

Ulster University — Pre-CAS Interview Guidelines

London • Manchester • Birmingham campuses

The Pre-CAS Interview (PCI) is your opportunity to demonstrate to UKVI and the University that you are a **genuine student** with a clear academic purpose. Your decision must come across as **well-researched, honest, and your own**. The guidance below sets out exactly what to do — and what to avoid — to give yourself the strongest possible chance of success.

The 5 questions you must master

1. Why did you choose to study in the UK?
2. Did you consider any other country?
3. Why did you choose Ulster University (and this campus)?
4. Did you consider any other UK university?
5. Why this particular course?

✓ DOs — What to do

Research thoroughly — be the source of your answers

- **Know why the UK:** globally recognised degrees, multicultural environment, improvement of academic and general English, the Graduate Route (2-year post-study work visa), and quality assurance bodies — QAA, REF, TEF, and QS rankings.
- **Know why Ulster University and your specific campus** (London, Manchester or Birmingham): location advantages such as proximity to financial hubs, transport links, employer connections, and campus-specific facilities.
- **Know the ACE Team** — the Academic Community of Excellence. Don't just name it: be ready to explain what it stands for and what it does for students.
- **Know your course in depth:** the full module names, what each module covers, and any accreditations (e.g. CIPS for supply chain courses, NCSC certification for cyber security).

Be ready for comparison questions

- **“Did you consider other countries?”** — name a specific university abroad, the exact course name, location, modules, and fees. Compare honestly with Ulster.
- **“Did you consider other UK universities?”** — same depth: official rankings, course content, and the specific reasons Ulster won.
- Use **official ranking sources only:** the Complete University Guide, The Guardian, or the QS World Rankings.

Show purpose, ambition and honesty

- **Link the course to your background** — previous studies or work experience — and to your **future career goals**.

- **Show enthusiasm.** Studying in the UK should come across as a privilege you are genuinely excited about. Even good answers delivered without energy can fail an applicant.
- **Be honest.** Interviewers verify; dishonesty is one of the most common causes of refusal.
- **Stay calm.** Anxiety can cause you to forget key information or give answers that don't make sense — practise out loud beforehand so your delivery is natural.

Ulster University — Pre-CAS Interview Guidelines

London • Manchester • Birmingham campuses

X DON'Ts — What to avoid

Don't lean on weak or risky reasons

- **Don't use the weather** as a reason to reject another country. Saying Canada is too cold or Australia is too hot is not credible — many South Asian countries are equally hot.
- **Don't cite flight time or distance.** A 7-hour vs 13-hour flight is not a serious decision factor.
- **Don't say friends, family or an agent recommended it.** They can advise, but the research and the final decision must clearly be yours.

Don't sound rehearsed or fake

- **Don't memorise answers.** Reciting statistics word-for-word reads as scripted and not genuine.
- **Don't read from a script.** If your answers sound book-like, UKVI will refuse the visa.
- **Don't use AI-generated answers.** In one recent interview the interviewer could hear an AI voiceover answering “Why have you chosen to study in the UK” — an instant fail.

Don't reveal alternative motives

- **Don't mention wanting to settle in the UK,** join family already in the UK, or any non-study purpose. In the last intake, an applicant said this during their PCI and their application was rejected.
- **Don't prioritise working over studying** in your answers. Part-time work is secondary; your studies must come first.

Don't give unrealistic or vague answers

- **Don't quote unrealistic salaries** — e.g. claiming you will earn 10 lakhs per month as a fresh UK graduate is not believable.
- **Don't name facilities you can't explain.** If you mention the ACE Team, be ready to say what ACE stands for and what they do.
- **Don't apply for a course unrelated to your background** without a strong, detailed explanation bridging the two.

The golden rule

For every answer, ask yourself: *could any applicant give this answer about any university?* If yes, it isn't strong enough. Your answer must show **your own research, specific detail, honest motivation, and genuine enthusiasm.**