

CAS Policy & Procedure

Policy Owner: Commercial Director
Last Updated: June 2016
Last Reviewed: July 2016
Next Review Date: July 2017
Version Number: v1.1
Informed by Quality Code Chapters: B2

CAS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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1 Policy and Purpose

All students requiring a Tier 4 Visa to study in the UK, and any institution wishing to enroll a student requiring a visa, are required to follow the guidelines as stipulated by the UK Visa and Immigration department.

A CAS is a unique identifier number which is issued by ICMP (the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance), to the applicant, via the UKVI's electronic sponsor management system (SMS). It contains information relating to both the applicant, and the course of study.

A CAS is valid for 6 months, so should not be issued more than 6 months before it is needed.

CAS can be issued on any course at ICMP that is full time, and deemed suitable for international study as agreed by the Visa Compliance Committee (VCC).

The ICMP will only issue a CAS to students who hold an unconditional place for an approved course.

ICMP issue CAS to applicants on internally approved courses which are:

- Of full time study
- Longer than 6 months
- At NQF Level 4 or above

ICMP is a Tier 4 Sponsor and as such it is able to sponsor international students wishing to study at ICMP under the Tier 4 visa route.

Under this system as a sponsor the ICMP accepts a range of responsibilities and duties regarding the recruitment and sponsorship of genuine students, and the monitoring and reporting of said students whilst enrolled on programmes of study at ICMP.

ICMP is fully committed to discharging its duties as a Tier 4 Sponsor and as illustrated in the relevant Home Office guidance documentation.

ICMP undertakes to establish effective and appropriate mechanisms to assure itself that it is discharging these duties for international students in line with published guidance regarding:

1. Recruitment
2. Enrolment
3. Attendance
4. Withdrawal/changes of circumstance

Procedures

2 Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Key Roles

Key roles are as follows:

- **Monitoring and maintaining compliance with UKVI regulations**
The Visa Compliance Committee (VCC) is responsible for monitoring CAS applications, and maintaining compliance with UKVI stipulations on the issuance of a CAS, and make recommendations of actions where necessary regarding the CAS process.
- **Approval of applicants for CAS**
The CAS panel is responsible for making final checks to any CAS applicant and ensuring that all documents supplied meet the UKVI regulations, and to confirm that the applicant is suitable to have a CAS issued at that time. The CAS panel is made up of a minimum of three members of the VCC in order to approve applicants.
- **Communicating with applicants and processing CAS within the SMS**
The Admissions team are responsible for communicating with students (and agents where appropriate) regarding admission to the course, and application for the CAS. Admissions Advisors will communicate guidance and support during the application stage. The Admissions Supervisor or a more senior Admissions Advisor will create the CAS in the SMS.
- **Appeals & Complaints**
Appeals and complaints relating to the CAS process are handled by the ICMP's Quality Manager in line with our Public Complaints Procedure available at www.icmp.co.uk.

2.2 Training and Support for Staff

When taking up an academic or admissions role, ICMP staff participate in a programme of preparation, professional updating and sharing of good practice, including relevant components from the following:

- internal seminars - to update academic and administrative staff with developments in ICMP and sector practice, including UKVI
- internal newsletters are circulated to all staff to notify when changes are made to UKVI policies relating to Tier 4 applicants
- external consultants – external consultants on UKVI policies are subscribed to for the use of those staff processing CAS and/or dealing with the Tier 4 students once their study has commenced
- events and conferences run by external companies such as Study-UK and UK NARIC

2.3 Confidentiality & Disclosure

All applications are created as an electronic record on our student administration system. Subject to the provisions of data protection and FOI legislation, the information provided by applicants is only shared with those ICMP and partner staff directly involved with processing the application or undertaking related management activity such as the administration of surveys and market research, compilation of statistics and the provision of further information about ICMP. It is implicit that where referees are named, we have the applicant's permission to approach these; however where we need to undertake further checks involving a third party we will seek the applicant's permission beforehand, whilst noting that we may not be able to proceed with an application without such permission.

3 The Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) Process

All applicants, including international, for any ICMP programme must have submitted an application form, and completed a suitable audition as stipulated for entry in the Admissions Policy.

