

University of **Kent**

CREDIBILITY INTERVIEWS

Guidance And Preparation For International Students

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Section 1: Understanding credibility interviews

As an international student applying to study at the University of Kent, you may be required to complete **two separate credibility interviews** during your journey to study in the UK:

1. University of Kent Pre-CAS Interview

This takes place before we decide whether to issue your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and forms part of the University's own CAS assessment and credibility checks.

2. UKVI credibility interview

After receiving your CAS and submitting your Student visa application, you may also be invited to attend a separate credibility interview with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), as part of the visa application process.

Although these interviews take place at different stages and are assessed separately, both are designed to assess whether you are a genuine student and whether your intention to study in the UK is credible.

You should therefore take both interviews seriously and prepare thoroughly. A credibility interview is more than a routine formality or a basic memory test. You should be able to demonstrate that you have researched your study choices, understand the decisions you have made and can explain your own circumstances, intentions and plans clearly, naturally and honestly.

Important: Receiving an academic offer or paying a tuition fee deposit does **not** guarantee that the University will issue you with a CAS. You must successfully complete all CAS assessment and credibility checks required by the University.

Similarly, **successfully completing the University's Pre-CAS Interview and receiving a CAS does not guarantee that your Student visa will be granted.** UKVI will make its own decision on your visa application and carry out its own credibility assessment.

Section 2: Your University of Kent Pre-CAS Interview

As part of the CAS assessment process, some applicants will be required to complete a **Pre-CAS Interview** before the University can decide whether to issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

The interview forms part of our credibility checks and allows us to learn more about you, your reasons for choosing to study at Kent and your plans as an international student.

Your Pre-CAS Interview is a **real credibility assessment and should be taken seriously**. It is not a practice or mock interview. However, the experience can also help you prepare for the types of questions and level of detail that may be expected if you are later invited to a credibility interview with UKVI.



How will I complete my interview?

Your Pre-CAS Interview will be completed through [CAS Shield](#), the online platform used by the University to manage the entire CAS assessment process.

The interview is recorded rather than live, which means you can complete it at a suitable time without needing to book an appointment with the Pre-CAS Support Team.

You will be asked a series of questions and given time to record your response to each one.

Listen carefully to each question and make sure that the answer you submit is the answer you want us to assess.

Members of the University's Pre-CAS Support Team then carefully review your completed interview. In rare instances, we may invite you to a follow-up meeting with the Pre-CAS Support Team to clarify or expand upon the responses provided in your recorded interview.

Please note: your interview outcome is not decided automatically by CAS Shield.



Check your equipment before you begin

Before starting your interview, make sure you have:

- a suitable device with a working camera and microphone;
- a stable internet connection;
- a quiet and private place where you can complete the interview alone; and
- your original passport ready for the identity check.

Test your camera, microphone and internet connection before you begin. You are responsible for making sure that your equipment is working correctly and that your responses can be clearly seen and heard.

Before your interview begins....

At the beginning of your interview, you will be asked to complete an identity and surroundings check. You will need to:

- have your original passport available;
- read the Pre-Interview Statement shown to you;
- clearly show your passport when instructed;
- confirm your current location; and
- show a clear 360-degree view of your surroundings.

You should complete your interview **alone, in a quiet and private environment**, with a working camera and microphone and a stable internet connection.

Read and follow all instructions carefully. If we are unable to clearly confirm your identity or surroundings, or there are significant technical problems with your recording, you may be asked to re-record the identity and surroundings check. **Please be aware that if you are asked to re-record this part of your interview, it may take longer for your Pre-CAS Interview to be reviewed and your outcome confirmed**

Complete your interview independently

Your Pre-CAS Interview must be completed **independently and without assistance from another person**.

Nobody else should be in the room with you or help you answer the questions. You should not receive prompts, answers or guidance from another person during your interview, either in the room or remotely.

Your responses must be your own and should reflect **your own knowledge, research and personal circumstances**. You should not read from notes, a script or prepared answers while recording your responses. You also should not have other browser windows open to refer to during your recording.

