The Journey of a Student Visa Applicant

CAS TEAM PROCEDURE

We will cover:

- What is a CAS?
- The Student visa applicant's journey
- What are the possible hold-ups?
- Does the CAS team only deal with CAS-eligible students?

What is a CAS?

- ‘Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies’
- 14-16 digit code
- Unique to that student, sponsor and course
- Contains a representation of the full assessment made by that sponsor

E.g. *E4F8HG0F32C0T4*

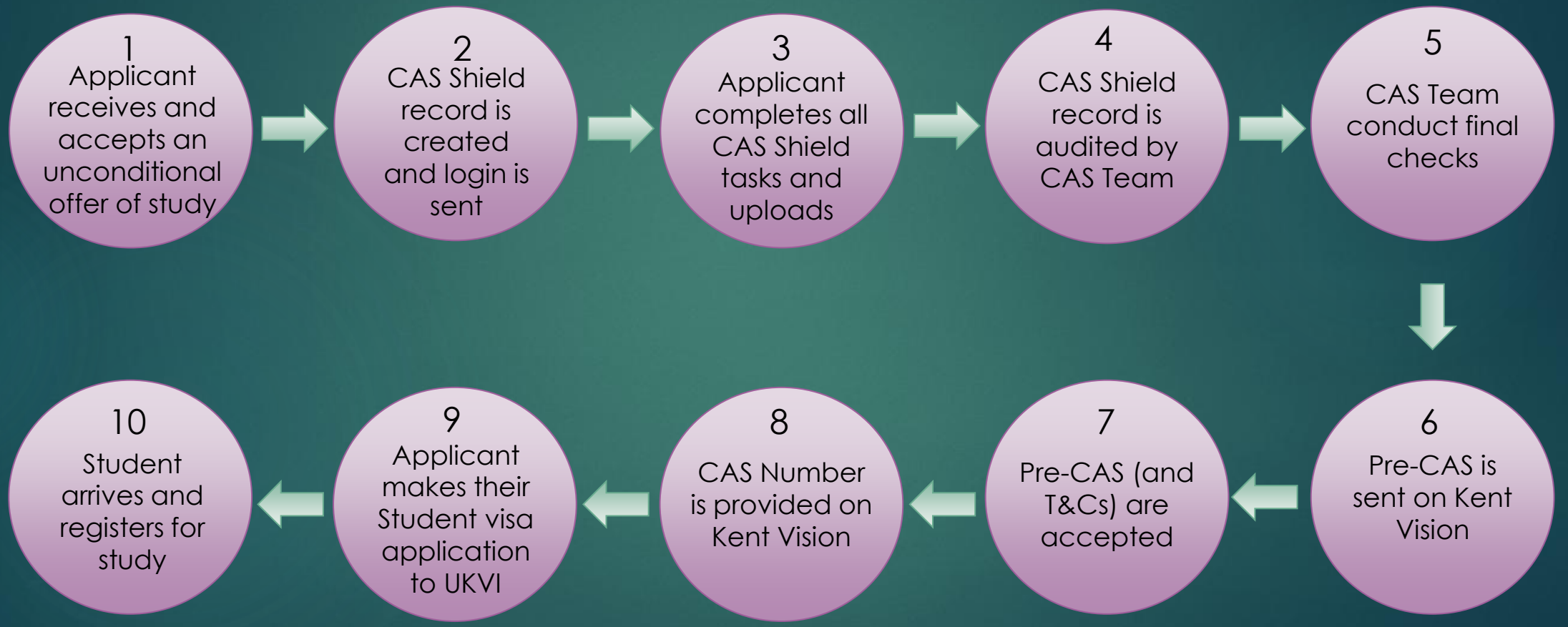
A CAS cannot be amended once issued

Agent details on CAS - ensuring your details are correct

- Agent details are now required to be listed on a CAS under UKVI rules
- Kent Agents contact: agents@kent.ac.uk
- Important to ensure that changes to addresses are up to date in line with compliance requirements

- **Please ensure you are tagged to applications at the start of the application process**

