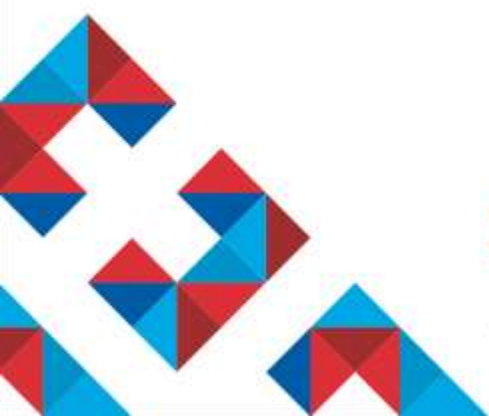# Temporary Worker - Government Authorised Exchange visa (GAE)

Erasmus+ Higher Education Participant
Key Action 103

Application for a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)

Handbook for Coordinators, Participants and Hosts

Version 1: 14/07/2022

UK Participation in Erasmus+

Some Erasmus+ participants coming to the UK require a <u>Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) visa</u> to allow them to work in the UK. This includes both paid and unpaid work, traineeships, internships, and voluntary work.

A Temporary Work - GAE visa requires a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS). The British Council are sponsors for Erasmus+ 2014 - 2020 traineeships. This is where the sending institution's grant agreement begins with a 2014 - 2020 reference number e.g., 2020-DE01-1-KA103-00001. We cannot sponsor participants funded under reference numbers starting 2021 or later. We cannot advise on alternative sponsors. Participants should contact the host directly or check the list of <u>Government Authorised Exchange programmes</u>.

Eligibility criteria for Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)

- The Erasmus+ project reference number must be from the 2020 application call for Erasmus+ funding e.g., 2020-DE01-1-KA103-00001.
- The work or activities undertaken must be over and above the hosts normal staffing requirements and must not fill a genuine vacancy.
- The role must be a skilled position contained within Table 1 and Table 2 of the <u>Immigration Rules Appendix Skilled Occupations</u>.

How to apply for a CoS?

The CoS is a unique reference number which holds information about the work placement and the participant's personal details. Participants must include the CoS number on their visa application.

The Erasmus+ coordinator from the sending university needs to email complete applications to Tier5erasmus@britishcouncil.org All communication with us must be via the university coordinator who is responsible for updating participants on the progress of their applications.

