

International Student Credibility Interview Guidance

What is a credibility interview?

When applying for a Student visa from the UK Government through the UKVI, completing a credibility interview may be part of your application process. The purpose of this interview is to determine whether your intention to study in the UK is genuine. When completing the interview, you will need to be able to demonstrate that your English language ability is sufficient to study your chosen programme.

If you are called to an interview by the UKVI, then you must attend. If you fail to attend the interview, then your visa is likely to be refused.

Will I be invited to a credibility interview?

Any applicant for a Student visa can be called for an interview, though it is less likely if you are applying from a country on the Differential Evidence Requirements list found on the UK Government website [here](#). It is good practice to assume that you will be called for an interview, and make the necessary preparations. Certain students are more likely to be called to an interview, so we require these students to pass a practice credibility interview before issuing a CAS. We always require students from Bangladesh, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Sub-Saharan Africa to pass this practice interview, as historically these countries are most likely to be invited to a credibility interview by the UKVI. However, anyone from any country can be called for a credibility interview.

If I do get selected for an interview, when and how will this take place?

If you are applying for your visa from outside the UK, the interview will usually be scheduled to take place online via a video interview with a Home Office caseworker based in the UK. The interview usually lasts around 20 minutes, but it can be longer.

The interview invitation details will be sent to you via email, and you need to confirm that you will attend. If you cannot attend the interview for any reason, you should notify the Home Office immediately so they can look to reschedule. You must have completed your biometrics before you attend your interview.

How can I prepare?

As part of your application to receive a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) statement from us, we may require you to complete a practice credibility interview with us. We will let you know if this is the case when you login to our CAS Shield system.

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The practice credibility interview is in place to ensure that you are sufficiently prepared for a credibility interview with the Home Office if you are invited to one. If we don't believe you are likely to pass a credibility interview, we will not issue you a CAS. If you conduct an interview with us through CAS Shield, you will answer questions we require within the system, and your answers will be assessed by one of our team. Sometimes, we may invite you to a face-to-face interview with a member of the CAS team, which will take place online via a video call.

You can be given more than one chance to pass our practice credibility interview, and it is important that if you do not pass your first credibility interview, that you undertake more research in order to gain the knowledge you need to pass. If you are seen to be reading from a script in your practice interview, it is likely you will be failed and have no further chances to pass, so it is important to sufficiently prepare without notes. You will not get a second chance to pass your interview with the UKVI – if you do not pass, your visa will be refused on the grounds of credibility.

The UKVI will also be assessing the strength of your English language when undertaking the credibility interview. As part of the admissions process to the University of Greenwich, you will need to have achieved a minimum level of English in order to receive an offer, however, as part of the credibility interview, we will also assess whether your current English language level is at a sufficient level. It is important that your English language ability is strong enough to pass the interview, as well as study your chosen programme.

What sort of questions can I expect?

In addition to assessing your English language ability, the purpose of the credibility interview is to ascertain whether the reasons for you wanting to come to the UK and study are genuine. The UKVI will ask a variety of questions that aim to assess this, as well as assess how much research you have done before making your choice to study in the UK, to study at the University of Greenwich, and the programme you have chosen.

We also may ask some unexpected questions, such as what is your favourite book or television show. This is not to catch you out, but to ensure that you are prepared that there may be questions that the interviewer asks that you may not expect, and that you can engage in natural conversation.

There are a variety of questions that may be asked, but the following topics can be used as a guide to prepare for your interview, both with our CAS team before your interview (if applicable) or with the UKVI. You should ensure that you can answer these questions in detail and be able to provide specific evidence as to why you have made your decisions.

Reasons for study

Why did you choose to study in the UK?

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Think about why studying in the UK will benefit you more than studying in your home country, or instead another English-speaking country

How will the experience of studying in the UK and outside of your home country be of benefit to you? Check the British Council website <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/why-study>

What other countries did you consider when assessing your options, such as the USA, Canada or Australia? What other universities did you consider in those countries? Why did you not choose them? Think about the cost, the duration of the programme, and your relationship to the UK over other countries.

Why did you choose the University of Greenwich?

Think about the reasons why the University of Greenwich was your top choice when studying in the UK. What stood out to you? What other universities did you consider, and why did you choose Greenwich instead of them?

Think about the facilities offered at the University of Greenwich. Do some research on our website, particularly on Student Life <https://www.gre.ac.uk/study/student-experience>

About the University of Greenwich

Where is the University of Greenwich, and what campus are you going to be studying at? Think about how you will travel to university, or if you are staying in university accommodation, why did you choose it? Research more about our campuses here <https://www.gre.ac.uk/about-us/campus>

The University of Greenwich recently merged with the University of Kent to create the London and South East University Group. Students still apply to each university separately, and graduate from the separate institution. You can find more information about this merger here <https://www.gre.ac.uk/lase> and here <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/institution-details/10007146/>.

How large is the University of Greenwich? How many international students do we have and how does that compare to other universities that you considered? Find some useful stats here <https://www.ucas.com/explore/unis/2c82b225/university-of-greenwich/stats>.

Do you know anyone who has previously studied at the University of Greenwich? Did friends or family influence your decision to study with us? Do you have any connections to the UK and/or the university?

Is there a welcome programme or a meet and greet service available for international students?

