**Credibility interviews - Guidance**

Many students will be required to attend credibility interviews as part of their visa application process. These interviews are intended to ensure that the students are coming to the UK to study and not to breach the terms of a study visa through working or staying illegally in the UK beyond the period of their visa.

Students will be asked a range of questions about their personal and financial circumstances, their intentions during and after the course and why they have chosen the university and course they have. While most of these issues are covered as part of the points-based part of the visa application process, the ECO may choose to ignore this and still refuse the application based on the interview. Students that have a genuine intention to study and can talk openly and clearly about their course/university selection process and circumstances should not be refused as a result of an interview. This document provides some guidance as to the types of questions students may be asked.

**Assessing intention to study**

The Entry Clearance Officer (ECO) will look to confirm that the student is intending to come to the UK to study and not for other purposes, such as full-time work or settlement. The ECO will be looking for the student to demonstrate a good level of knowledge around the course and the university, and that the decision to apply to study that particular course at University of Leeds has been a properly informed one. The ECO will expect students to have considered a number of alternative institutions and courses, so if they have only considered Leeds, the student will need to be able to demonstrate why this is and that they understand the course they are going to study.

The ECO will also be making an assessment on the relevance of the course to the student's background and future career plans - if a student is studying a course that appears to have no relevance to their future plans, they may regard this student as more likely to not be genuine - so students should think carefully about how and why the course they will study is going to support help in achieving their goals and aspirations. Below are a number of example questions:

* Why do you want to study in the UK?
* Why did you choose University of Leeds (UOL)?
* How did you find out about UOL?
* Which other universities have you considered
* Do you know anyone who has already studied at UOL?
* Do you know how large DMU is/how many students UOL has?
* Where is UOL located in England?
* Why did you choose the course you have applied for and how does it relate to:

o Your previous study? o Your future career plans?

* How long is your course, and what qualification will you receive?
* How is your course assessed?
* Did you consider any other course?
* Are you planning on further study in the UK on completion of this course?
* If *the student has any gaps in their education or employment history:* How do you explain the gaps in your education/employment history - what were you doing during this period?

**Assessing financial viability**

While the points based system covers financial evidence in the maintenance requirements, where a student is required to attend an interview, the ECO may ask further questions about the student financial circumstances, and the ECO can use the answers to these questions to refuse the application, even where the student has already been awarded 10 points for their bank statement evidence.

Students should be able to confirm that they can support themselves during their studies without relying on work to do so, and that the means of financing their studies, such as money from parents, is realistic (i.e. is the parent's salary sufficient to support the student throughout their studies?). The ECO will expect the student to be aware of the details of the financial evidence that they have submitted as part of their visa application .

* What is your current occupation?
* Who is financing your studies?
* What is the profession of your financial sponsor and what is their relationship with you?
* Would you be able to pay your tuition fees in full up-front?
* Do you know what your accommodation in the UK will cost?
* Do you know how much your living expenses will be?
* Do you know whether you are entitled to work part time in the UK - if so, how many hours are you allowed to work?
* Do you intend to work while in the UK? If so, is this necessary for you to be able to pay for your course, accommodation and living costs?

ECO's will also look to assess the student's level of spoken English and listening skills throughout the interview. Prior to the interview, students might benefit from practicing answering sample questions, however, it is important that student's answer the question they have been asked, rather than giving an answer that they have practiced that does not necessarily directly relate to the question asked. If the ECO feels the student's answers are too rehearsed or not relevant, they may use this as a reason to refuse the application. Finally, students should relax, answer all questions honestly, and use the interview as an opportunity to demonstrate they are a genuine, high-quality student and secure their visa to study in the UK.

**Credibility Interviews - Preparation**

The following are examples of the type of questions students may be asked during interviews when applying for a tier 4 visa. Some guidance as to the type of issues students might want to think about in preparing for interview is provided. This is intended as guidance only and is intended to help you in preparing applicants and carry out mock interviews. The guidance in red indicates the key facts the interviewer is looking to establish - but the student must answer for themselves in their own words..

The interview will be looking for students to show that they are genuine and serious students who have thought carefully about where and what to study. Students should relax, answer questions honestly and take the opportunity to demonstrate their qualities to the interviewer.

• Why do you want to study in the UK?

The interviewer will want to know your reasons for studying in the UK rather than in your home country, or other countries such as Canada, the USA or Australia. Think about what attracts you to the UK.

