



Brunel University of London – CAS Shield Interview Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction

1.1. Brunel University of London introduced the [Enrolly/CAS Shield](#) system in 2024 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, particularly from certain countries, primarily 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. However, pre-CAS interviews are also used to provide assurance that a student would also be able to answer the questions that would be asked in a visa interview conducted by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to a suitable standard to be granted a student visa.

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 UKVI, typically related to social, political and economic factors within them. UKVI measure such 'abuse of the UK immigration system' in relation to student visas using various sources of data that can include (but is not limited to):

- Visa Refusals
- Non-enrolment
- Non-course completion (students who fail to complete their UK course but fail to leave the UK)
- Students found to be breaching visa conditions while in the UK i.e. illegal working or overstaying (remaining in the UK beyond the expiry date of a visa)
- Students visa holders making spurious or questionable asylum claims (in the opinion of UKVI)

UKVI apply some of these factors to their visa policies and decision-making practices. For example, there is an 'evidential flexibility' policy where some students are required to supply more documentary evidence to support their visa application than others, based on nationality or country of domicile. UKVI has also applied 'visa brakes' to nationals of certain countries, effectively banning visa applications being made, based on such data. For these reasons, Brunel University must also consider some of these factors when assessing our applicants for student visa sponsorship.

Furthermore, Student visa sponsors such as Brunel University, are annually assessed on the three visa metrics referenced above – visa refusal, non-enrolment and course completion rates. We may lose our sponsor licence should certain 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 widespread 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.

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Ghana
- India
- Iran
- Kenya
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Somalia
- Sri Lanka

2.3. However, 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, or if more information is required to determine CAS eligibility.

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 or are applying to extend their student visa within the UK. However, Brunel reserves the right to interview any applicant for the same reasons outlined in 2.3.

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 displayed on a computer/mobile device screen. 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 20-30 minutes to complete. The questions are randomised but will be based on the following themes:

- The reason the applicant has chosen to study in the UK, and at Brunel University
- The reason the applicant has chosen their particular course, and how it relates to their previous academic background
- The applicant's post-study plans and how their course supports this
- How the applicant expects to fund their studies in the UK and awareness of UKVI financial requirements
- The applicant's arrangements for UK accommodation
- '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’ in their pre-CAS interview performance may be given the opportunity to resit the interview, either in whole or for specific subject areas where it was decided unsatisfactory answers were given. In such instances, 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, if an applicant is unable to answer the questions to a sufficient standard of English, this 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 third-party involvement in providing guidance to the interviewee i.e. if other individuals are present in the room where the interview is being recorded and appear to be aiding with the 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.

6.5. Brunel University reserves the right to determine which interview performances it regards as 'borderline' to allow a resit interview as outlined in 4.3 above. Note that applicants deemed to perform at a particularly poor standard may be rejected after one interview attempt and will not be given a resit opportunity.

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 by emailing admissions.immigration@brunel.ac.uk. 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. An appeal will typically only be accepted if it can be clearly demonstrated, normally with the support of documentary evidence, that there were clear mitigating factors that affected the student's interview performance. 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.

8. Applicant options for rejected pre-CAS interviews

8.1. Where an applicant has been unsuccessful in their pre-CAS interview/s and have exhausted any rights of appeal, Brunel University will allow the applicant to defer or reapply for a future intake. However, the applicant would be required to undergo the same CAS Shield application/interview process for reassessment of their suitability for student visa sponsorship. Alternatively, the applicant can be directed to the tuition deposit refund policy within the [Admissions Policy](#).