible), to allow time for exploration of the most appropriate visa type, drafting of associated documentation and (where required) time for the individual to apply for and receive the visa in advance of travel.

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Summary of action required when inviting an international academic to visit Leeds Beckett



Appendix 1 - Suggested Template Letter of Invitation to support a Visitor visa application

The letter of invitation must not refer to 'work', as paid or unpaid employment is not permitted under the visitor visa immigration route. If the visit relates to research, then the main purpose must be research – collaborating, gathering information and facts, or conducting research which directly relates to their employment overseas.

Dear

I invite you to visit Leeds Beckett University for the period [DATE] to [DATE]. The main purpose of the visit is

to use your sabbatical leave from [INSERT NAME OF OVERSEAS UNIVERSITY] to carry out research linked to your employment overseas.

OR

to take part in a seminar/short series of lectures [INSERT DETAILS]. These are not commercial events and will not make a profit for the organiser.

(delete as appropriate)

Information about Visitor visas is available on <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor>, including information on how to apply and activities which are permitted during your visit and those which are not.

As a visitor to Leeds Beckett University, you will be required to present your passport and visa/immigration stamp (if applicable) on your first day with us. A copy will be taken and retained for the duration of your visit, after which, the copies will be destroyed.

Include any further information as required – e.g. contact person within the School, more information about the planned research or other activities.