

Guidance for Pre-CAS and Credibility interviews

February 2021

How to Use this Document:

- Read through each section of the guide carefully before booking your Pre-CAS and Credibility Interviews.
- Use the sample questions from page 3 and 'Common Reasons for Refusal at Interview' on page 5 to research and prepare effectively for your interviews.
- Contact us if you have any questions – our contact details are included on the final page of the document.

Contents

This document provides guidance on both Study Group pre-CAS interviews and UK Visas and Immigration [UKVI] credibility interviews for prospective students, agents and internal Study Group staff. It will provide the following information:

- What is a UKVI credibility interview?
- Why does Study Group conduct pre-CAS interviews?
- How will a credibility interview be conducted?
- What do I need to know for Study Group pre-CAS interviews and UKVI credibility interviews?
- Key recommendations
- What do I do if I receive a visa refusal?

What is a UKVI credibility interview?

As part of your Student visa application, you are required to attend a credibility interview to ensure that you comply with the UK's Immigration Rules.

The purpose of a credibility interview is for the Entry Clearance Officer (ECO) to establish whether or not you are a genuine student. In order to assess this, you may be asked questions about your study plan, future career plans and study and immigration history.

If you are a Student visa applicant and an overseas national not listed on the [UK Government list of low-risk nationals](#), you are highly likely to be interviewed. In order to be granted a visa, your application must be approved at every stage.

Whilst this is true for both Student visa applicants and Child student visa applicants who are 16 or 17, it is less common for the latter to be invited to an interview with the UKVI.

In order to be eligible to apply for a Student visa, you must first have received a CAS from a licenced education provider in the UK and provided financial statements which prove that you have the funds to cover the course and your living costs. If your documents are approved by the UKVI, you will then be required to attend a credibility interview.

Further information regarding students who require a credibility interview can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>

How will the UKVI credibility interview be conducted?

The interview will be in English and, if you are applying from abroad, it will be conducted via video link, telephone or in person at the Visa Application centre stated on the letter the student receives from the Home Office. If you are invited for an interview in the UK, this will usually be conducted via Skype with a member of staff from UKVI.

You should usually receive an email asking you to attend an interview, so make sure to check your email (including the 'spam' folder) regularly.

The interviewer will type your answers during the interview.

If you feel unwell and you think this may affect your performance in the interview, you should inform the interviewer of this. Also, if the network connection is poor and this affects your ability to hear the interviewer, you should let the interviewer know of this immediately.

Once the interview has finished, the interviewer will send a typed record of the interview to the ECO, who will then consider your answers and make a decision concerning your visa application.

If the ECO still has questions or wishes to clarify any issues regarding your application following the first credibility interview, you may be asked to attend a further telephone interview, for which you could be contacted at any time.

If you fail to attend a scheduled credibility interview and cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for why you did not attend, this may result in your visa application being refused – so it is very important you attend your interview when you are invited to one.

Why does Study Group conduct pre-CAS interviews?

The primary focus of the pre-CAS interview is to prepare you for your credibility interview and reduce your chances of a credibility visa refusal. It is important to note that if you do receive a visa refusal, any subsequent visa applications may also be at a higher risk of being refused.

Pre-CAS interviews also help protect Study Group's licence as an education provider. We are confident that the students we sponsor are genuine and by ensuring that our overall number of visa refusals remains low, we can offer the maximum possibility for you to come and study in the UK.

By coming prepared to your first pre-CAS interview, you can receive your CAS after one interview, thereby dramatically reducing the time between confirming your place on your course and applying for your visa. After your interview, you will receive personalised feedback from our specialised team, which will flag any areas deemed to need developing.

English Language Requirements

The interviewer will expect your English language level to be at the level stated on your CAS letter.

You will be refused a visa if you are unable to communicate your points clearly to the interviewer without using an interpreter. You will be considered unsuitable for UK study if it is necessary for you to accept the services of an interpreter.

What do I need to know for Study Group pre-CAS interviews and UKVI credibility interviews?

In the credibility interview, you may be firstly be asked how much your course will cost, how long your course will last and what qualification you will gain once you complete your course.

As well as this, your answers for the remainder of the interview will need to demonstrate that you have conducted detailed research into your UK education. You should be able to back up all of your responses, including opinions, with objective facts found through research.

