

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE FOR STUDIES (CAS) ISSUANCE POLICY

Introduction

1. This policy outlines the guidelines for University of Suffolk's sponsorship of international students who require a Student visa to study in the UK. It states the conditions and guiding principles for the issuance of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). The CAS is required for obtaining a UK Student visa, and this policy outlines the procedures for issuing CAS for both new students (applicants) and current students.
2. Scenarios in which an international student would require the University of Suffolk's sponsorship under the Student route:
 - Applying through our Admissions system as a new student (applicant) and require a student visa to study
 - Accepted as an inbound Exchange Student
 - Current student who changes course
 - Current student who requires a visa extension to complete studies (e.g. required to retake a module)
 - Current student who requests to move from their existing immigration permission to the Student route
3. University of Suffolk holds a Student Sponsor Licence granted by the UKVI that allows us to issue CAS to new and current students requiring a Student visa. A CAS is a unique electronic document issued by the University of Suffolk from its annual CAS allocation. The University of Suffolk is granted a limited number of CAS per year by the UKVI. To maintain an annual CAS allocation and sponsor licence, the University of Suffolk is required to fulfil certain [sponsor duties](#) outlined in the Student Sponsor guidance to ensure that immigration control is maintained.
4. For new and current students requiring a visa, the University of Suffolk will assess each CAS request on its individual merit through the holistic review of relevant documentation, existing student attendance and financial status, length of permission required, reason for CAS, pre-CAS interviews and the original application to determine a new or current student's intention to study. Decisions on CAS issuance will therefore be made based on one or a combination of multiple risk factors.
5. The assessment of CAS applications requires the professional judgement and experience of Admissions, UKVI Compliance and other professional or academic members of staff. This policy is designed to outline the criteria that CAS applications are assessed under, in accordance with the University of Suffolk's understanding and interpretation of the [Immigration Rules](#).
6. The Immigration Rules and Student Sponsor guidance will supersede the contents of this policy as they are subject to change on a frequent basis.
7. This policy should be read in conjunction with University of Suffolk Admissions Policy, General Regulations (Students), Student Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy and Tuition Fee Policy. All University of Suffolk policies referred to in this document are available on the University of Suffolk website under [Our Policies and Procedures](#).

APPLICANTS (NEW STUDENTS)

Applying for a CAS (Applicants)

8. To apply for a CAS, applicants must have accepted an unconditional offer to study at UoS and completed a CAS request. Applicants will be invited to complete their CAS request in the online CAS Shield platform. CAS Shield is a product owned by Enrolly.

9. An academic offer for study is not a guarantee that a CAS will be issued.

Verification of academic documents (Applicants)

10. Where verification of academic documents is deemed necessary as part of the CAS application, the applicant will be asked to provide their consent to a qualification verification.

11. Qualification verifications are usually completed via Qualification Check (www.qualificationcheck.com). If a verification through Qualification Check is not possible, a request for verification may be made directly via the awarding institution for the qualification. Consent from the applicant will be sought in either case.

12. If the result of the verification check is that the documents are found to be fraudulent, or the documents cannot be verified as genuine, a CAS will not be issued. The offer of study will also be withdrawn in accordance with section 72 of the Admissions policy.

13. If the applicant does not wish to consent to the verification check, a CAS will not be issued, and the offer of study will be withdrawn.

14. Previous study at the same academic level may require a justification statement and will be considered in accordance with the Academic Progression requirement.

CAS Deposit (Applicants)

15. In accordance with the University of Suffolk's Tuition Fee Policy, new students who require a student visa to study in the UK must pay a deposit to secure their place on a chosen programme of study in order to receive a CAS.

16. Students who are financially sponsored by their national government may be exempt from paying a CAS deposit but must provide satisfactory evidence of their financial sponsorship that meets the [UKVI's requirements](#) and the University of Suffolk's financial document checks.

17. The University of Suffolk may request a CAS deposit up to the value of a full year tuition fee, where this is deemed necessary to reduce the financial or sponsorship risk to the University of Suffolk when deciding whether to issue a CAS.

18. Requests for CAS deposit refunds should be communicated to the Admissions Team and will be considered in line with the [Tuition Fee Policy](#). CAS deposit refunds requested prior to CAS issuance will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Admissions Team.

