



Offering help, information and advice

## International Students

Scotland has a long history of welcoming international students to study in its universities and colleges. These students come from many different countries and add greatly to the educational and social experience, with a unique multi-cultural environment. These students may need advice and support, in particular entry qualifications and course requirements, immigration and visa issues, financial matters, employment, and international student welfare. These notes aim to help you to be ready to answer their questions and help them from thinking about studying all the way through the application process and include:

- Financial support
- English as a second language
- Qualifications gained overseas
- National schemes for asylum seekers and refugees

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This information is intended to help you to give advice to international students who wish to study a course of further or higher education in Scotland, including:

- asylum seekers
- refugees and those with leave to remain
- EEA migrant workers
- Non-UK European nationals

#### Asylum seekers

- Asylum seekers are defined as those whose application for asylum has not yet been processed.
- The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) will waive the fees for asylum seekers attending college, and studying:
  - ◊ Full- or part-time English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses

- ◊ Other part-time advanced or non-advanced course.

*Adult ESOL learners are those for whom English is not a first language, and who need spoken and written English for everyday life and to participate in the labour market, their local communities and wider society.*

- Asylum seekers are also eligible to apply for support from the Hardship Fund for help with travel and study costs.

#### Refugees and those with leave to remain

- Includes those who have been awarded refugee status by the Home Office or those who have been refused refugee status but granted some other form of leave to remain (e.g. Humanitarian Protection, Discretionary Leave).
- Provided they are ordinarily resident in Scotland on the first day of the first academic year of the course, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands at all times since receiving refugee status or leave to remain, students who are refugees or have leave to remain are eligible to apply for:
  - ◊ fee and student support in Higher Education (HE),
  - ◊ fee waiver and discretionary bursary support in Further Education (FE),
- The spouse, civil partner or child of a refugee or with leave to remain who meets the ordinary residence criteria in Scotland is also eligible.
- These students are also eligible to apply for an Individual Learning Account (ILA) or an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).



### EEA Migrant workers

- The EEA consists of the areas of the member states of the EU plus Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein ([current list](#)).
- Initially an EEA or Swiss national is eligible to be classed as a migrant worker for a period of 6 months after they have arrived in the UK without work as long as they are actively seeking employment.
- Following this, a period of work must be secured to be entitled to retain the classification of migrant worker.
- There is no minimum period of employment in this situation but it would be advisable to ensure that any work secured by the claimant was not for the sole purpose of securing eligibility for financial support from the college.
- If they are ordinarily resident in Scotland on the first day of the first academic year of the course, and have been ordinarily resident in the EEA or Switzerland throughout the immediately preceding 3-year period, students are eligible to apply for:
  - ◊ fee and student support in HE
  - ◊ fee waiver and discretionary bursary support in FE,
  - ◊ family members who meet this residence criteria may also be eligible
- They are also eligible to apply for an ILA or an EMA.

### Non-UK EU nationals

An EU national with a right of permanent residence in the UK (after 5 years of residence), will be eligible in the same way as a person with settled status in the UK. Similarly a UK national exercising their right of permanent residence in other areas of the European Economic Area (EEA) may also be eligible to receive fee and student support in their colleges and universities.

### Further Education

Funding	Fees	Other support	State benefits
Asylum seekers	May be eligible for fee waiver	Some help with travel costs and books  Can apply for the Hardship Fund	No
Refugees	Eligible for fee waiver*	Eligible to apply to Hardship and Childcare funds*  Can apply for an ILA and EMA	Support may be available
Migrant workers			
EU National	Same as a UK student**		

\* If fulfilling residency criteria

\*\* With a right of permanent residence

### Higher Education

Funding	Fees	Other support	State benefits
Asylum seeker	May be eligible for fee waiver	Some help with travel costs and books  Can apply for the Hardship Fund	No
Refugees	Part-time students may be eligible for fee waiver  Full time students eligible to apply for payment of tuition fees*	Part time students eligible to apply for disabled student allowance and hardship funds*  Full time students eligible to apply for living cost support and hardship funds*	Support may be available
Migrant workers			
EU National	Same as a UK student**		

\* If fulfilling residency criteria

\*\* With a right of permanent residence



## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

If English is not the student's first language, it is important to remind them that all courses will be delivered and assessed in English. Therefore, they will need to ensure that their spoken and written English is appropriate. In Scotland, there are many opportunities for adults to learn English. These can range from informal classes in the local community to courses at colleges. Some colleges offer ESOL courses at a variety of levels, from beginners through to advanced.

