

Credibility Interviews

What is a credibility interview?

Credibility interviews are part of the Tier 4 visa application process, they were introduced by United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to try and ensure that only genuine students are studying in the UK.

The Home Office intends to interview most Tier 4 student applicants before granting them immigration permission to come to the UK. Therefore you might be sent an email asking you to attend an interview as part of the application process. You should check your email (including the 'junk' folder) regularly as your application is likely to be refused if you are asked to attend an interview and you do not do so without providing a reasonable explanation.

What is the purpose of the interview?

The interview is to check that you are a genuine student. During the interview you will be asked questions about your background, immigration history, about the studies you are planning to undertake in the UK, why you applied to the University of Central Lancashire and your chosen course, how you intend to fund your studies and living costs in the UK and how your course fits your long term career aspirations.

The interviewer will also be checking your ability to converse well in English, if there is any issue with hearing them clearly, for example, via the video link or telephone signal, you should ensure that you raise this so that they are aware that it is a technical issue not one of comprehension.

Will I have to attend an interview?

This will depend on where you apply:

If you are applying for a Tier 4 (General) visa from overseas you can expect to receive a short credibility interview during the application process.

If you are applying for a Tier 4 (General) visa from the UK, you may be required to attend an interview. You are more likely to be invited for an interview if there are discrepancies between the supporting documents you have provided and the information included in your visa application form, or if the caseworker considering your application requests an interview in order to obtain further information before they can make a decision on your application.

If you have previously studied a course at the same level as the new course and you received an academic progression justification statement alongside your CAS, you are more likely to be invited to an interview. This is because the caseworker is required to assess whether the academic progression requirement is met. When making this assessment, the caseworker will consider the level of the course, the subject of the new and previous course, your education history, the rationale for wishing to study the new course, and whether the justification statement sufficiently explains why you are applying to study a course at the same level. If you are invited to an interview, you should be prepared to talk about the reasons why you want to pursue the new course.

What do I need to do before attending an interview?

You need to complete the Interview Reply Form and Declaration sent to you by the Home Office and email it to them before the deadline stated on the covering letter. Please remember to bring the original signed forms to your interview. You may be informed of the interview directly by email using the email address that you included in your visa application. Please ensure that you check your junk and spam folders so that you don't miss the interview request email.

How will the interview be conducted?

If you are overseas, the interview will take place at a Visa Application centre (VAC) as stated on the Home Office's covering letter you will receive or by telephone. The interview will be conducted in English and therefore your ability to communicate in English will be tested.

The interview will normally last for no more than 30 minutes and it will be conducted via video link with a Home Office member of staff in Sheffield in the UK if being conducted at the Visa Application Centre (VAC) or by telephone. The report of the interview will then be sent to the Entry Clearance Officer who will consider it alongside your Tier 4 visa application and supporting documents. You can request a copy of your interview transcript and we suggest that all students do this.

If you are invited for an interview in the UK, you can expect to be interviewed for around 30-60 minutes and this will usually be conducted by Skype with a Home Office member of staff in Sheffield in the UK.

You need to be aware that failure to attend an interview you have been invited to may result in your visa application being refused.

What questions may I be asked?

There are no set questions you will be asked, however from the feedback received the common types of questions are listed below:

Q: Why did you choose the University of Central Lancashire?

Think about why you chose the UK rather than your home country, other English-speaking country or country which other students of your nationality choose to study in.

You may find it useful to refer to the university profile on the following link:

http://www.uclan.ac.uk/about_us/index.php

The University of Central Lancashire is a campus university within a city - what attracted you to the student lifestyle of a campus located within a thriving city?

Q: Why did you choose your course?

There may be many courses in the same subject area as the one you plan to study at the University of Central Lancashire. What is it specifically about this course which you prefer and which suits you over other course available at other universities? Think about your decision-making process. Did you apply for other courses and why did you choose the University of Central Lancashire over them?

Q: How do your studies fit your career plans?

Think about what your plans are after you graduate, how will the knowledge and skills you gain from your course at the University of Central Lancashire help you with the type of work you hope to do in the future? Does your course lead to any professional exemptions or qualifications and are these recognised in your home country? Do you know what other students who graduated from the course went on to do, for example, the types of roles and organisations they now work for? If the course you plan to study is at a similar academic level to previous studies, how does it represent progression and does it have a vocational focus? If this is the case be prepared to explain this.

Q: If the costs of pursuing your course of study are higher in the UK than in your home country, why have you decided to incur the extra costs involved with studying in the UK?

Think about the advantages that a degree from the UK might give you and why you and/or your family are prepared to make this investment. Have you made a realistic assessment of all the costs involved and how you plan to pay for them? These costs include accommodation and cost of living.

Q: If you have previously studied in the UK - why have you chosen to return?

Think about how the new course relates to previous studies and how it might build on your previous learning to support your personal development and career aspirations.

Q: If you have had a long break in your studies, why are you returning to study now?

Think about how you explain your decision in the context of your long-term aspirations and career plans.

Q: Do you plan to work in the UK?

You cannot rely on funds from working to pay your course fees and living costs. The main purpose for being in the UK is your studies so, if you do hope to work, think about how this will enhance your academic studies. You also need to demonstrate an understanding of the hours you are allowed to work and typical rates of pay.

Q: How will you fund your studies?

The purpose of this question is to check that your funds are genuinely available to you for your studies. As part of your application you will have submitted proof of your finances: ensure that you are very clear about the source and availability of these funds, also how you plan to pay for subsequent years fees if your course is more than a year in duration. If you have official financial sponsorship make sure you are aware of the amounts and exactly what is covered. If you have a loan, how will you afford to pay this back? How much will your accommodation cost and are you clear about the cost of living in the UK?

Following your interview we would welcome any useful feedback you think it would be useful for us and other students to know. Please use the following email address: SICTSupport@uclan.ac.uk with 'Credibility Interview Feedback' as the subject title.