Pre-CAS Interviews (Applicants)

19. Applicants may be subject to a pre-CAS interview.

20. The purpose of the pre-CAS interview is for the University of Suffolk to assess whether an applicant has genuine intentions to study at University of Suffolk and will meet the requirements to be successful in a Student visa application (including a UKVI credibility interview).

21. Interviews may be conducted in a number of ways including online, face-to-face or via CAS Shield in a recorded video format, where a series of questions are displayed on screen for the applicant to record their answer to. There are a range of security features included in the interview including a room scan and passport identification check.

22. Pre-CAS interviews are not used to assess an applicant's English language proficiency. However, an applicant's failure to answer the interview questions to a sufficient standard of English will likely lead to a rejection due to credibility concerns.

23. A successful pre-CAS interview does not guarantee that an applicant's CAS application will be successful. A successful pre-CAS interview also does not guarantee that an applicant's subsequent visa application or a credibility interview with the UKVI will be successful.

24. Applicants who fall under the UKVI's Differentiation Arrangements may be exempt from the pre-CAS interview. University of Suffolk 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 identified.

25. Applicants are expected to demonstrate suitable conduct during the pre-CAS interview.

26. Applicants who are judged to have undermined the pre-CAS interview process by attempting to use deception will not be considered for a CAS and this will result in the withdrawal of their offer and application.

- Examples of deception include, but are not limited to, reading pre-prepared answers from notes or scripts, using AI or third-party assistance during the interview.
- Applicants or students who are initially deemed successful at the pre-CAS interview but are subsequently judged to have undermined the pre-CAS interview process by attempting to use deception will have their visa sponsorship withdrawn by the University of Suffolk.

27. Request for reasonable adjustments at interview will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Requests should be made in CAS Shield prior to the first attempt to complete a pre-CAS interview.

CAS Deadlines (Applicants)

28. CAS for new students will be issued in line with the University of Suffolk's CAS deadline for each intake. CAS deadlines will be published on the University of Suffolk's website.

29. In some circumstances, the University of Suffolk may issue CAS after the published CAS deadline where it is believed that an applicant may still be able to arrive to the UK on their Student visa before their latest arrival deadline.

30. The University of Suffolk reserves the right to bring forward CAS deadlines and to set earlier CAS deadlines for certain regions where longer visa processing times are anticipated.

CURRENT STUDENTS

Applying for a CAS (Current Students)

31. Students must request a CAS by raising a Student Support ticket within the Minerva platform. An initial request for a CAS must be made 3 months prior to requiring the CAS. Requests made with less than 3 months' notice may be immediately rejected.

32. CAS requests for current students are not processed through CAS Shield. Communication is maintained through the Minerva platform. A panel of staff review CAS requests for current students. If the panel approve the issuance of a CAS, this is 'approved in principle'. The CAS will only be issued once further checks have been completed and are satisfactory. Further checks could result in the approval decision being overturned.

33. In line with the immigration rules, the University of Suffolk will be unable to offer a visa extension where there is a gap of 60 days or more between the students last date of academic engagement and the next period of academic engagement (e.g. for retakes). Students will be required to leave the UK and reapply for a visa from their home country. There is no guarantee that a CAS will be issued and therefore students may be required to return under the visitor route. The University of Suffolk will not be liable for any costs incurred by the student to return home, apply for a new visa and travel back to the UK.

Pre-CAS Interview (Current Students)

34. Current students who request to change course or require a CAS for the first time may be subject to a pre-CAS interview and the terms outlined in Paragraphs 20-27 of this Policy.

Attendance (Current Students)

35. Students who request a CAS will have their request reviewed in line with their current academic engagement.

36. Students must have maintained an attendance record that meets the requirements outlined in the Attendance Monitoring Policy to be considered for a CAS. Exceptional circumstances relating to attendance may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

37. Where a CAS is required to retake or resubmit work connected to a specific module, academic engagement will also be reviewed for that module.

38. Where attendance is deemed unsatisfactory, a CAS will not be issued

39. A CAS will not be issued in circumstances where the student is not required to attend in person (in classes or by contact) for the period the new CAS would be issued for.