Concerns about whether an interview has been completed independently, or whether the responses genuinely reflect the applicant's own knowledge, may negatively affect the outcome of the University's credibility assessment.

What are we assessing?

We're looking for genuine answers, not perfect ones.

You do not need to speak as though you have memorised a presentation or script. We want to understand whether you have genuinely researched and considered your decision to study at Kent and whether you can explain your choices and plans in your own words.

During our assessment, we may consider your:

- knowledge and understanding of your chosen course;
- reasons for choosing the University of Kent and the UK;
- academic background and how this relates to your proposed studies;
- financial circumstances and understanding of how your studies will be funded;
- accommodation and living plans;
- future career and post-study plans;
- understanding of any relevant Student visa requirements;
- English Language and ability to understand and respond to the questions asked; and
- overall credibility and authenticity of the information you provide.

Remember: It is normal to feel nervous, and we understand that you may need a moment to think about your answers. What is important is that you have prepared properly, listen carefully to the questions and answer honestly and naturally based on your own research, circumstances and plans.

Section 3: UKVI credibility interviews

After receiving your CAS and submitting your Student visa application, you may also be invited to attend a credibility interview with **UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)**.

This interview is separate from your University of Kent Pre-CAS Interview. Receiving a CAS means that the University has agreed to sponsor your studies; however, UKVI will make its own decision on your Student visa application.

Who may be invited to a UKVI credibility interview?

Any Student visa applicant may be asked to attend a credibility interview as part of their visa application.

Applicants who meet the **Differential Evidence Requirement** may normally be required to provide fewer supporting documents with their Student visa application. **However, this does not remove the requirement to satisfy UKVI that you are a genuine student, and you should still be prepared for the possibility of a credibility interview.**

You can check whether your nationality is currently included under the Differential Evidence Requirement in the official UK Government guidance. [Check the current Differential Evidence Requirement on GOV.UK](#)

What to expect from a UKVI credibility interview

If UKVI decides that you need to attend a credibility interview, you will be contacted with instructions explaining when and how your interview will take place.

UKVI interviews may be conducted in different ways depending on your circumstances and location. **Read your interview invitation carefully and follow the instructions provided by UKVI.**

Make sure that you:

- check your email regularly, including your junk or spam folder;
- read the interview instructions carefully;
- attend your interview at the date and time specified; and
- follow any instructions about confirming your attendance or providing identification.

If you are unable to attend for a genuine reason, follow the instructions provided by UKVI and contact them as soon as possible. **Do not simply miss or ignore your interview.**

Failure to attend without a reasonable explanation may affect your Student visa application.

If your interview takes place by video or telephone, make sure you are in a suitable environment and can communicate clearly throughout the interview.

Be prepared for follow-up questions

UKVI may ask **follow-up questions based on the answers you give**. Be prepared to explain your answers in more detail and show that you genuinely understand the reasons behind your study choices and plans.

Do not use phrases or reasons just because they sound impressive. Make sure you understand what you are saying and why it is relevant to you.

This is why thorough preparation is important. Understanding your own research and decisions is more important than memorising prepared answers.

You should always check the latest Student visa guidance on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/student-visa-guidance) when preparing your visa application and credibility interview.

Useful Visa Guidance:

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/>

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

Student visa route - [Student route: caseworker guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/student-visa-route-caseworker-guidance) - GOV.UK

Your CAS does not guarantee your visa

Successfully completing your University of Kent Pre-CAS Interview and receiving a CAS does not guarantee that your Student visa application will be successful.

UKVI carries out its own assessment and will make its own decision on your Student visa application.

Receiving your Student visa decision

Keep us updated

Once you have submitted your Student visa application, make sure you keep the University updated on the progress and outcome of your application through **CAS Shield**.

This includes updating your visa application status and providing any information or documents requested by the University. Keeping your record up to date helps us support you through the CAS and visa process and prepare for your arrival at Kent.