All applicants who require a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK and who have successfully completed an application and audition will need to supply the requisite documents needed to meet UKVI regulations to ICMP prior to the issuance of a CAS.

3.1 Documents and Requirements

- **Passport**

The applicant must supply a copy of the photo page of the passport with which they intend to apply for a CAS. This passport must show the biometric information in English as well as the native language from where it was issued. The passport must have a minimum of 6 months validity before expiry.

- **Qualifications**

Applicants are required to provide copies of their qualifications achieved which must be suitable for entry on to their chosen course.

- a. These must be official final certificates or transcripts (not provisional), stamped and/or signed by the educational institute who issued the certificate/transcript, and on official headed paper.
- b. If the certificate/transcript is not in English or Welsh, translated copies must be provided. The translation must include the stamp of the translator, details of the translation company, confirmation that it is an accurate translation of the original, and contact details for the translator/translation company.
- c. If the applicant has previously studied in the UK, the course they are applying for must be of a higher academic level on the QCF. If the course is of the same academic level, a justification must be provided to support the application.

- d. All qualifications will be assessed at the level they are assigned from UK NARIC. A copy of the UK NARIC advice is required with the applicant's certificate/transcript for CAS panel approval.

- **English Language Qualification**

All applicants are required to obtain a UKVI approved English language qualification, with the exception of those that come from a majority English speaking country as defined by UKVI. Applicants will need to meet the minimum level of B1 for courses below QCF Level 6, and B2 for courses at QCF Level 6 or above. The English test must be within the UKVI stipulated validity times.

Applicants may be exempt from this where they have successfully completed a course equivalent to UK Bachelor's level which was taught in a UKVI approved majority English speaking country.

- **Financial Statements**

Applicants are required to show that they have enough monetary funds available to them to support themselves financially for the duration of their study.

- a. ICMP is considered "in London", located within the City of London and the Former Metropolitan Police District. Applicants are required to show a minimum of £1,256 for each month of study, up to a maximum of 9 months.
- b. Applicants from low-risk countries are able to self-certify their documents and therefore may not be asked to provide proof, but are still expected to hold to the relevant point above and should be prepared to present evidence if required to do so.

The following documents can be used to show monies available:

- a. Personal bank/building society statements showing a consecutive 28 day period, ending no more than one month before the date of the application for the visa. Statements must include the name on the account, the account number, the date of the statement, the money available over the 28 days, and must be printed on headed paper showing the bank's logo.

Electronic bank statements showing the same account information may be used, however they will need either a letter from the bank/building society to confirm the authenticity of the statements, or official bank stamps signed by a bank authority on each page of the electronic statements*.

- b. A letter from the applicants bank/building society on headed paper with the bank's logo which must confirm the name on the account, the account number, and that the applicant has held the required amount of funds for a minimum of 28 consecutive days.

- c. A joint account may be used, provided evidence of funds is submitted in one of the accepted methods, and that the applicant is named as one of the joint holders of the account.
- d. Personal bank/building society pass book showing a consecutive 28 day period, ending no more than one month before the date of the application for the visa. The pass book must include the name on the account, the account number, the date of the statement, the money available over the 28 days and must clearly show the institution's name and logo.

Applicants can also use money held by a parent or legal guardian as evidence of funds available to them for the duration of their study. The applicant will need to provide one of the above documents showing funds available in the name of their parent/legal guardian. Applicants who choose this option will also need to provide:

- a. The applicant's birth certificate showing the names of their parents or a certificate of adoption showing the names of both parents and legal guardians or a court document naming the legal guardian.
- b. A letter of sponsor support from the parents/legal guardians which must be signed and must confirm the relationship between the sponsor and the applicant, and the sponsors consent to the applicant to use their funds for the duration of their study in the UK.
- c. Copies of the parent/legal guardian sponsor's passport for signature verification.

Financial statements or letters that confirm funds held in a foreign currency will be converted using the UKVI recommended currency converter, OANDA Classic Converter. Copies of the currency conversion should be included with the application prior to CAS committee approval.

Financial statements or letters from banks/building societies are checked against the UKVI Appendix P list of both satisfactory and unsatisfactory international institutions.