Applications for a CoS must be submitted **at least 10 weeks before the placement start date**. This allows for our CoS processing time and for the <u>visa processing time</u> which is a separate process managed by UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI). We do not offer a priority service.
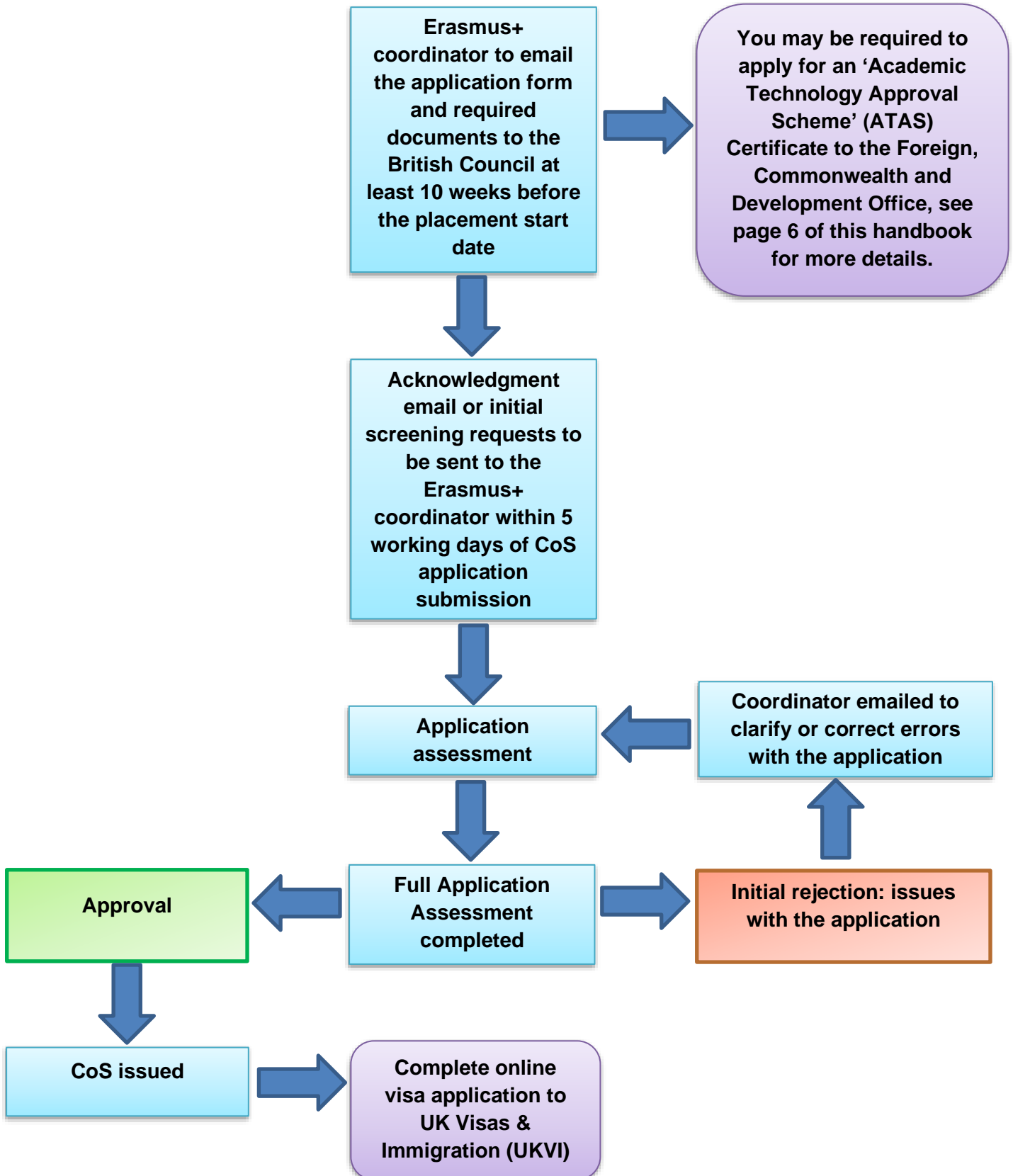
We accept applications more than 10 weeks in advance of the placement start date. Please note that you **cannot apply for a visa more than 3 months in advance of the placement start date**. We will complete our assessment and the CoS will be put on hold. Three months before the placement start date, we will contact the coordinator to ask if the information is still correct. If everything is still correct, then we will issue the CoS. If any information has changed, we may need to complete another assessment.

Summary of initial steps and responsibilities

- Participant or coordinator to email the '**Recording and Reporting Guidelines for Hosts'** and **'Host Acceptance Form'** to the host.
- Host to read '**Recording and Reporting Guidelines for Hosts'** and complete the '**Host Acceptance Form'.** Hosts should then email the Acceptance Form to the participant or the coordinator.

- Coordinator to collect all documents from their participants.
- Coordinator to ensure all documents are completed correctly.
- Coordinator to email CoS applications to Tier5erasmus@britishcouncil.org.

CoS application process flow chart

Erasmus+ coordinator to email the application form and required documents to the British Council at least 10 weeks before the placement start date

You may be required to apply for an 'Academic Technology Approval Scheme' (ATAS) Certificate to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, see page 6 of this handbook for more details.

Acknowledgment email or initial screening requests to be sent to the Erasmus+ coordinator within 5 working days of CoS application submission

Application assessment

Coordinator emailed to clarify or correct errors with the application

Approval

Full Application Assessment completed

Initial rejection: issues with the application

CoS issued

Complete online visa application to UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI)

What documents are required for the application?

To process applications for a CoS, we require the following documentation:

1) **Participant Information Form.**
2) **Participant's Passport (photo page and personal information page/pages only).**
3) **Coordinator Confirmation Letter template completed by the Sending University.**
4) **The sending university's Erasmus+ 2014-2020 Grant Agreement.**
5) **Host Acceptance Form.**
6) **Overseas criminal record check (only applicable if the host confirms it is required in the 'Host Acceptance Form').**

Further guidance on how to complete and submit each document is described below.

