Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

What is ATAS?

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) was introduced on 1 November 2007 by the UK Government to stop the spread of knowledge and skills that could be used in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

If you are an international student whose nationality is outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland undertaking postgraduate studies in science, engineering or technology subjects leading to a Masters or PhD, you may need to apply for an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance certificate from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) before you apply to extend your student visa.

Who needs to apply for ATAS clearance?

Students who need to extend their student visa to continue or switch into the following course(s) at the University of Dundee will have to apply for an ATAS certificate:

- Taught postgraduate - MSc Earthquake & Offshore Geotechnical Engineering
- Certain research courses - if you originally needed an ATAS and are extending your visa to continue on the same course, you will require a new ATAS certificate

For a list of courses see [http://uod.ac.uk/int006-1](http://uod.ac.uk/int006-1)

You will also need to apply for a new ATAS certificate if:

- There are any changes to the course content (or research proposal). If you are studying a research PHD course, changes include changes other than minor changes to the areas of research or the use of any new research technique
- You wish to start a new course that requires ATAS clearance
- You move to another institution

When to apply

You must apply for your ATAS certificate before you can begin your programme. Processing times vary but it can take up to 20 working days for an ATAS certificate application to be considered and approved. Please note at peak time (April – September), processing times will increase and can take 30 or more working days to complete. We advise you to apply for an ATAS certificate as soon as you receive your ATAS statement from the University.

- **If you are a new student** you can apply for ATAS certificate after you accepted an Unconditional Offer of study. Your offer letter will indicate that you need to apply for ATAS and you will be issued with an ATAS statement. You must use the details provided in your ATAS statement to complete your ATAS application.

- **If you are a continuing student extending your visa**, you should contact International Advice Service at [internationalsupport@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:internationalsupport@dundee.ac.uk) at least 8 weeks before your visa expires. If you are eligible to extend your Tier 4 student visa, you will automatically receive an official ATAS statement following your visa extension query.

- **If you are taking resits or extending your studies**, you will need to apply for a new ATAS certificate if the end date of your course is extended by more than 3 months. This must be done within 28 days of confirmation of the change of date.

- **If you are applying for the Doctorate Extension Scheme**, you WILL NOT need a new ATAS certificate unless your PhD end date has been extended by more than 3 months since you last applied for Tier 4 visa.
How do I apply?
You can apply for ATAS through a free, online application process on the Foreign & Commonwealth Office website at http://uod.ac.uk/int006-

You should follow the instructions carefully before you make the application. Please have the following information to hand for the ATAS application process:

- Your contact details
- Passport details
- Name and nationality of your spouse/partner (if applicable)
- Full details of all previous studies
- Your official ATAS statement from the University of Dundee which includes:
  - Taught courses - a list of modules you will be undertaking
  - Research courses - a brief research proposal of your intended study. This needs to be a minimum of 5 sentences in length and explains exactly what you will be learning from your course
  - All courses - your course JACS code
- Full details of any previous or current employment
- Full details of published papers
- Previous ATAS applications
- Full name and contact details of two referees (first name(s) and family name). You must have known both your referees for at least three years. At least one of these must be an academic from your country of origin.
- Details of how you will be funding your studies

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office often experience some delays in processing ATAS Certificates. Therefore if you are a continuing student and need an ATAS, you are advised to contact the International Advice Service at least 8 weeks before your visa expires.

If you are experiencing difficulties with the online application please try the following:

- Try registering from a different computer (e.g. in a place of work or education) or with a new login email address.
- Try using a different web browser. The ATAS website works best on Internet Explorer. You may have trouble using other browsers such as Mozilla Firefox.
- Complete each field in sequential order. Completing the fields in a different order will cause the page to refresh.
- When you have completed all of the fields in sequential order, click the "submit" button and do not press the enter key on your keyboard. Pressing the enter key on your keyboard will cause the page to refresh.

If the above does not work and if you have any further query about your application, please contact the ATAS team at ATAS@fco.gov.uk. The ATAS team will do their best to answer your enquiry within 5 working days.

How long is an ATAS certificate valid for?
You must use your ATAS certificate within 6 months of the date of issue. If you do not, you will need to apply for a new one. Once you have used the certificate with a visa application, your ATAS certificate will remain valid for the length of the course that it was issued from the course start date to the course end date given on your CAS, plus up to an additional 3 calendar months of study. The certificate remains valid as long as your course details and subject area does not change. If your course details do change, or your course end date is postponed for a period of more than 3 calendar months, you must apply for a new ATAS certificate within 28 days of being notified of the changes in course regardless of when your visa expires.

Important!
You cannot apply for your Tier 4 Student Visa if you are not in receipt of an ATAS Certificate from the FCO and if you do apply without providing your ATAS Certificate, your visa will be automatically refused. During your time at the University, if there are any changes to the course content (or research proposal) the FCO will require you to apply for a new ATAS clearance certificate.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SECURE YOUR ATAS CERTIFICATE BEFORE YOUR VISA EXPIRES

For further information and assistance please contact us at internationalsupport@dundee.ac.uk
Tel: +44 1382 381381