



## **Brunel University London – CAS Shield Interview Policy and Procedure**

### Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Applicant Interview Selection Criteria .....	1
3. Interview Process .....	2
4. Interview Assessment and Decision Making.....	3
5. Interview Outcomes and Application Decisions .....	3
6. Grounds for Interview Rejection.....	4
7. Appeals.....	4

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### 1. Introduction

1.1. From June 2024 onwards, Brunel University London will be using the [Enroly/CAS Shield](#) system to enhance its compliance processes and enable the more advanced assessment of applicants for their suitability for Student visa sponsorship – the issuing of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). This includes a function to conduct pre-CAS/credibility interviews for applicants from certain countries to determine that they have a genuine intention to study in the UK and are not seeking a Student visa simply as a means to enter or remain in the UK.

This policy is closely linked to Brunel’s [Admissions Policy](#) and should be read in conjunction with it (particularly the section on Student visa requirements).

### 2. Applicant Interview Selection Criteria

2.1. Sadly, certain countries of the world display higher levels of risk when it comes to the submission of fraudulent/non-credible Student visa applications to the UK Home Office, typically related to social, political and economic factors within them. The Home Office measure such ‘abuse of the UK immigration system’ in relation to Student visas using data in the three following areas:

- Visa Refusals
- Non-enrolment
- Non-course completion (students who fail to complete their UK course but fail to leave the UK)

Student visa sponsors, which includes Brunel University, are assessed annually on these metrics and may lose their sponsor licence should the relevant thresholds be exceeded. The University also monitors these statistics internally. Therefore, the decision to interview applicants from certain countries is driven by this data, in line with common practice across the UK Higher Education sector.

2.2. Interview selection is primarily based on the nationality of the applicant. This may typically include nationals of the countries below, however, this is not an exhaustive list.

- India
- Pakistan
- Bangladesh
- Iran
- Afghanistan
- Uzbekistan
- Nigeria
- Ghana

2.3. Brunel University reserves the right to change the nationality criteria for interview selection *at any time*. It may also require an applicant from *any country* to undertake an interview if any concerns about their credibility are raised via any of the information presented in the student's application to Brunel.

2.4. Interviews will be applied to undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and research degree applicants, whether applying directly or via the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Applicants to the Brunel Pathway College (BPC) will not go through the CAS Shield system, but note they may still be interviewed by BPC under its processes.

2.5. Applicants may be exempted from the pre-CAS interview if they have been interviewed as part of their academic selection for their chosen course.

### 3. Interview Process

3.1. Interviews are conducted via the online CAS Shield software in a recorded video format, where a series of questions are read out and displayed on a computer. There are a series of security features and the applicant must display their passport on the camera for an ID check. Each interview takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The questions are randomised but will be based on the following themes:

- The reason why the applicant has chosen to study in the UK, and at Brunel University
- The reason why the applicant has chosen their particular course
- The applicant's post-study plans and how their course may support them in this
- The applicant's financial circumstances and how they expect to fund their studies in the UK
- The applicant's arrangements for UK accommodation
- The applicant's awareness of the Student visa regulations

- 'Random' questions on unrelated topics may be included to prevent the use of scripted answers

3.2. Upon completion of the online interview, it will be available for assessment by a member of Brunel University Compliance/Admissions Staff.

## 4. Interview Assessment and Decision Making

4.1. The purpose of the interview is to determine, to the best of the University's ability, that an applicant has a genuine intention to study at Brunel University and will meet the requirements to be successful in a Student visa application (including a UKVI visa interview) If, via this assessment, the University does not deem this to be the case, it reserves the right to reject the application and withhold the issuing of a CAS.

4.2. Although there will always be an element of subjectivity in any interview process, Brunel University is committed to assessing the interviews in a fair, robust and transparent manner, in order to make the decisions outlined below.

4.3. Upon assessment of each interview, there will be three possible outcomes:

- **Pass** – the applicant has been assessed as having a genuine intention and ability to study at Brunel and, to the best of Brunel's knowledge, can meet the requirements for a successful Student visa application.
- **Resit** – applicants deemed to be 'borderline' as to their suitability for visa sponsorship will be given the opportunity to resit the interview, either in whole or for specific subject areas where it was decided unsatisfactory answers were given. Applicants will only be given one opportunity to resit an interview. Failure to 'pass' the interview at a second attempt will result in rejection, as outlined below.
- **Reject/Fail** – the applicant is deemed to either not have a genuine intention to study at Brunel University and/or there are significant concerns that the student will not be able to make a successful visa application.

## 5. Interview Outcomes and Application Decisions

5.1. Following the review and assessment of the video interviews (including a retaken interview where necessary), the decisions made on these will lead to the following outcomes for the application to Brunel University, in line with [Admissions Policy](#).

- **Pass** – Brunel University's Admissions Team will be notified of the interview decision and advised to progress with the application as normal. **Please note that the passing of the interview does not guarantee the issuing of an unconditional offer/CAS – all other requirements and conditions of the offer must be met.**

- **Reject** - Brunel University's Admissions Team will be advised not to progress with the student's application and it will be made unsuccessful.

## 6. Grounds for Interview Rejection

6.1. There is an element of subjectivity in any interview process, but the decision to reject an applicant based on the interview will only be made upon careful assessment and confirmation that the applicant is not suitable for Student visa sponsorship.

6.2. The interview will be marked for rejection if, through any of the answers given, the applicant fails to demonstrate a genuine intention to study at Brunel University and/or there are significant concerns that the student will not be able to make a successful Student visa application.

6.3. The interviews are not used as a method to assess the English proficiency of the applicant, which is expected based on the English qualification accepted for entry to the University. However, a failure of an applicant to be able to answer the questions to a sufficient standard of English will likely lead to a rejection due to credibility concerns.

6.4. Interviews will be automatically rejected should an applicant be found to have attempted to manipulate or cheat the interview in any way, whether identified through the security features of CAS Shield directly, or through the University's assessment of the interview. This may include, but is not limited to:

- The evident use of a proxy interviewee (getting an individual who is not the student to take the interview)
- The evident use of any prohibited resources to give answers to the interview questions, i.e. scripted material, internet materials, or artificial intelligence software etc
- The evident use of any individual/s off of the camera to advise upon scripted answers

Brunel University will not progress with the application or CAS of an applicant who is rejected at interview stage, in line Brunel's [Admissions Policy](#). Please refer to the Admissions Policy for further details about deposit refunds.

## 7. Appeals

7.1. Appeals can only be made against the decision to reject an interview (and therefore an application). They cannot be used against the decision to ask an applicant to resit an interview.

7.2. There is no right of appeal for an applicant whose interview is rejected on the grounds of having attempted to manipulate or cheat the interview as outlined in paragraph 6.4 above.

7.3. Otherwise, if the applicant wishes to appeal the decision, they must submit this in writing to the Compliance and Sponsorship Manager. An explanation should be provided as to why the rejection is felt to be incorrect and/or if there were any personal circumstances that may have affected the applicant's interview performance at the time. Any appeal should be supported by documentary evidence and must be submitted no later than 7 days after being notified of the rejection.

7.4. If the Compliance and Sponsorship Manager accepts the appeal, the applicant will be allowed an opportunity to resit the interview for reassessment (the appeal process will not change a rejection

decision to a pass). Should the second interview again be 'rejected', this will be the final decision and there will be no further right of appeal.

7.5. The decision of the Sponsorship and Compliance Manager on any appeal remains final. If an applicant is rejected and all appeal rights are exhausted, the application will be rejected/withdrawn for that intake. The applicant would be allowed to reapply for entry for a future intake but would be required to undergo the same selection process.