



## Credibility Interview Guidance

To assess an applicant's credibility, the UKVI caseworker must consider all of the information provided in the application and, if applicable, in the credibility interview. The caseworker must not refuse an applicant on genuineness grounds without interviewing them, unless:

- the application has been refused previously on genuine student grounds, there have been no changes to the material circumstances, or no new evidence has been provided
- there have been a significant number of identical or very similar applications, and the caseworker has interviewed a sample of these applicants and is satisfied that they are not genuine and the facts of the case mean that the applicant would not be able to refute the allegation of lacking credibility.

If, having reviewed the application – including information obtained during the interview – the caseworker is not satisfied on the balance of probability that the applicant is genuine, the application must be refused under the appropriate paragraph of the Immigration Rules. This is paragraph [ST.5.1 of Appendix Student for Student applications](#), or paragraph [CS.5.1 of Appendix Child Student for Child Student applications](#) where the applicant is aged 16 or over.

If the caseworker refuses an applicant on credibility grounds, they must clearly set out their allegations and reasoning and argument behind these that form the basis for their decision. If a statement made by an applicant is interpretable in different ways, then the caseworker must provide a justification for which way they have interpreted the information. The English language ability of an applicant can be used as a relevant factor in assessing credibility, however, the caseworker must clearly provide a justification in any refusal letter.

## **Credibility: factors to be considered and possible interview questions**

This section lists factors that caseworkers must consider when assessing whether an applicant is a genuine student. This is not an exhaustive checklist of factors, and not all will be appropriate in every case. Caseworkers must also take into account other issues that arise in particular cases.

### **The immigration history of the applicant and any dependant, in the UK and other countries**

Examples include:

- previous visa applications for the UK and other countries, including reasons for any visa refusals  
**Why did you apply for a UK visa?**  
**Why was your visa refused/cancelled?**
- the amount of time the applicant has spent in the UK or other countries on previous visas, and for what purpose  
**How long did you remain in the UK during your last visit?**  
**What was the reason for your visit to the UK?**
- whether the applicant has complied with the terms of previous visas for the UK and other countries  
**Did you comply with the terms of your previous visa?**  
**If not, what was the reason for your visa being curtailed (cancelled)? Why was your visa cancelled?**

### **The applicant's education history, study and post-study plans**

Examples include:

- the amount of time that has elapsed since the applicant last studied, and whether the applicant has sound reasons for returning to, or commencing, formal study of this subject, particularly after any significant gap  
**Why did you choose this course and how does it relate to your previous study?**

How do you explain the gaps in your study history?

- whether the applicant demonstrates sufficient commitment to the course

How long does your course last?

What is the relevance of the course to your future career path?

- whether the course represents academic progression

Do you know what level your course is at?

- the credibility of the applicant's rationale for, knowledge of, and research into the proposed course of study and the sponsoring institution

Why do you want to study in the UK?

What are the benefits of studying in the UK compared to your home country or USA/Canada/Australia?

Did you consider any other course?

How is your chosen course assessed?

Does this course offer any professional recognition?

Why did you choose the University of Plymouth?

How much do you know about your intended course of study?

How did you find out about it?

Where is the University of Plymouth?

What facilities are you expecting at the college/university?

Which other colleges/universities have you considered?

How long does your course last?

- the credibility of the applicant's rationale for, knowledge of, and research into living arrangements in the UK

Will you need help in finding accommodation?

What accommodation is available at the University?

- how the circumstances of any dependant may affect the ability or motivation of the applicant to study

Why do you intend in bringing your child/family to the UK?

Will they pose a distraction to your studies?

What will your dependants do in the UK whilst you study on your course?

- the relevance of the course to post-study plans in the UK or overseas  
 Are you planning to stay in the UK on completion to study for a higher award? Are you planning to leave the UK once you have completed your studies? Are you thinking of transferring to another institution on completion?
- whether the applicant intends to comply with the terms of their permission, including the requirement to leave the UK when their permission comes to an end (or, where lawful and appropriate, to apply to extend their permission under the Student route or to switch to another immigration route)  
 What are your plans once your degree finishes? What are your career aspirations? What is the relevance of the course to your future career path?  
 What companies have you considered working for?

The caseworker must not refuse an applicant based on an applicant's knowledge of the location where they will be studying, for example, if the applicant has a lack of knowledge of bus routes, or of the geography of the town or city.

**The personal and financial circumstances of the applicant and any dependant Examples include:**

- the economic circumstances of the applicant and any dependant  
 Would anything about your personal circumstances make it difficult for you to complete a full time course of study?
- whether the applicant has a credible source of funds to meet course fees, and living costs – both for themselves and any dependants – for the duration of the course in the UK, in cases where they would have a limited, or no, ability to work in the UK  
 How will you be funding yourself? Are you planning to work in the UK? What type of work are you planning to do?
- how the applicant was able to acquire the necessary funds for course fees, as well as accommodation and living expenses in the UK for themselves and any dependant  
 Where have the funds come from, i.e. from wages, family etc.?  
 Who is sponsoring you and what is their relationship with you?

- the distance between the applicant's place of study and their proposed accommodation in the UK  
Where are you planning to live in the UK? e.g. near the Campus  
Do you know where Plymouth is in the UK?  
How far is your accommodation from the main site of study? E.g. 10 minutes' walk or a short bus ride.
- the average monthly expenditure for the applicant and any dependant in the UK  
How much will it cost you/your family to live in Plymouth per month? E.g. Please familiarise yourself with the Maintenance /Living costs for living in the UK  
How much are your tuition fees? This information will be stated on your CAS statement  
Have you paid any money towards your tuition fees? Check your CAS statement or contact the University.
- the applicant's personal circumstances, where these might make it difficult to complete a course of study  
If something is likely to affect your studies, you might be asked questions.

The caseworker must take account of the fact that the applicant will need to make a considerable investment to gain a qualification from the UK.

### **The qualification, course provider and agents**

Examples include:

- If the applicant is applying to study at an institution that is under investigation or has been identified by the Home Office as an institution of concern in relation to immigration compliance  
The University of Plymouth has an excellent track record of compliance with the Home Office
- where the application is being managed by an agent about whom the Home Office has concerns  
Who is your agent? Why did you choose this agent?

## English language ability

If the caseworker has concerns over the applicants English language ability potentially falling short of the required level they should consider this when assessing the genuine student requirement.

If you are unable to speak English, your application will be refused.

## Role of dependants

The caseworker must consider carefully whether they are satisfied that the applicant is a genuine student where a main reason for the application is the employment, education, or health care benefits for any accompanying dependants.

Why are you bringing dependants to the UK?

What will your dependants do whilst in the UK?

## Pull factors

Pull factors are known to influence students' choice of the UK as a study destination. They can give an indication of an applicant's motivation for coming to the UK, and whether the applicant is a genuine student.

Examples include:

- if the applicant chose the UK because of the reputation of its academic and education institutions compared to those of other countries

Why do you want to study in the UK?

What are the benefits of studying in the UK compared to your home country or USA/Canada/Australia?

How many Universities have you applied for in the UK?

Why did you choose the University of Plymouth?

- if the ease of working during or after the course of study was a deciding factor

Are you planning to work in the UK?

What type of employment are you planning to do?

How many hours per week will you be working?