• Why did you choose University of Leeds (UOL)?

There are many reasons that students choose to study at UOL, the interviewer will want to know what particular factors lead to you choosing UOL over other institutions. These could be factors ranging from academic quality to the central location of the campus and city to positive experiences of friends or family - to name a few. You should explain what is important to you.

• How did you find out about UOL?

The interviewer will expect you to explain how your research about what to study and where led to you finding out about UOL. Was it through websites, prospectuses, friends and family or other methods?

• Where is UOL located?

UOL is based in the city of Leeds in the Northern part of the United Kingdom. For more information about UOL and the city visit: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/20014/about

• Which other universities have you considered

Name the other universities you thought about studying at and why you chose UOL rather than those institutions.

• Have you ever been refused a visa to enter another country

Answer this question honestly. If you have been refused in the past explain the reason why this happened and explain why this occurred. If you subsequently were granted a visa, tell them this too.

* Do you know anyone who has already studied at UOL?
* Do you know how large UOL is/how many students UOL has, and where UOL is located in England? Information about the university and the city of Leeds are available herehttp://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/20014/about
* Why did you choose the course you have applied for and how does it relate to:

o Your previous study?

The interviewer will be expecting you to explain how the courses you have studied before will help you in the course you have applied to study. What similarities are there in the course? Is it helping you develop further knowledge you have already gained

o Your future career plans?

The interviewer will be looking to find out what it is you want to do when you finish your studies, and how your course will help you achieve this - what skills and knowledge will it provide you with that will be needed in your future career?

* How long is your course, and what qualification will you receive? To remind yourself of this information, check our online prospectus
* Did you consider any other course?

The interviewer will be looking for you to explain what else you thought about studying and why you chose the course you did in the end,

• Are you planning on further study in the UK on completion of this course?

If you plan to undertake further study in the UK say what this is and how it will relate to the course that this visa application is for

* How do you explain the gaps in your education/employment history - what were you doing during this period? If your visa application shows that you were not in education or employment for a period of time, the interviewer will expect you to explain what you were doing during this time. Some students may take a year out to travel, whereas others might be working in a family business. Whatever your reason, answer honestly and clearly.
* What is your current occupation?
* Who is financing your studies?

The interviewer will be looking for you to explain where the financial support for your studies will come from, such as parents or a sponsor.

• Would you be able to pay your tuition fees in full up-front?

There are benefits in paying your fees in full in advance - If you cannot pay in full in advance, explain why you would need to pay in installments.

• Do you know what your accommodation in the UK will cost?

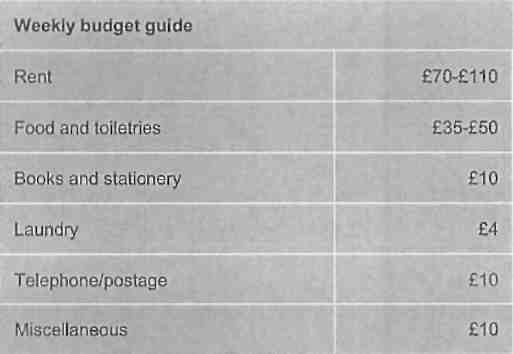
If you are planning to stay in halls of residence, details can be found here

(http://accommodation.leeds.ac.uk/). There is also information about private rented accommodation through our Accommodation team http://accommodation.leeds.ac.uk/info/100001/prospective\_students/30/private\_housing

• Do you know how much your living expenses will be?

The International Student Calculator may also help you plan and manage your money and to see how other students have budgeted for life at university in the UK.

The interviewer will expect you to have an understanding of how much things like food, bills, socializing will cost you. Below is a guide of weekly costs:



• Do you know whether you are entitled to work part time in the UK - if so, how many hours are you allowed to  
work?

Students on a tier 4 visa are permitted to work part-time - up to 20 hours per week, during term-time. See the UKBA website for more information on tier 4 student rights and responsibilities.

• Do you intend to work while in the UK? If so, is this necessary for you to be able to pay for your course,  
accommodation and living costs?

While some work is permitted, students will be expected to be able to focus on their studies throughout their course

The interviewer will also be checking student's English speaking and listening ability. Interviews may take place over the telephone or through a video call - if the student is experiencing technical difficulties that are making it difficult to hear what is being said by the interviewer, the student should make it known that you are experiencing technical difficulties, so that this is not perceived as poor English language ability