Participant Information Form

- Complete all fields in the form. Forms must be typed. We will not accept handwritten forms.
- In the **Participant Passport Details** section please complete all fields exactly as they appear in the participant's passport.
- In the **Participant Contact Details** section please complete full address details including the post code as this is required to issue the CoS.
- The duration of the work placement must be a minimum of two months.
- The start and end date of the placement must match the dates detailed in the other documents.
- Signatures on the **Signature Page** must be digital or ink only, NOT typed. You can use the **'Fill & Sign' tool** in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Please find instructions on how to do this here. If you need to physically sign the page, **please print the signature page only and upload this separately.**
- The coordinator and the participant must sign and date this form.

Participant's passport

- We require the photo page and personal information page/pages (Biometric page).
- Please make sure the photo or scan is clear and **easily readable.**
- If you are applying for a new passport during your CoS application, please make sure to send this to us urgently as we are only able to issue a CoS to a valid passport you will use to enter the UK.
- The same passport must be used for the CoS application, visa application and to enter the UK.

Coordinator Confirmation Letter Template

- The template letter must be used. We will not accept any other letter.
- Complete all fields in the form. Forms must be typed. We will not accept handwritten forms.
- The sending university's Erasmus+ Grant Agreement (contract) number should have this format: 2020-1-UK01-KA103-000001.
- We sponsor students under the Erasmus+ 2014 - 2020 cycle and cannot issue a CoS for 2021 grant agreements.

- Signatures must be digital or ink only, NOT typed. You can use the **'Fill & Sign' tool** in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Please find instructions on how to do this here.

Erasmus+ 2014 - 2020 Grant Agreement

- Please submit a copy of the latest approved and signed version of the KA103 Erasmus+ Grant Agreement - **This is the grant agreement between the National Agency and the sending university**.
- The sending institution's grant agreement begins with a 2014 - 2020 reference number e.g., 2020-DE01-1-KA103-000001.
- We can only sponsor students until the university grant expires. We cannot sponsor applicants funded by Erasmus+ grant agreements from the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme.

Host Acceptance Form

- The host is responsible for completing this form which must be submitted by the sending university coordinator along with the other documents.
- Complete all fields in the form. Forms must be typed. We will not accept handwritten forms
- The job title must be a valid job title and **not** *'E+ Intern, student, work experience'.*
- A full description of the actual tasks the participant will be undertaking must be included and must align with the relevant Occupation Code detailed in the Job Type field.
- You must tell us if a criminal record check is required to work in the role by selecting 'Yes' or 'No' in the box.
- Criminal record checks **only required** if participants are undertaking regulated activity in relation to children and/or adults.
  - If you are in England or Wales these checks are carried out by Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
  - If you are in Scotland these checks are carried out by Disclosure Scotland.
  - If you are in Northern Ireland, these checks are carried out by AccessNI.
- Signatures on the **Signature Page** must be digital or ink only, NOT typed. You can use the **'Fill & Sign' tool** in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Please find instructions on how to do this here. If you need to physically sign the page, **please print the signature page only and upload this separately.**

Overseas criminal record check (only if applicable)

- Overseas criminal record checks for participants are **only required** if participants are undertaking regulated activity in relation to children and/or adults.
- Please check the **'Host Acceptance Form'** to check if one is required.
- If required overseas criminal record check certificate must come from the participants' country of residence.
  - In cases where the participant is applying from a different country to where they normally reside, we may ask for a criminal record check from that country.
- The certificate **issue date** must be **no more than six months in advance of the placement start date.**
- If a criminal record check is indicated on the '**Host Acceptance Form'** as **not required** then we **do not** require a copy of the participant's overseas criminal record check certificate.

All documentation must be consistent; we require the start and end dates of the work placement to match across all documents.

All documents must be completed in full and emailed by the university Erasmus+ coordinator to us.

All communication will be via the university coordinator.

Do not send documents as web links like Google, RAR or OneDrive attachments as these will be refused.

How long does it take to issue a CoS?

We aim to issue a CoS no later than four weeks before the placement start date. Due to the high number of applications, we will not reply to emails asking for an update before this time.

We would strongly encourage coordinators, participants and hosts to thoroughly check all application documents carefully prior to submission as errors with applications can cause delays.