The visa applicant's journey



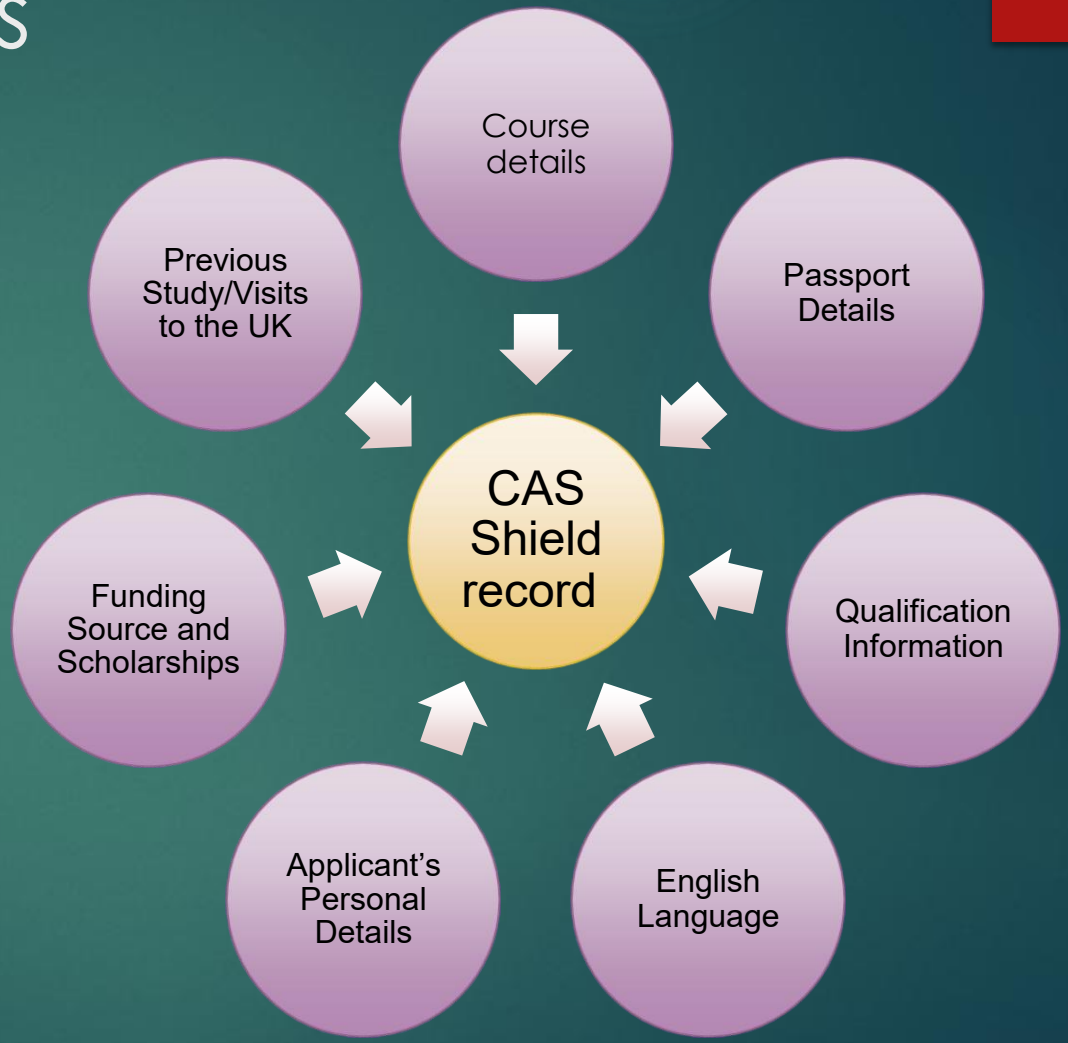
1. Applicant receives and accepts an unconditional offer of study

- This the first stage that the CAS team is made aware of eligible students for sponsorship
- We are not automatically notified of fee and visa status, so it is essential that applications for study are accurate at submission
- We assess each applicant individually to determine whether they meet the requirements for a CAS, in order to apply for a Student visa
- The academic assessment and the CAS assessment are separate – an offer of study does not guarantee CAS issuance
- Applicants are transferred into CAS Shield automatically

2. CAS Shield Record is created and login is sent

All information given on the Kent Vision application will feed into CAS Shield, so it is essential this is up to date and accurate.

The email address provided on the application is the email that will automatically be used to set up the CAS Shield record, so please make sure this is correct before accepting an unconditional offer on behalf of an applicant.