** ICMP can provide applicants with a template bank letter if requested.*

▪ **Tuition Fees**

The applicant must ensure that tuition fees for either the full course (course of one year or less) or the first year's tuition fees (for courses of more than one year duration) are paid in full. CAS will not be issued prior to full payment being received. Tier 4 applications should ensure they are familiar with ICMP's Refund Policy available at www.icmp.co.uk/policies prior to making payment of their fees.

3.2 Other Considerations

ICMP may consider other aspects of an applicant's documents, previous education or personal history when deciding to issue a CAS, more specifically:

- Applicants who have applied for Tier 4 visa for study in the UK previously will need to declare this information on their application form and/or CAS declaration. If an applicant has previously had an application refused, they may be required to provide further information on this.
- Applicants who have studied previously in the UK on a Tier 4 visa for three years at below QCF Level 6, or for five years at QCF Level 6 or above will not be eligible for a CAS for further study due to UKVI regulations.
- Applicants applying for a Tier 4 visa, who are currently in the UK under a different visa, will need to disclose their current immigration status, and we would recommend they apply for either the Tier 4 visa, or an extension of their current visa, prior to their existing leave expiring.
- Applicants applying for an extension who are already in the UK on an ICMP issued Tier 4 visa will need to apply for an extension prior to their existing leave expiring. Any new CAS approved will continue on from the day after the previous visa expires.
- Applicants in the UK on a Tier 4 visa with another institution who wish to transfer to ICMP will be treated as a new applicant.

4 Responsibilities of CAS applicants

4.1 Responsibilities at Application

In order to operate the CAS approval process in a fair, effective manner, we place certain obligations upon the applicant, namely:

- to provide complete and accurate information as requested through the application process, so that the application can be properly assessed
- to provide all relevant documents as requested by ICMP against UKVI regulations, the documents are outlined to applicants through the CAS Guidance for Tier 4 applicants which is sent to all overseas applicants
- to update us as soon as possible if personal details or study intentions change, this includes during the application process, once a CAS has been issued but before the arrival of the applicant, and once the student arrives and is enrolled on the course
- to provide any additional information required to support the approval process which may be requested by ICMP
- to meet any and all requirements for entering the UK as stipulated by the UKVI, such as registration with the police

4.2 CAS Declaration

Prior to the issue of a CAS, the ICMP requires Tier 4 applicants to sign a 'CAS declaration document'. This document confirms:

- Any previous study in the UK which the applicant has undertaken
- Any previous applications for a UK Tier 4 visa and the outcome of any applications made
- The student is responsible for keeping ICMP up to date and notifying us of any changes to their contact details, residency details and terms of their stay, marital status, etc
- The student is responsible for keeping ICMP informed of any necessary absences from their studies
- The student is aware of the required attendance levels for their course and the mandatory 10 consecutive contact points
- The student is aware they are not permitted to work whilst studying at ICMP

The 'CAS Declaration Document' also makes the applicant aware that they may be requested to complete a credibility interview as part of their application for a Tier 4 visa, and offers basic guidance on areas in which the student may be required to provide information.

5 Refusal of Sponsorship

ICMP reserves the right to refuse sponsorship of an applicant where:

- the applicant has exceeded the maximum time allowed to study in the UK
- the applicant has studied previously in the UK on the same or higher level qualification and cannot show sufficient justification for the application
- the applicant has provided false or misleading information as part of their application to the course, including the audition
- a first CAS application has been refused on the basis of documents provided to the UKVI, which were not provided to ICMP prior to the application

6 Withdrawal of Sponsorship

ICMP reserves the right to withdraw their sponsorship of a Tier 4 applicant once a CAS has been issued should the applicant:

- not enroll for their course, or subsequent year of a course
- withdraw themselves from the course
- not make satisfactory academic progress whilst studying on their course
- owe fees for any part of their course
- breach the terms and conditions of their stay as set out by UKVI
- breach the terms set out in their programme handbook
- fail to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance for the duration of their course or meet their required 10 consecutive contact points
- take an unauthorised leave of absence from the course

- move to another institution
- fail to adhere to the student code of conduct

Where withdrawing an applicant who has been issued a CAS, the ICMP will notify UKVI via the Sponsor Management System.

Where an applicant transfers to another UK based institution, the ICMP will notify UKVI via the Sponsor Management System with details of the applicant's new course and institution, if known.