Check out some of these links to help with your research

<https://www.gre.ac.uk/visa/when-you-arrive>

<https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/university-greenwich>

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<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/universities/university-of-greenwich-london>

Your chosen programme

Why did you choose your programme?

Think about the process you went through on deciding your programme and how it relates to any previous study. What attracted you to the programme? Did you undertake research through any specific websites and or comparisons online?

What do you know about your programme? How long is it? What qualification will you receive? What is the structure of the course? What specific modules you are interested in studying?

You might also be asked for technical details of your specialism. What impact might your course have on the country you are from?

How much do you know about the programme and the modules you will be studying? What are the names or topics of some of the modules you will study? How long will the programme last? Make sure to research the details of your programme, the modules, the location and the outcomes of the programme on the programme webpage - <https://www.gre.ac.uk/subjects>. Research the specific modules you will be studying, and think about why they relate to your chosen career path and previous study history.

How will the programme help you to achieve your chosen career path?

How is your programme assessed? Check the University website: <https://www.gre.ac.uk/subjects>. Is your programme assessed by exam, presentations, or coursework? Is your programme accredited by a professional body that will enhance your learning?

Academic history

What have you previously studied?

What academic qualifications do you have? What English language test did you use to apply to the University of Greenwich?

How will your chosen programme enhance the subjects you have already studied? If it is different to what you have previously studied, why are you looking to change your career path?

Have you always been in full time education, or do you have any gaps in your study history? Can you explain any gaps in your studies? Explain why and what you did during those gaps, and the reason you have decided to return to studies. If you are a mature student, why are you ready to return to studies now? Do you currently have a job that relates to your chosen programme?

Finances

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Who will be paying for your studies?

Are you paying for your studies yourself, or are your studies being paid for by your parents or a sponsor? If your parents are financing you, you could be asked how they are able to do this. Make sure you know what income and savings they have, how they have been able to afford to send you to the UK. If you are sponsored, why are you being sponsored and do you have a relationship with your sponsor, either by employment or through education. Is your sponsor providing funds for both your tuition fees and maintenance funds?

Be very clear about the source of your funds which you have submitted evidence of with your application and be sure that you can justify where the source of this money is from.

If your programme is longer than a year - how do you plan to pay for your fees and living costs in subsequent years?

If you are receiving an educational loan, what is this secured against and what are the terms of repayment for it?

You should know how much your accommodation in the UK will cost and what your living expenses will be. Remember to talk about financial support from parents, or perhaps any savings you have.

Do you know how many hours maximum you can work in the UK, and what the likely hourly rate is? You should **not** be relying on work to cover your tuition fees and finance but be sure you know what the regulations are in terms of working while you study. Take a look at this website <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student-advice/working/student-work/>

Immigration history

Have you previously applied for a Student visa, or other visa to enter the UK? What other countries have you visited? Have you previously had a visa refusal?

You may be asked about your previous immigration record – the different types of visas you have had (or applied for) and where and when they were granted. You may also be asked about any prior visa refusals to any country.

Make sure you know your responsibilities as a Student visa holder - have a look at the UKCISA website guidance which tells you more about protecting your Student status: www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Protecting-your-Student-status

Future plans

What are your plans after you have graduated?

Think about your future plans, whether you wish to continue studying in the UK at a higher level, return to your home country to find a job and what you sort of job you expect to find once you

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have graduated. Do you know what the average wage you can expect in a graduate job in your home country?

Receiving a visa refusal

If your visa is refused for any reason it is essential that you let the University know straight away by emailing casrequests@gre.ac.uk. The refusal letter will advise you if you have the right of administrative review. There is a deadline to submit a request for administrative review so make sure you apply in-time. More details can be found on the Home Office website <https://www.gov.uk/ask-for-a-visa-administrative-review/if-youre-outside-the-uk> or contact the International Student Advice Service at internationaladvice@gre.ac.uk.

Important information and updating us

If you receive a positive visa decision, be sure to update us on this by updating your record on CAS Shield. You should receive multiple reminders to update us on your visa status, including when you applied and when you are scheduled for a credibility interview, if applicable. Be sure to keep us updated through CAS Shield at each stage of your visa application process so we can prepare for your arrival.

If you receive a visa refusal, you must not apply for another student visa with the same CAS number. If you submit another application with the same CAS, that application will automatically be refused. You can only use a CAS number once. Ensure you contact us as soon as possible if you receive a visa refusal, attaching a copy of it onto CAS Shield and updating your profile there as soon as possible, so we can advise you on what to do next. Depending on the reason for your refusal, we may issue you another CAS, but this is on a case-by-case basis and cannot be guaranteed. It may depend on the reason for your refusal.

Useful tips and links

When answering interview questions, speak naturally, as if you were having a conversation with a friend or a family member. The interviewer will be looking for fluency in the answers and for signs indicating that a student may have been 'coached'. If they believe you may have been coached, your visa may be refused.

You may want to research more information in preparation for your interview. We recommend using some of the following information sources to prepare, as well as the links throughout this document.

Why study in the UK? <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/why-study>

Applying for a visa from outside the UK - <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student-advice/visas-and-immigration/student-route-applying-outside-of-the-uk/>

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Applying for a visa from inside the UK - <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student-advice/visas-and-immigration/student-route-applying-in-the-uk/>

Preparing and planning - www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Preparation-and-Arrival/Choosing-a-course

UKVI Student Route Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-route-caseworker-guidance>

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