Financial Status with the University of Suffolk (Current Students)

40. Students must have no outstanding payments with the University of Suffolk to be considered for CAS. If the student requires a CAS for a retake or resubmission opportunity and this has a fee attached, then this payment must also be cleared.
41. Where a student is in debt to the University of Suffolk, they will be given the opportunity to clear this debt.
42. A CAS will not be issued in circumstances where the student refuses or is unable to clear any outstanding payment in a timely manner

Accommodation in UK (Current Students)

43. In accordance with the General Regulations, students intending to study at the University of Suffolk's Ipswich campus or London Centre will be required to live within a 70-mile radius of the campus to support good attendance at classes as stipulated by student visa requirements.
44. When assessing eligibility for a CAS to current students, the UK address held on file for the student will be checked.
45. A CAS will not be issued where the student lives beyond 70 miles of campus and is unable to evidence plans to move within the required radius.

APPLICANTS AND CURRENT STUDENTS

Financial Document Checks (Applicants and Current Students)

46. Applicants and students are required to demonstrate that they have enough funds to pay for their tuition fees and living expenses in the UK. Applicants and students are required to provide suitable financial evidence for this purpose. University of Suffolk will assess financial evidence to ensure that it meets internal requirements for CAS issuance and UKVI requirements for the Student route.
47. Although the University of Suffolk checks and approves financial documents for the purpose of assessing a CAS request, it cannot guarantee that the documents will be accepted by the UKVI.
48. The level of financial checks undertaken and the associated documents required to complete these checks may vary between all new and current students based on individual circumstances (including their dependents' circumstances, where relevant) and markets based on perceived levels of risk associated with visa sponsorship.
49. Some applicants and students may be exempt from submitting financial evidence with their visa application. Typically, such applicants and students will fall under the UKVI's Differentiation Arrangements or have evidence they have resided in the UK for 12 months or more prior to the visa application being made. The University of Suffolk reserves the right to request and review financial evidence as part of the CAS application before agreeing to issue a

CAS even when an applicant or student is exempt from submitting financial evidence with their visa application.

Issuance (Applicants and Current Students)

50. University of Suffolk is required to only issue CAS to genuine students and retains the right to conduct additional checks to ensure this.

51. University of Suffolk can only issue CAS for courses that meet the Immigration Rules for the Student route.

52. University of Suffolk can only issue CAS to applicants or current students who meet the UKVI's Immigration Rules.

53. A CAS will not be issued more than six months before the programme start date.

54. Where the applicant or student is in the UK, a CAS will not be issued more than 3 months before the programme start date.

55. CAS will typically be issued on a first-come-first-serve basis. However, the University of Suffolk reserves the right to prioritise CAS issuance for certain recruitment markets or courses in cases of limited CAS or when deemed necessary by the University of Suffolk.

56. University of Suffolk cannot issue a CAS if its allocation has been fully used. The allocation renews on an annual basis, which requires the University of Suffolk to submit an application to the UKVI for their next CAS allocation.

57. There are a number of circumstances where the University of Suffolk may be unable to sponsor an applicant or student (referred to below as 'applicant') by issuing a CAS. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Failure to provide the University of Suffolk with the necessary personal information (including, but not limited to bank statements/other financial documents to demonstrate sufficient funds as defined by the UKVI) to issue a CAS.
- Failure to obtain [Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\)](#) clearance where it is required for a course of study.
- The applicant has or will exceed the maximum time allowed for study at degree-level or below as defined [Appendix Student](#) of the Immigration Rules.
- The applicant requires but does not have valid leave to be in the UK at the time the CAS is requested.
- The applicant has submitted information or documents that are proven or suspected to be fraudulent or demonstrates behaviour that is deemed fraudulent.
- The applicant is unable to meet sponsorship deadlines set by the University of Suffolk.
- The applicant has failed to demonstrate clear intentions and motivation to study in the UK at a pre-CAS interview, or through behaviour demonstrated throughout the application process.
- The University of Suffolk believes that a visa application will not be successful. Grounds for this may include (but are not limited to) inadequate information, a history

of visa refusals, insufficient funds, overstaying, language ability or on the basis of the applicant's criminal history.

- The applicant has previously been refused visa sponsorship by the University of Suffolk.
- The applicant has previously studied at a higher academic level in the UK under Student or Tier 4 visa routes, meaning academic progress cannot be demonstrated. Where an applicant has previously studied at the same academic level in the UK or overseas, the University of Suffolk will assess on a case-by-case basis whether a CAS application can be considered.
- There may be instances where the University of Suffolk has causes for concern regarding the success of a visa application at any point during the application process (i.e. prior to a CAS request). If this is the case the University of Suffolk will advise the applicant that sponsorship will not be granted, and the application will be withdrawn.
- The applicant has previously had their visa sponsorship withdrawn by University of Suffolk.
- The University of Suffolk determines that the applicant does not meet the [UKVI's Genuine Student requirement](#).
- The University of Suffolk believes sponsorship could put the sponsor licence at risk.
- The applicant fails to satisfy the relevant requirements specified in this document.