Once your application is meeting the eligibility criteria we will issue a CoS. The participant will receive a CoS number and important information to apply for their visa. The host will be informed when the CoS is issued.

Next Steps - applying for a visa

Once the participant has been issued their CoS number they will be able to apply for their visa.

The CoS is valid for three months from the date of issue so please make sure to apply for your visa whilst it is valid.

Processing times differ from country to country. You can check visa processing times here.

As part of the visa application process participants staying in the UK for longer than 6 months will have to pay a health surcharge (called the 'immigration health surcharge' or IHS). Further details on this can be found here.

Depending on your passport and where you're from you may need to:

- Use the **UK Immigration: ID Check' app** to prove your identity when applying to stay in the UK. For those who prove their identity when they apply for a visa using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app – their immigration status will be confirmed by an **eVisa** (a digital version of their immigration status information), rather than in the form of a physical visa or ink stamp.

    Or

- **Attend an appointment** and provide fingerprints and a photograph (biometric information) at a visa application centre.

You must have a valid visa to enter the UK. You are unable to enter the UK before the start date on your visa. If you try to enter before the start date on your visa you will be refused entry or will be asked to leave and re-enter on the correct dates.

We recommend that no travel plans are made, or costs incurred until you are advised of the decision regarding your CoS and a visa is approved.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

You may need to apply for a Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before you apply for your visa application.

The ATAS requirement only applies to certain nationalities, and in certain roles and research fields. It also only applies to participants who are studying at **PhD level or above**.

If you need to apply for an ATAS certificate please follow the guidance here.

If one is required, we will mark that an ATAS certificate is required on your CoS, and you will need to include this certificate in your visa application.

The time applications take for ATAS can be at least 30 working days and should be applied for whilst you wait for your CoS.

If necessary we may contact host institutes to confirm if the job role requires ATAS certification. We will complete a check to see if the participant requires ATAS certification and inform you if one is required. We would encourage participants to check if one is required when discussing the traineeship with the host.

Applying for a CoS Extension

If you wish to extend your placement duration you will need to apply to extend your visa. You will need a new CoS. Further information on how to apply to extend the visa can be found here.

You can apply for an extension whilst you are in the UK, and you can continue to work in the role whilst the application is being assessed. The maximum length of stay for an Erasmus+ placement is 12 months. This maximum is calculated from your visa start date.

The Erasmus+ coordinator at the sending university must email the following documents to us:

1) Participant Information Form
2) Participant's current visa which is either:
   - a **visa vignette** in the passport or
   - **eVisa Share code**

For placements that were originally **more than 6 months** if you have a visa vignette in your passport you will need to provide us with a copy of your **Biometric Residency Permit.**

3) Host Acceptance Form

The job type (Occupation Code) must be the same as the job type on the original CoS application.

Changing Hosts

Whilst on your placement in the UK you can change your host provided that the new job role has the same Occupation Code that was detailed on your original CoS. There is no need to apply for another CoS but the Erasmus+ coordinator at the sending university must email us the following documents:

1) Participant Information Form
2) Host Acceptance Form

You must not start work at the new host organisation until the change has been approved by us via email.

Upon arrival in the UK

Information for Host Organisations

Please read the information contained within **'Recording and Reporting Guidelines for Hosts'** very carefully. It highlights the sponsorship duties that the host and the British Council must comply with to continue to sponsor participants in the Erasmus+ programme.

Once the participant has arrived in the UK, we require the host to complete the **'UKVI Reporting Form'** which is a **compulsory UKVI requirement**. Please return this form as soon as they arrive at your organisation. You will be emailed it when the CoS is issued to the participant.

As sponsors we are also required to inform UKVI of any changes made to the participant's placement. You must report information to us **within 5 working days by completing and emailing the 'UKVI Reporting Form' to us.** Further information on what you need to report to us can also be found in the **'Recording and Reporting Guidelines for Hosts'.**

Please note that failure to comply with UKVI record keeping duties can lead to the revoking of a Temporary Worker (GAE) license which will impact on our ability to sponsor Erasmus+ participants in the future.

The information and links contained within this document are correct at the time of writing and may change. We would advise you to keep up to date with information on the GOV.UK Temporary Work – Government Authorised Exchange visa webpage for the most up to date information regarding the visa application process.