3. Applicant completes all CAS Shield tasks and uploads

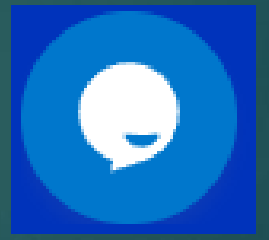
- Applicants are sent a welcome message once they are UF and been transferred to CAS Shield via contact@cas-shield.com.
- They will have several tasks to complete to be eligible for a full CAS assessment by a member of the CAS Team, which will usually include:
  - Completing an information checklist of questions
  - Uploading general and financial documents
  - Completing an interview request
  - Completing a Pre-CAS Questionnaire
  - Paying a £5,000 Pre-CAS Tuition Fee Deposit
- The CAS Team tracks applicant progress to see who is ready for a full CAS assessment
- Tagged agents have access to CAS Shield, as they do with Kent Vision
- Guidance on the CAS process can be found via https://www.kent.ac.uk/student-immigration/cas/apply-cas-new

3. Applicants completes all CAS Shield tasks and uploads - continued

CAS Shield includes a messaging service for applicants and agents to use if they have any queries or need assistance from the CAS Team



CAS Shield also includes a technical issues chat direct to the CAS Shield team.



4. CAS Shield Record is audited by CAS Team

The Academic Review

What was their offer based on?

What English Language do they hold?

What course have they been accepted for?

Does that course have additional requirements, e.g. ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme)

The immigration review

Does their application indicate they've been to the UK previously?

Are they a genuine student?

Do they need an IHC (Immigration History Check)?

Are they from a country that needs a pre-CAS interview or TB test certificate?

The financial review

Are they from a low-risk country (Differential Evidence List)?

Does their application indicate financial hardship?

Have they paid their deposit?

Have they completed the Financial plan and uploaded acceptable financial documents?

5. CAS Team conduct final checks

- Once all tasks and uploads are completed by the applicant and the CAS assessment is successfully complete by a member of staff on CAS Shield, the application is ready for a **final check**

- The CAS application is reviewed again by a **second CAS team member** as best practice before CAS issuance

6. Pre-CAS is sent on Kent Vision

- The Pre-CAS is a reduced version of the CAS Record and represents a draft version of the final CAS that the applicant will receive
- The actions ask you to 'accept' or 'not accept' the details as being correct
- If the pre-CAS is not accept, you will need to complete a mandatory text box stating why, then we get an automatic in-tray message stating what is believed to be wrong with the pre-CAS
- We then check whatever is highlighted as incorrect, amend (if applicable) and resend the pre-CAS for approval
- Applicants should be encouraged to check this themselves rather than have you check this for them.

It is essential that the pre-CAS is checked fully before being accepted, as that is the last chance for any amendments to be made – no changes can be made after a CAS is issued.

7. Pre-CAS (and T&Cs) are accepted

- Two stage acceptance on Kent Vision:
  1. Accept the pre-CAS details are correct
  2. Accept the terms and conditions of sponsorship

- No in-tray message is generated for the for CAS team – applicants ready for final issuance are checked each working day

- Applicants are not automatically issued a CAS – they must all complete the two-stage acceptance above

8. A CAS Number is provided on Kent Vision

- The CAS is created and paid for by the University of Kent on UKVI's Sponsorship Management System (SMS)
- The final CAS Number is then sent via Kent Vision once purchased from UKVI
- The data provided in the CAS Shield record for the CAS assessment is now locked and cannot be amended
- New uploads and information requests will now become available in CAS Shield – these can include:
  - A copy of the visa application submission
  - Details on the travel and accommodation arrangements
  - A copy of the decision letter/email
  - A share code to confirm the applicant's visa status from UKVI when granted

9. Applicant makes their Student visa application to UKVI

- Once an applicant has their CAS Number they can submit their visa application to UKVI. They will need to submit all relevant documents and information to Home Office as part of the visa application.
- The CAS Team are not permitted to assist or advise on the Student visa application process.
- The Immigration Advisors at the Kent Union Advice Centre may be able to assist if an applicant needs guidance and they can be contacted via advice@kent.ac.uk.
- They also have a step-by-step guide about completing and submitting a visa application on their webpages at https://ksu.co.uk/advice/international-students-and-visas#applying-for-a-student-visa-in-the-uk.
- Once the visa application is submitted they will then have to wait for a decision from Home Office.
- The applicant will either be granted entry via the Student visa route or be given a refusal of entry clearance.

Refusal of Entry Clearance

- Failure to meet the Immigration rules results in a refusal
- Refusals are held against the student **and** the sponsor
- Kent and UKVI also keep a record of the agent that any refused applicants are working with
- Refusals can be based on:
  - **Credibility**, **finances**, academic ability, English language ability, criminal convictions, lack of TB certificate, ATAS etc.
- The most common reason for refusal at the moment is poor performance at credibility interview with UKVI. Good preparation in this area is therefore essential. Please visit https://www.kent.ac.uk/international/credibility-interviews for detailed up to date guidance on preparing for credibility interview.

