

LSI independent College Pre CAS interviews Policy Document

Date of policy review: September 2024
Review date: August 2025
Lead for review: Principal

Institutional Aims:

The aim of this Policy is to provide guidance for any member of staff that will be working with international students at LSI College London and need to conduct Pre CAS interviews. The International Recruitment team, Admissions and/or any international student recruitment Agent can refer to this Policy as to when they feel a Pre CAS interview is appropriate, get guidance as to how the interviews need to be conducted, and the justification for conducting the interviews.

Scope

This document applies to all staff who will be involved in the interview process. The process can be referred to for current students that the department or the school feel an interview to proceed with the application is required. This policy can also be used for new students who will be applying for a child / student visa by virtue of a CAS (Certificate of Acceptance of study).

Interview

This section outlines how an interview should be conducted and how decisions will be made.

Purpose of an interview

LSI College London holds a Student License. As part of the sponsor responsibilities the College is expected to ensure that the applicants that it accepts onto its course are genuine and will qualify for a UK study visa, will enrol successfully and complete the course that it was issued a CAS for. In order to pass the Basic Compliance Assessment LSI College must ensure that the students are genuine therefore the need for a Pre CAS interviews.

One of the requirements of the Basic Compliance Assessments is to ensure that the refusal rates remain below 10%. If any staff member feel that the student requires a Pre CAS interview before it can proceed with its application then they have the right to request to conduct an interview. This is to ensure that the refusal rates stay below the 10% threshold and to mitigate the risks to the Basic Compliance Assessment metrics.

Who to interview

LSI College London has a bank of questions where the interviewer will ask certain applicants to answer creditability style questions. The questions will range from a variety of subjects to ascertain whether the student is genuine and can speak English to the required standard in order to pass the course successfully.

If the applicant fails the Pre CAS interview then the applicant will be referred to the Principal to make a decision as to whether another interview is required for the student to proceed. If the Principal feels that the student does not have the required English to successfully pass the course then the Principal can request the Admissions team to put the student on a Pre sessional English course. (AEM Academic English Module) before starting the initial course.

Each interview will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Factors that will be taken into consideration when deciding whether a Pre CAS interview is required are as follows and is listed in this document.

Students will be invited to an interview automatically if they fall into any of the risk categories highlighted by UKVI or by market intelligence listed gathered by the Business intelligence team for the college or if student numbers/ resources allow all students to receive the interviews. Students from low risk countries may not require a Pre CAS interview but can be conducted if the need requires.

Any recruitment officer Compliance or Principal at LSI College London reserves the right to interview any student chosen at random at any point during their CAS application (to ensure a robust and consistent procedure) this will be applicable to all students even those from low risk nationality countries.

When to interview

All interviews will be reviewed in date order but maybe prioritised further at peak periods. Those students that have completed the whole CAS interview process and have a high confidence score

will be prioritised.

A CAS will not be issued until the interview process is complete and satisfactory.

How to interview

Students will be invited to an interview once the Recruitment Officer / Principal feels that there is a need for an interview in order to proceed with the visa application and to have a CAS issued.

Students that come from high risk countries will all be put forward for a Pre Cas interview to be conducted. All students that are invited to interview will be given a brief and told how to prepare for the interview and asked to do necessary research in order to prepare them for the interview.

Interview questions

All questions that will be asked will come from a series of pre prepared questions. There is a bank of questions that the interviewers can choose to ask from. All questions will be changed so that the same questions are not asked to all the students within the same batch. This is to minimise the distribution of questions and help prevent pre prepared answers to the questions.

The decision to proceed

All students that are interviewed as part of the Pre CAS interviews will be scored and then the decision to proceed with the visa application and get a CAS will be put forward for the Principal to assess and approve. If the interviewer feels that the student has failed the first round of the interviews then the student will be put forward for the Principal to review and decide whether there is a need for a second Pre CAS interview or the student may benefit from being placed on a Pre sessional English module such as a Academic English Module.

Assessor confirmation

Any assessor conducting the interview must account for the following when assessing an interview:

1 Verification

The interviewer must check the students bio data page of the passport and be able to identify the student at the interview. The interviewer must be conscious of the possibility that someone else may be sitting the interview in the place of the student. The interviewer may also ask to check the room where the interview will be taking place. If the interviewer feels that there is a risk to the interview then the interviewer has the right to cancel and reschedule the interview.

The interviewer can also refuse to take the application further and refuse to issue a CAS to the student. The interviewer can also refer the student to the Principal to make a further decision on the case of the student in question.

2 Language barrier and English language capability

The interviewer must use their judgement to determine whether the student has a satisfactory level of English. It is not the role of the interviewer to determine whether the student is “good or bad” but to determine whether the student can:

- Complete the course successfully whilst being taught in English
- Communicate if interviewed by the Home Office

A language barrier here not only relates to a student academic understanding of reading, writing, listening and speaking English but relates to the cultural nuances of how certain terms are received and understood.

This may lead to some misunderstanding of the questions asked or usage of different terms not common to native British English speakers.

If the student still provides a concise and natural answer to a question for example “ how will your course be assessed has sometimes been taken to mean “what does the course consist of” then the interviewer needs to use their judgement to grade relative to the answer provided.

3 Nerves and unseen disabilities

Whilst a Pre CAS interview being recorded with a bank of questions we can assume that the student will understand the context of the interview and recognise that the performance of this interview may hinder their future plans.

The interviewer needs to take into consideration that the student can be experiencing nervousness, general anxiety and other neurodivergent behaviours can impact a student's ability to answer clearly. It is important not to assume a student's English language ability because of the presence of stuttering or delayed answers.

4 Body language robotic and rehearsed answers

The role of the interviewer is to assess the performance of the interview in its entirety. This not only includes the substances of the answers, but also their delivery keeping in mind the factor listed above. It is not expected that the student maintains eye contact with the camera, however the interviewer may use their judgement in whether the student is not answering naturally.

It is expected that the student will undertake a general level of research on the course topic that they would like to study but determinations need to be made as to whether the answers are scripted or rehearsed.

Due to the nature of the interview format it will be difficult to confirm definitively whether the student is reading from a script.

Thresholds for accepting Pre CAS interviews

The following below is a list of concerns that LSI College London would perceive as receiving red flags in an interview:

- Poor English
- Unable to communicate adequately
- Evidence of looking elsewhere in an interview, suggesting they may be reading off notes
- Unable to answer questions properly
- Poor research
- Not providing id documents
- Student is assisted through lip syncing