Refusals (Applicants and Current Students)

58. New or current students who have been refused a Student visa may request one further CAS subject to the University of Suffolk's approval. They must be able to evidence that a further visa application is likely to be successful. In such cases, they must submit their full visa refusal letter before they can be considered for further CAS issuance. University of Suffolk reserve the right to decline any request for a subsequent CAS following a visa refusal.

59. The University of Suffolk reserves the right to reject future applications to study from applicants who have received a visa refusal.

60. Applicants are encouraged to submit an Administrative Review to the UKVI where they believe their Student visa has been refused in error. In some cases, University of Suffolk may decline the option to offer an additional CAS where it believes that an Administrative Review should be pursued to overturn a refusal.

61. Where an applicant receives a visa refusal from the UKVI, University of Suffolk is required by the UKVI to report the visa refusal and withdraw visa sponsorship, except in cases where an Administrative Review is being submitted. Applicants who do not confirm to University of Suffolk Admissions that they intend to submit an Administrative Review will have their refusal reported and visa sponsorship withdrawn. Once the refusal is reported to the UKVI, any pending Administrative Reviews become liable for automatic rejection.

62. Where an Administrative Review is submitted, the University of Suffolk will retain the full CAS deposit payment until the result of the Administrative Review is confirmed.

- Where the Administrative Review is successful and a Student visa is granted, the CAS deposit will not be refunded and the funds will contribute towards the student's tuition fees.

- Where the Administrative Review is unsuccessful and the original refusal decision is upheld, applicants can request a CAS deposit refund. Requests will be considered in accordance with the Tuition Fee Policy. Refund eligibility will be determined in line with the reasons for the original refusal decision.

Withdrawals (Applicants and Current Students)

63. University of Suffolk reserves the right to withdraw a CAS or withdraw sponsorship of a visa in certain instances.

- Discovery of fraudulent documents, information or behaviour (either discovered by us or UKVI) at any time during the period of Student sponsorship. In such instances, withdrawal of sponsorship may occur post-CAS issuance, post-visa issuance or post-enrolment.
- The University of Suffolk has concerns that the applicant no longer meets the requirements of the Student visa route.
- Additional information is received which leads the University of Suffolk to believe a visa application will be unsuccessful.
- The University of Suffolk believes the submission or outcome of the applicant's visa application would put its sponsor licence at risk.
- The applicant will not receive their visa and arrive to the UK in accordance with deadlines set by the University of Suffolk (extensions to these deadlines may be granted on a case-by-case basis). Applicants are expected to withdraw their visa application where they are unable to meet the latest arrival deadline for their course.

64. International students should be aware that University of Suffolk will report to the UKVI any student who is issued with a CAS, but does not enrol, misses classes, stops attending, or defers their place in accordance with the [University of Suffolk General Regulations \(Students\), Student Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy and Tuition Fee Policy](#).

CAS Updates and Corrections (Applicants and Current Students)

65. In some limited cases, it may be necessary for the University of Suffolk to issue a revised CAS due to the presence of errors in the original CAS.

- In such cases, the original CAS will be withdrawn by the University of Suffolk and will not be valid for a visa application.

66. It is the applicant or current students' responsibility to ensure the CAS is accurate before submitting a visa application.

67. Where an incorrect tuition fee is stated on the CAS, this is not a commitment by the University of Suffolk to honour those fees. For the avoidance of doubt, the tuition fee stated on the Definitive Course Record will supersede tuition fees stated on a CAS.

68. If an applicant pays an additional CAS deposit prior to their CAS being used in a Student route application the University of Suffolk may issue a revised CAS letter.

- A new CAS is not required in this instance but an updated CAS letter can be issued.
- The University of Suffolk cannot guarantee that a CAS will be updated in time to notify the UKVI when an additional deposit is paid. Therefore, applicants are advised to submit official proof of their payment with their visa application.

COMPLAINTS

69. Concerns that the principles and procedures of this policy have been incorrectly implemented may be raised through the relevant University of Suffolk appeals and complaints procedures:

- Applicants (new students): [Applicant Appeals and Complaints Procedure](#)
- Current students: [Student Complaints Procedure](#)