- "**Sponsorship is a privilege and not a right**. Sponsors benefit directly from migration and are expected to play a part in ensuring that the system is not abused. Sponsors must therefore fulfil certain duties, in order to ensure that immigration control is maintained. Providers must be able to show that they can fulfil, and are fulfilling, these sponsor duties in order to gain and retain a Student sponsor licence."

Guiding Principles – GOV.uk sponsorship duties for Student visa licence holders

BCA Metrics

- Traffic light system implemented by UKVI

- 5% refusal rate limit
- 95% enrolment rate minimum requirement
- 90% course completion minimum requirement

- Metric numbers are now tighter and public making robust and thorough assessment even more important
- UKVI are using the agent details declared on CAS to monitor agent performance

10. Student arrives and registers for study

- Applicants will need to make an e-Visa, link a travel document and confirm leave dates with a share code
- Some applicants may be able to register before they get a decision on their visa application from UKVI, but this only applies to applicants applying for their Student visa from within the UK
- More guidance on preparing for registration and the information and documents you need to provide to complete that process can be found via https://www.kent.ac.uk/welcome/international-students
- Enrolment and registration opens in late August for courses starting in September, and usually in the new year for courses starting in January

What are the possible hold-ups?

- Incorrect financial evidence
- Missing document uploads (e.g. passport and qualifications) in CAS Shield
- Incomplete CAS Shield tasks
- Deposit not paid
- Incorrect or missing Agent details
- Last minute changes to applications
- Lack of engagement – "Ghost applicants"

Does the CAS team only deal with students who need a CAS to study?

- We are required to ensure every student has permission to study with us
- We must ensure applicants with leave through other visa routes can register for study at Kent
- Commonly reviewed statuses include:
  - Asylum/Refugee
  - Leave to Remain
  - Indefinite Leave to Remain/Settlement
  - Workers
  - Dependants
  - EU Settlement Scheme – Settled and Pre-settled status

Further reading

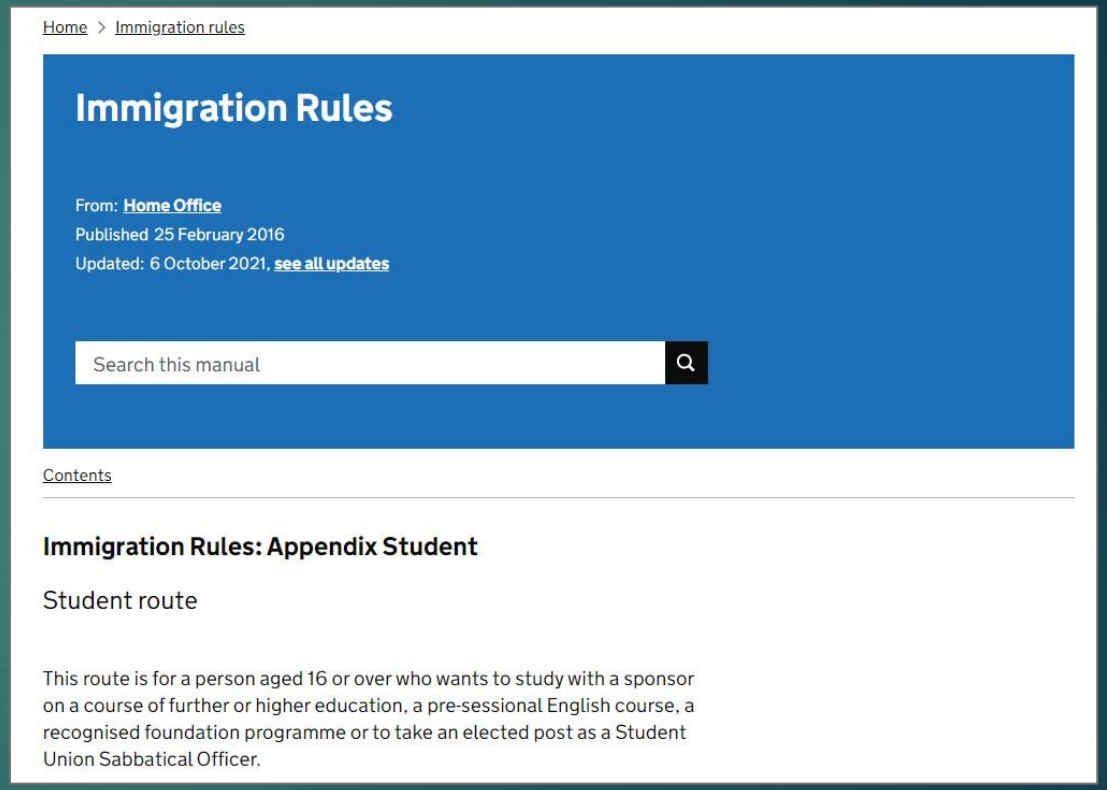
www.kent.ac.uk/studentimmigration

www.kent.ac.uk/student-immigration/cas/apply-cas-new



Further reading

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student



Home > Immigration rules

Immigration Rules

From: **Home Office**
Published 25 February 2016
Updated: 6 October 2021, **see all updates**

Search this manual

Contents

Immigration Rules: Appendix Student

Student route

This route is for a person aged 16 or over who wants to study with a sponsor on a course of further or higher education, a pre-sessional English course, a recognised foundation programme or to take an elected post as a Student Union Sabbatical Officer.

