Guidance for applicants to the Cambridge Foundation Year with Refugee/Seeking Asylum Status

2023/24 Entry
Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide support to UK-based forced migrants (refugees or asylum seekers) who wish to make an application to the Foundation Year at the University of Cambridge. Further information on this programme is available at cam.ac.uk/foundationyear.

The University defines a refugee as someone whose claim for asylum has been recognised and they have been granted official 'refugee' status. An asylum seeker is defined as someone who is in the process of seeking asylum, or the decision is still pending.

The guidance provided in this document is also applicable to those who have been granted humanitarian protection which has resulted in permission to stay in the UK for humanitarian reasons.

If you have been granted limited leave to remain (LLR) or discretionary leave to remain (DLR) as a result of an asylum claim, you are eligible to apply for the Cambridge Foundation Year. However, you would likely not be eligible for student finance support for further degree study at Cambridge or elsewhere and could even be liable for 'Overseas' tuition fees which are much more expensive than 'Home' fees. Consult the sources listed in ‘Further Support' below for more guidance and information on scholarships that you might be eligible for in the future.

Foundation Year Eligibility Criteria

Verifying eligibility is an important part of ensuring that the programme can support the students it has been designed for.

To be considered for the programme, all applicants should meet one or more criteria from at least two of the categories detailed on our website (unless you are care-experienced) and will ordinarily be resident in the UK. If you are not already resident in the UK you will not be eligible for the programme.

Category 1: Individual Characteristics

Applicants with Refugee status or Humanitarian Protection in the UK, or as someone who has claimed asylum in the UK, will automatically meet the criteria stipulated in Category One - Individual Characteristics. To be eligible for the Foundation Year, you must also meet one or more of the criteria stipulated in either Category 2 - Family Characteristics or Category 3 - School/College Characteristics.

You will be asked to evidence your eligibility as part of the application process. Full details on this are available at www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/foundation-year#eligibility.

To prove your status, you could provide official documentation reflecting your (or your parent(s)/carer(s)) status. This could be evidence of limited or indefinite leave to remain such as a copy of a Biometric Residence Permit (previously Immigration Status Document) or an Application Registration Card (ARC) for asylum seekers. We appreciate that there can be delays in obtaining formal documentation from the Home Office or other authorities. We would also accept a letter of support from a registered educational charity such as Refugee Education UK if they have been supporting you.
If you are in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, we appreciate you may not yet have your Biometric Residence Permit. We would accept a copy of your Permission to Travel letter.

**Category 2: Family Characteristics**

There may be some aspects of your applicant profile that do not correlate easily with the stated eligibility criteria for applicants on our website.

This table provides further guidance on how to apply Category 2 criteria to your circumstances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Further Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are currently eligible for Free School Meals</td>
<td>You will be eligible to receive Free School Meals if you are currently in the British education system and are receiving support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have been eligible for Free School Meals at any point in the previous 6 years</td>
<td>You could have been eligible for Free School Meals if you were in the British education system after being granted leave to remain in the last 6 years or otherwise received support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a combined UK household income of £25,000 or less</td>
<td>If you are under 25 and financially depend on at least one parent this includes their income if you live with them. If you live in the same household and depend on the partner of one of your parents, their income is also included. If you are under 25 and do not financially depend on your parent(s) and live independently we would consider your own income and the income of any spouse. If you are over 25 we would consider your own income. If you have a partner or spouse, their income is included in your household income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You or your parent(s)/carer(s) are eligible for Universal Credit</td>
<td>Universal Credit is available to those with refugee status who otherwise meet the government’s criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This applies to you if you are over 25 or otherwise would be classed as an independent student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It applies to you or your parent(s)/carer(s) if you are under 25 and live with them or depend on them financially.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Category 3: School/College Characteristics**

Criteria in Category 3, refer only to institutions based in the UK. We are sadly unable to verify or fairly compare data on schools or colleges outside of the UK. As such, you will only be eligible under this category if you have attended a school or college in the UK since your arrival. Further detail on how to determine if the institutions you attended would make you eligible is available here.
Academic Entry Requirements

All applicants need to have secured or be predicted to secure 120 UCAS Tariff Points. This is a value applied to different qualification types and grades to make it easy to compare them.

If you have studied qualifications in the UK such as A Levels, Access to HE Diploma, BTECs or Scottish Highers, you can check the points you hold using the UCAS Tariff Calculator: [www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator)

If your qualifications come from outside of the UK, they may still have a Tariff value, but there are relatively few that do. If your international qualification does not have a UCAS Tariff value, we may still accept it and you should contact us directly to find out. One of the sources of information we would consult would be the UCAS Qualification Information Profiles to compare your qualification to our requirements which can help us to compare your qualification level: [www.qips.ucas.com](http://www.qips.ucas.com)

If you need help understanding if your qualification would be suitable for entry, you can contact Dr Alex Pryce at foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk. In your email, please provide the qualifications full title, the country in which you studied, and the grade(s) you achieved to assist us in researching the equivalency to UK FHEQ Level 3 qualifications. If you have a transcript, it can be helpful to attach it.

You may need to obtain a statement of comparability to certify your qualification. This can be obtained from UK ENIC: [www.enic.org.uk](http://www.enic.org.uk)

If your qualifications would not meet the 120 UCAS Tariff Points level, it is unlikely your application would be competitive and we advise that you seek opportunities for further study to meet our requirements.

How to make an application

Applications for this programme must be made via UCAS once admissions open for the relevant academic year entry. If you are a student at a school/college in the UK, they can usually offer advice and support to help coordinate your application. It is possible to apply independently if you aren’t studying at a school/college in the UK. There is advice and guidance available directly from UCAS for ‘independent applicants’.

The application process is the same for all applicants. However, you might like to note that if your first language isn’t English, your English language skills must be good enough for you to undertake an intensive and challenging course that is both taught and examined in English. Throughout the admissions process, we will be assessing your English language skills as well as your academic ability. See [English language requirements](#) for details.
Further support

There is a range of sources of support that can assist refugees and asylum seekers with Higher Education applications in the UK:

- Take a look at UCAS’s [student finance information for refugees and asylum seekers](#);
- [Student Action for Refugees (STAR)](#) is a national network of students who are working to help refugees in the UK – including access to higher education. It also lists [scholarships and bursaries](#) available directly through HE providers and charitable organisations;
- Guidance on fee status and government financial support is available from [UKCISA](#);
- [Refugee Education UK](#) provide advice by email or WhatsApp;
- [Project Access](#) support refugee students in making applications to top universities through mentorship;
- [InsideUni](#) has a support page for refugee applicants;
- [Cambridge Refugee Scholarship Campaign](#) has support for refugee applicants to Cambridge.

We are on hand to answer any further queries and support applications to the Foundation Year from those with refugee status or those seeking asylum in the UK. To best support you, please make enquiries in good time. You can reach Dr Alex Pryce at [foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk)

You may also wish to join our mailing list for application support and free webinars at [www.foundationyear.cam.ac.uk/prospective-students/applicant-newsletter](http://www.foundationyear.cam.ac.uk/prospective-students/applicant-newsletter)

Details are correct at the time of publication (May 2022) but should be checked against the Undergraduate Study website for the most up-to-date information. © University of Cambridge, 2022.