

Home Office Credibility Interviews for Tier 4 visa

- The Home Office have introduced credibility interviews into the Tier 4 visa application process. However, if you are a low risk national you may not be called for interview.
- There are two types of credibility interview. The first type will take place at the same time as your biometrics are taken at the Embassy or designated agency. This initial interview will only take around five minutes and will be via video link with the Home Office in the UK. The purpose of the interview is to check your credibility as a genuine student and the focus of this interview will be your reasons for choosing the UK, the University and your programme of study as well as questions on the content of your course. The Home Office will record the interview and send a summary to the Entry Clearance Officer who will decide if a second more detailed interview at the Embassy is needed.
- The Home Office expects most applicants to be able to prove they are genuine at the first stage and that this will in fact speed up the decision process on applications because fewer documentation checks will be required.
- You will be asked questions about why you chose the UK, the Newcastle University and your programme, also how this fits into your career aspirations

Typical questions may include:

Q: *Why did you choose Newcastle University?*

Answer preparation: 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 information about Newcastle University on the following link: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/about/> . Think about what attracted you to study at Newcastle University?

Q: *Why did you choose your programme?*

Answer preparation: There may be many programmes in the same subject area as the one you plan to study at Newcastle. What is it specifically about the programme you have chosen which you prefer? You may find it useful to look at your programme of study again on the University on-line prospectus. For Postgraduate see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/a-z> For Undergraduate see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/> .

Q: *How do your studies fit into your career plans?*

Answer preparation: Think about what your plans are after you graduate - how will the knowledge and skills you gain from your programme of study help you with the type of work you hope to do. Does your course lead to any professional exemptions or qualifications and are these recognised in your country? Do you know what others graduating from the course you will be following went on to do? If the course you plan to study is at a similar academic level to previous studies be prepared to explain how it represents progression and whether it has a vocational focus?

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?*

Answer preparation: 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. You should note that these costs include accommodation and costs of living.

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

Answer preparation: Think about how the new programme relates to previous studies and how it might build on your previous learning.

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

Answer preparation: Think about how you explain your decision in the context of your long-term career plans.

Q: *Do you plan to work in the UK?*

Answer preparation: You cannot rely on funds from working to pay your course fees and living costs so you need to be aware of this. The main purpose for being in the UK is your studies so, if you do hope to work, think about how this would enhance your academic studies. You also need to demonstrate an understanding of the hours you are allowed to work (maximum of 20 hours per week) and typical rates of pay.

Q: How will you fund your studies? (you should not be asked this unless you are called back for a second interview)

Answer preparation: 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 programme 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?

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