

The Business Visitor Route (Unpaid Engagements)

This document outlines the immigration arrangements to facilitate non EEA nationals entering the UK as a Business Visitor from an employer outside the UK. The Business Visitor will not receive any salary or fee from a UK organisation.

NOTE: All practical details relating to Business (includes Academic) Visitors are the responsibility of the Host School/Department/Research Institute and should be discussed and agreed with the relevant Dean on the suitability of the visit.

Immigration regulations can be complex. It is recommended that you consult with your nominated HR Business Partner.

Procedure to engage a Business or Academic Visitor

- A letter (see template letter) is sent from the relevant Dean to the visitor detailing the following points:
 1. The nature of the visit;
 2. The period of stay;
 3. The funding arrangement in terms of subsistence/expenses agreed to be paid.
- If the visitor requires a visa they should take the letter of invitation to the British Embassy or equivalent for any visa or entry clearance requirements (includes if they wish dependents to accompany them on their visit.) They should refer to the visa section of the UK Visas & Immigration website at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa> to check if they require a visa for the purpose of their visit to enter the UK. Allow time for this process. The letter of invitation and entry clearance should be brought through immigration control on arrival at their point of entry to the UK.
- For payment of any agreed expenses or subsistence to the visitor, complete the Finance claim form for visitors; attach receipts and a copy of the invitation letter to the Finance Department for action.

When the Business Visitor arrives you must inspect and copy their passport to ensure that they are in the UK lawfully.

Non EEA nationals should travel directly to Belfast International or via another UK airport e.g. London Heathrow, instead of via the Republic of Ireland e.g. Dublin or Shannon.

Non EEA nationals receiving sponsorship funds to carry out research will require a certificate of sponsorship - as a Sponsored Researcher under [Tier 5 - Government Authorised Exchange](#)

The immigration rules, as published by the Home Office, define a business visitor as someone who works abroad but intends to visit the UK for a short period of time – up

to a maximum of six months in order to transact business on their own or their employer's behalf, in order to enter the UK under this route the business visitor must:

- Be based abroad and have no intention of transferring their base to the UK even temporarily;
- Will not receive a salary from a UK source (although they are permitted to receive reasonable expenses to cover the cost of their travel and subsistence.);
- Are not involved in selling goods or services direct to members of the public.

The immigration rules clearly outline the permissible activities e.g. attending meetings arranged before entering the UK or speaking at a 'one off' conference, which may be undertaken by a business visitor and do not permit the payment of any fees. Please see the [Permissible Activities](#) to ascertain if this is the correct route for your visitor.

Within the Business Visitor route there is a sub route as an Academic Visitor.

Academic Visitor

This route allows well qualified academics to visit the UK for a maximum of 12 months to undertake certain activities. They should be able to produce evidence that they have been working an academic in an institution of higher education overseas or in a field of their academic expertise immediately prior to seeking entry or entry clearance in this category.

An Academic Visitor must be:

- A person on sabbatical leave from an overseas academic institution who wishes to make use of their leave to carry out research here (e.g. to do research for a book). [Note: those who are on sabbatical leave from private research companies are **not eligible** for leave under the academic visitor provisions]; or
- Academics (including doctors) taking part in formal exchange programmes with UK counterparts; or
- Eminent senior doctors or dentists coming to take part in research, teaching or clinical practice.

In addition they must:

- Normally¹ they must not receive funding for their work from any UK source (payments of expenses or honoraria to cover their needs whilst in the UK may be disregarded, as may payments on an exchange basis);
- Not intend to take employment or engage in any work other than the academic activity for which they are being admitted;
- Not be filling a normal post or a genuine vacancy;
- Not stay in the UK for more than 12 months;
- Intend to leave the UK at the end of their visit;

¹ Please see under 'Permissible Activities' the **limited circumstances in which payment can be made.**

- Be able to maintain themselves and any dependents without having recourse to public funds (or be adequately maintained and accommodated by relatives or friends);
- Be able to meet the cost of the return or onward journey from the UK.

A person entering the UK with a general tourist visa is not allowed to act as a Business/Academic Visitor. Please ensure you are quite clear about which route your visitor will use to enter the UK.

The UK Visas & Immigration provide a supporting document checklist to guide on the documents needed as a Business Visitor to enter the UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/business-visitor-visa>

Another useful link includes:

<https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa/y>

If you require any further information or guidance on engaging Business (includes Academic) Visitors please contact your nominated HR Business Partner.