If your Student visa is refused

If your Student visa application is refused, **tell the University as soon as possible and upload a copy of your full refusal notice and visa application to CAS Shield.**

Please do not submit another Student visa application before you have carefully reviewed the reasons for the refusal and received any appropriate advice.

Your refusal decision will tell you whether you have the right to request an **administrative review**. An administrative review asks the Home Office to review the decision if you believe an error was made. Strict deadlines and eligibility apply, so you should read your decision carefully and check the current [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) guidance as soon as possible.

Important: your CAS after a visa refusal

A CAS is used to support a Student visa application and can only be used once. If your Student visa application is refused and you decide to apply again, you will need a new CAS. **You cannot re-use the CAS from your refused visa application.**

The University will review the circumstances of your refusal before deciding whether another CAS can be issued. **A new CAS is not guaranteed and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.**

Useful guidance

- [Administrative review if you applied from outside the UK — GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/administrative-review-if-you-applied-from-outside-the-uk)
- [Administrative review if you applied from inside the UK — GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/administrative-review-if-you-applied-from-inside-the-uk)
- [Student visa and immigration advice — UKCISA](https://www.ukcisa.gov.uk/)

Section 4: Preparing for your credibility interview

The following guidance will help you prepare for both a **University of Kent Pre-CAS Interview** and a **UKVI credibility interview**.

Good preparation is one of the most important things you can do before a credibility interview. You are not expected to memorise large amounts of information or prepare a perfect answer for every possible question.

Instead, you should carry out your **own research**, understand the choices you have made and be able to explain them clearly and naturally in your own words.

Your answers should be personal to you. You should be able to explain why you chose your course, why you chose Kent and the UK, how you plan to fund your studies and how your course relates to your future plans.

IMPORTANT: General information that could apply to almost any student, course or university may not demonstrate that you have properly researched or genuinely considered your study choices.

“Research it. Understand it. Explain it”

Research it – Carry out thorough research into your course, Kent, studying and living in the UK, your finances and the relevant Student visa requirements.

Understand it – Don't just collect facts. Think about how the information relates to **you**, your previous experience, your circumstances and your future plans.

Explain it – Be prepared to discuss your choices naturally in your own words. If you genuinely understand the decisions you have made, you should be able to explain them even when you are asked an unexpected or follow-up question.

Know your course

Useful research: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/courses>

You should have a good understanding of the course you have applied to study. This should go beyond simply knowing the course title or being able to name modules.

Research the structure and content of your course and think about **why you chose it**. You should be able to discuss areas or modules that genuinely interest you, what you expect to learn and how the course relates to your previous education, experience or future plans.

If you are changing subject area, returning to education after a break from study or studying at a different academic level, think carefully about why this course is the right next step for you.

Good preparation: understanding what you will study and being able to explain why particular aspects of the course are relevant or interesting to you.

Poor preparation: memorising module names from the course webpage without understanding what they involve or why you want to study them.

Understand your academic background

You should be prepared to discuss your previous education and explain how it relates to the course you now intend to study.

Think about your previous qualifications, subjects and study experience, and how these have influenced your decision to pursue your chosen course. If your new course is in a different subject area or at a different academic level, you should be able to explain why you have chosen this direction and how it fits with your plans.

If there has been a significant gap since you last studied, be prepared to explain what you have been doing during that time and why you have decided to return to education now.

Your academic journey does not need to follow a perfectly straight path. What is important is that you understand the choices you have made and can explain them clearly and honestly.

Why Kent?



Useful research:

Explore student life at Kent: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/student-life>

Learn more about LASE University Group: <https://www.lase.ac.uk/>

You should be able to explain **why you chose the University of Kent specifically**, rather than giving reasons that could apply to almost any UK University.

Think about the research you carried out before making your decision. This could include aspects of your course, academic opportunities, facilities, resources, location or other features of the University that genuinely influenced your choice.

You should also be aware that the **University of Kent is part of LASE University Group**, alongside the University of Greenwich. Take some time to understand what LASE University Group is and what this means for students studying at Kent.

Simply saying that Kent has a good reputation, high-quality education or good facilities may not provide enough information on its own. Be prepared to explain **what specifically interested you and why it mattered to you**.