Please see sample questions below. You must ensure that you can answer each of the questions below fully and truthfully in the pre-CAS interview and credibility interview.

Why did you choose to study at this institution?

- Consider what your reasons are for choosing to study at this institution. What made this institution stand out from the rest? What facilities and services does the institution provide that attracted you to studying there?

Did you consider any other courses and institutions?

- If your chosen course is run by various institutions you should be able to justify why this one was the top choice, over the others. If you considered studying other subjects, what was it that made you choose this course over others?

Why did you choose to study this course?

- What made this course stand out from the rest? Consider what your reasons are for choosing to study this course over other longer/shorter ones.

What information can you give about the course? What was the last course you studied, and what have you been doing since completing it?

- Think about what you will study on your course and the key details of the course. How does your previous study relate to your chosen course?

- If you have a gap between your last course and the course you are now applying for, what have you been doing during this time? Why have you decided to return to studying now?

What are your future career plans?

- Have you researched any job roles and organisations you might like to work for in the future?
- How much do you expect to earn in this line of work?
- How will this course, institution and a UK education help you achieve your future career plan?

Why have you chosen to study in the UK?

- There are many countries which offer a high standard of education all around the world, so why choose the UK? Why did you choose to study abroad rather than in your home country?
- Where would you live in the UK? Have you looked at accommodation options, even if you have not yet booked anything? Consider your reasons for choosing it.

How will you fund your studies?

- Given the large costs associated with studying abroad, how do you plan to fund the full duration of your UK studies? Who will be funding your studies and what is their salary/income? Is there any extra funding that will help to fund your studies (e.g. savings, loans)?

Previous Visa Applications

- Have you ever previously made a visa application to the UK or any other country, and was this visa refused? If so, please be prepared to give the key details for the refusal.

Common Reasons for Refusal at Interview

From previous credibility visa refusals we have seen, common reasons that interviewers give for refusing a student's visa at interview include:

- Students providing limited reasons for choosing their institution, and providing reasons that also apply to many other institutions.
- Students demonstrated a limited understanding of their future plan and what this would involve.
- Students providing a limited explanation for how the course will help them to achieve their future career plan.
- Students not providing strong, logical reasons for why they are returning to study after a gap in their studies (if applicable).
- Students being unable to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to cover the full duration of their UK studies (i.e. their pathway programme and progression course).

Key Recommendations

	Do		Don't
✓	Check your emails for any correspondence from the UKVI	X	Forget to check your spam folder so that you don't miss any emails
✓	Answer all of the questions honestly and comprehensively - failure to answer all of the questions may result in a visa refusal	X	Be evasive when answering the questions as this may damage your credibility
✓	Ask the interviewer to repeat the question if you do not hear/understand	X	Make up information – any fact you give will be checked by the ECO
✓	Make sure you answer the question before elaborating on your answer	X	Answer any questions with just “yes” or “no”
✓	Remind yourself of your research in detail so that you are prepared for the interview	X	Recite set answers. They may not be relevant to the questions you are asked during interview
✓	Use language you understand and explain, e.g. if you choose your institution because it is a Russell Group university, you need to be able to explain what this means and why it was important when making your final decision.	X	Use phrases that you do not understand from the institution's website
✓	Speak naturally	X	Take notes into the interview with you / read from notes

What if I receive a visa refusal?

If you do not fulfil the criteria in the credibility interview as per the UKVI's Immigration Rules, your Student Visa application will be refused.

If you receive a visa refusal, you have 28 days from the date on the Refusal Letter, to submit an Administrative Review to the UKVI and contest the decision made by the ECO. This requires you to respond in writing to each of the points raised in the refusal and you must submit your Admin Review from outside the UK.

www.gov.uk/ask-for-a-visa-administrative-review

If your credibility visa interview is refused, please contact Study Group as soon as possible. We will assist you to submit an administrative review if we believe you have valid grounds to challenge the Entry Clearance Officer's decision.

For more information, please see the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route>

Please see the links below for more information on Student or Child student visas, depending on your application:

- <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>
- <https://www.gov.uk/child-study-visa>

Contact Details

If you have any questions about the Study Group pre-CAS Interviews, please email:

studentvisainterviews@studygroup.com

If you have any general queries about UK and Europe visas, or about Student and Child student visas, please contact us at:

VisaQuestions@studygroup.com