Before enrolling on an English language course, students may be asked to take a test of their current English language skills to make sure they're placed in a class at a suitable level. The length of the course and the frequency of the classes will affect how quickly they can progress from level to level. Many colleges and community centres offer free or low cost English language courses if students are ordinarily resident in Scotland and meet certain eligibility criteria.

SCQF	SQA qualifications	ESOL levels	IELTS levels
7	Advanced Higher		
6	Higher	Advanced	6/6.5
5	Intermediate 2	Upper intermediate	5/5.5
4	Intermediate 1	Intermediate	4.5
3	Access 3	Beginners Pre-intermediate	
2	Access 2	Pre-beginners Beginners	
1	Access 1		

## QUALIFICATIONS GAINED OVERSEAS

For international students to obtain recognition of their professional qualifications gained overseas, it is necessary to register with the designated authority for their profession in the UK. The Higher Education and Research Opportunities (HERO) website contains links to the main professional bodies in the UK ([www.hero.ac.uk](http://www.hero.ac.uk)).

- *Accountancy* – Association of Chartered Certified Accountants [www.assa.co.uk](http://www.assa.co.uk)
- *Civil Engineering* – The Institution of Civil Engineers [www.ice.org.uk](http://www.ice.org.uk)
- *Dentistry* – General Dental Council [www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)
- *Engineering* – Engineering council UK [www.engc.org.uk](http://www.engc.org.uk)
- *Law* – Law Society of Scotland [www.lawscot.org.uk](http://www.lawscot.org.uk)
- *Medicine* – General Medical Council [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)
- *Nursing* – Nursing and midwifery council [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)
- *Pharmacology* – Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain [www.rpsgb.org.uk](http://www.rpsgb.org.uk)
- *Teaching* – General Teaching Council for Scotland [www.gtcs.org.uk](http://www.gtcs.org.uk)

There are several schemes to help refugees and asylum seekers to have their previous qualifications recognised and to help them into further or higher education.

### Overseas trades people accreditation and re-skilling (OTAR)

This project identifies people with a trade background in their country of origin, particularly those that are important for the construction industry. The project aims to give fast track accreditation and fill the gaps so that overseas workers can quickly gain recognised qualifications and enter the workforce ([www.bridgesprogramme.org.uk](http://www.bridgesprogramme.org.uk)).

### Refugees into teaching in Scotland (RITeS)

RiTeS works with refugees who have teaching qualifications. They offer specialised long-term guidance and support for job search (including assessing prior learning),



professional re-qualification and entry/re-entry into higher education. They can offer advice on registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland and help obtain voluntary placements in schools. They can also provide advice on the education system, including curriculum, methodology and resources ([www.strath.ac.uk/cps/rites](http://www.strath.ac.uk/cps/rites)).

Refugee and asylum seekers doctors' scheme  
This scheme is designed to assist medical professionals (doctors, dentists and pharmacists) arriving in Scotland, either as asylum seekers or refugees, towards work within the NHS for Scotland. The scheme provides assistance with the recognition of previous professional qualifications, mentoring support to help sit English language exams and professional re-qualification ([www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/medicine/refugee\\_doctors/default.asp](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/medicine/refugee_doctors/default.asp)).

Council for assisting refugee academics (CARA)  
CARA operates an information and advice service and a small grants programme to assist refugees with an academic background to re-establish their careers in the UK ([www.academic-refugees.org](http://www.academic-refugees.org)).

#### Scottish refugee Council (SRC)

The SRC is an independent charity, dedicated to providing advice, information and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland. They provide advice on education and careers, ESOL courses, funding and accreditation of overseas qualifications ([www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)).

#### **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS**

- What student support services are available in your organisation for international students?
- How can students apply for financial support?
- What English Language courses are available in your area?

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

- Local information
- [Diverse routes – asylum seekers](#)
- [Diverse routes – second language](#)
- [HERO](#)
- [Scottish Executive Funding](#)