Time for Questions

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

PREPARE THE STUDENT, NOT THE SCRIPT: THE KEY TO INTERVIEW SUCCESS.

Credibility interviews | Guidance for international recruitment agents

Why does this matter

Credibility concerns have real consequences for applicants and the University.

- Almost one-third of unsuccessful interviews in the September 2026 intake involved heavily scripted responses.
- We are seeing generic, rehearsed responses and repeated wording across applicants.
- IMPORTANT: An academic offer, deposit or CAS does NOT guarantee a visa.

Two interviews. Two separate decisions.

Know which stage your applicant is preparing for.

- Pre-CAS Interview: recorded in CAS Shield; reviewed by the Pre-CAS Support Team.
- UKVI credibility interview: may follow the CAS and Student visa application.
- **A successful CAS assessment from Kent does not guarantee UKVI approval**.

The most important boundary

There is a difference between preparing an applicant and supplying an answer.

- DO: explain the process and encourage applicants to look at the important information and resources provided by the University of Kent.
- DO: ask students to research and reflect on their own decisions, research, knowledge and motivations for study.
- DO NOT: give scripts, model responses or phrases to memorise.
- DO NOT: prompt, assist or sit with students during recording.

Why identical answers raise concerns

An impressive-sounding answer is not necessarily a credible one.

- Generic claims do not show why a particular student made a choice.
- Repeated wording can mask genuine personal knowledge and motivation.
- Unexpected questions can expose gaps in an applicant’s knowledge and understanding

From generic to personal

Teach the student to investigate the “why” behind each decision.

- Course: Which content interests them, and how does it fit their background?
- Kent and the UK: Which researched features influenced their choice?
- Future: How does this course fit in with their own ambitions?

Preparation goes beyond course choice

Applicants should understand the practical reality of their study plans and should be prepared to discuss this in detail.

- Funding: tuition, living costs, source of funds and document consistency.
- Accommodation: location, costs and commuting to campus.
- Academic and immigration history: explain changes, gaps or refusals honestly.

The recorded Pre-CAS interview

Set expectations without influencing responses.

- A working camera, microphone, stable internet and private room.
- Original passport; applicant must match ID; honest location and 360° room check.
- Agent office is permitted, but no help, scripts, prompts or reference tabs.

Identity and independence are non-negotiable

Every recording must be completed by the applicant themselves.

- Applicant must be the person shown in their original passport.
- Declare the real location - we do not penalise students for recording the interview at their agent's office. As long as they are able to be alone in the room, this is acceptable. Being untruthful in any response is always unacceptable and will not be ignored.
- No impersonation, third-party participation or prompting: This is an instant interview fail.

What good agent support looks like

A practical framework you can use with every applicant.

- RESEARCH IT — direct applicants to Kent course pages and official guidance.
- UNDERSTAND IT — encourage them to connect facts to their own circumstances.
- EXPLAIN IT — build confidence speaking naturally, without memorisation.

Authenticity

Before you refer an applicant for interview, ask:

- Have they personally researched their course, Kent and the UK?
- Can they explain finances, accommodation, history and ambitions in their own words?
- Do they understand they must complete the assessment alone?
- Have you avoided telling them what to say?

After an unsuccessful interview

Feedback explains concerns; it is not an invitation to repeat the assessment.

- Encourage applicants to review the feedback carefully and use it for future learning.
- Requests for a second chance after an unsuccessful interview decision will be rejected. UKVI does not offer second chances to interview; therefore, applicants are expected to be suitably prepared to pass their Pre-CAS interview on the first attempt and can then take any feedback forward to improve their performance for UKVI.
- Avoid repeated reconsideration requests, particularly across multiple departments.

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Points to remember

Our expectation is simple and non-negotiable.

- Encourage genuine preparation, not rehearsed answers
- Accurate information, independent preparation and honest answers are important and non-negotiable.
- Every applicant has a different story. Let them tell their own.