If you considered other universities, you should also understand what influenced your final decision to choose Kent.

Good preparation: identifying specific things you discovered during your research and understanding why they were important to your decision.

Poor preparation: learning a ranking, statistic or list of facilities simply because you think it is what an interviewer wants to hear.

Why the UK?

Useful research: [Why study in the UK | Study UK](#)

Your decision to study in another country is a significant one, so you should have genuinely considered **why the UK is the right study destination for you**.

Think about the research you carried out into studying in the UK and how your chosen course and study experience fit your own academic and career plans.

Avoid relying only on very general statements such as “the UK has a high-quality education system” or “UK degrees are internationally recognised”. These statements do not explain why **you personally** decided that studying in the UK was the right choice.

If you considered studying in your home country or another country, be prepared to explain the research and considerations that influenced your final decision.

Understand your finances

Useful research: <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/money>

You should clearly understand **how your studies in the UK will be funded**.

You should know your tuition fees, understand your expected living costs and be able to explain where the money for your studies will come from. If somebody else is funding your studies, you should understand who they are, their relationship to you and how your studies are being funded.

IMPORTANT: The information you provide during your interview should be consistent with your application and financial documents.

You should also research the **current UKVI financial requirements for a student visa** using official [GOV.UK guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance). Do not rely solely on information provided by friends, agents or social media, as immigration requirements can change.

Accommodation and living in the UK

Useful research: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/accommodation/international>

Before your interview, research where you intend to live during your studies.

You should have considered the type of accommodation you intend to use, its location, approximate cost and how you will travel between your accommodation and the University.

You do not necessarily need to have finalised your accommodation at the time of your interview, but you should be able to demonstrate that you have **thought realistically about where and how you will live** while studying at Kent.

You should also be familiar with the location of your campus and the town or city in which you will be studying.

Understand your immigration history

UKVI may consider your previous immigration history when assessing whether you are a genuine student.

You should be familiar with your previous visa and immigration history in the UK and other countries. This may include previous visa applications, any visa refusals, time you have previously spent in the UK or elsewhere and whether you complied with the conditions of previous visas.

If you have previously had a visa application refused, make sure you understand the reason for the refusal and can explain your circumstances accurately.

IMPORTANT: Be open and honest about your immigration history. The information you provide should be consistent with the information included in your visa application and any previous applications.

Think about your future plans

You should have considered what you intend to do after completing your course.

Your plans may change over time, and you are not expected to predict your entire career. However, you should be able to explain how your proposed studies relate to your current ambitions and what you hope to achieve after graduating.

Think about the type of work or further study you may wish to pursue, where you currently intend to develop your career and how the knowledge and skills gained from your course may help you achieve your goals.

If your plans involve remaining in the UK after your studies, you should research and understand the [relevant UK immigration requirements](#).

IMPORTANT: Completing a UK degree does not automatically give you the right to remain in the UK permanently

Section 5: Are you ready for your credibility interview?

Before completing your interview, ask yourself:

- ☐ Have I researched my course and do I understand why I chose it?
- ☐ Can I explain why I chose the University of Kent and the UK?
- ☐ Do I understand how my studies will be funded?
- ☐ Have I researched where I intend to live and the cost of living in the UK?
- ☐ Can I explain how my course relates to my previous studies, experience or future plans?
- ☐ Can I explain my academic background, including any changes in subject, level of study or gaps in my education?
- ☐ Do I understand my previous immigration history, including any previous visa refusals, and can I explain it accurately and clearly if asked?
- ☐ Have I checked the relevant Student visa requirements using official GOV.UK guidance?
- ☐ Have I prepared independently, without relying on scripts or prepared answers?
- ☐ Am I ready to explain my choices and plans in my own words?

Take time to prepare

A credibility interview is an important part of your journey to study in the UK. Give yourself enough time to research your choices, understand your plans and prepare properly.

You do not need to have perfect answers. **Be honest, be prepared and be ready to explain your own decisions in your own words.**