



Validation for
Inclusion of New
Citizens of Europe

GUIDELINES

Welcome to this Institution

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Introduction

These guidelines are aimed at supporting higher education professionals dealing with enquiries and applications to their institutions by refugees or migrants with a refugee-like situation who would like to start or continue their higher education.

Typical questions asked by migrants have been formulated and the answers provided, grouped into four categories:

- General Information about the Institution and Departments
- Language Issues
- Funding and Financial Support
- Social and Practical Issues

The regulations at the various higher education institutions in Europe differ not only from country to country, but within the countries themselves. Each institution will handle various issues differently, depending on the country or even region, type of institution, etc. For this reason, comprehensive, detailed answers to all the questions cannot be provided; guidelines on how to answer these frequently asked questions by migrants have been drafted, giving the institutions the flexibility to adapt the answers to their own specific needs.

It is recommended that the institution adds a section on its website specifically for refugees/migrants interested in studying at their institution. At the end of these guidelines some examples are given of higher education institutions in Europe which have already started initiatives to support refugees applying to study there. Links to the relevant sections on their websites are given.

At the end of the document you will find also the list of links to websites or/and documents used when writing this document that might be useful as a reference.

General Information about the institution and departments

Q: Where can an overview of this institution be found?

A: Depending on the size of the institution, it may be appropriate to give a brief overview in English of the faculties/departments of the institution. A link to the institution's website can provide more details.

Q: Where is the institution and how can it be reached?

A: Most institutions will have a map and directions to the institution on their websites, so a link should be sufficient.

Q: What are the rules and regulations of the institution?

A: Most institutions will comply with the law governing their type of institution in their country, so a link to the relevant governmental website can be given. There may also be individual house rules on the institution's website (link) or information on the internal platform/intranet which may need to be included in the answer.

Q: Where do I start with my admission to the studies?

A: This will depend on the system used in the country. If the system of admission to higher education is centralised, provide the link to the website of the organisation handling the admission procedure. If students have to apply to institutions individually, include links to the institution's website with the relevant information as well as contact names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.

Q: Is it possible to take part in a course as a guest student to assess ability, suitability, etc. and use the institution's facilities?

A: Some European higher education institutions allow refugees to enrol as academic students in a course to first explore the university and their level of knowledge, waving any fees. For

example, the [Stiftung Universität Hildesheim](#) have opened their courses to refugees. [The University of Groningen](#) offers the possibility to switch to a degree programme despite not having official documentation. The [University of Bologna](#) implements a programme enabling asylum seekers to enrol in single course units waiving the fee and without official recognition of the previous degree.

Other institutions which permit refugees to follow courses as guests and use the institution's facilities include the [University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer](#);

The [University of Duisburg-Essen](#); Leiden University's graduate school of teaching ([ICLON](#)) allows Syrian teachers to take part in the Mobile Educator project, an 8-week programme designed by ICLON that aims to enable participants to use a range of ICT applications for mobile education; [TU Dortmund University](#) encourage refugees to start or continue their academic education as visiting students, waiving the tuition fee until they may start or continue their studies as regular students. More examples can be found [here](#).

Q: Does the International Office or some other department in the institution provide any services specifically for migrants?

A: If special provisions are made for migrants, include the information as well as a contact person, e-mail address and telephone number.

Q: Who can be contacted at this institution to get into a validation procedure?

A: If validation of prior learning is dealt with at the institution itself, the contact details of the person responsible for validation at the institution should be provided. In some countries, this is dealt with by a separate organisation or ministry. Details of the institution's staff or the responsible organisation should be provided.

Q: What is the Students' Union? What does it do?

A: Most institutions have a students' union – information is also provided in the [“Welcome to Higher Education” guidelines](#). Contact details at the institutional level should be provided.

Q: What is the timetable for the start of the semester, holidays, applications, etc.?

A: Provide a link or copy the institution's dates for admission applications and any other dates relevant for students.

Q: *Is the library available to everyone, not only students?*

A: This will depend on the institution. Provide information/a link to the library of your institution.

Q: *Where can information about preparatory courses in English or the local language be found?*

A: If the institution provides bridging courses for prospective students before they actually start the admission procedure, provide details of the course and contact person here.

Language Issues

Q: Is it compulsory to be able to speak the local language?

A: This will depend on the policy of the institution and the languages of the courses offered. Details should be provided.

Q: Are language courses held to support foreign students?

A: Language courses may be provided at the institution and details should be given.

The following courses may also be of interest for institutions and migrants:

- The [Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support](#) (OLS) currently offers **online language courses** in Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, German, Greek, English, Spanish, French, Croatian, Italian, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Finnish and Swedish to higher education students, vocational education and training learners and young volunteers taking part in the [Erasmus+ programme](#). The European Commission has decided to **extend this service to the benefit of around 100,000 refugees** over three years, on a voluntary basis and free of charge for them. The OLS can be used at any time from a computer, tablet or smartphone with an internet connection. The OLS language courses include a variety of self-paced modules covering different linguistic areas, as well as "Live Coaching" interactive activities (online MOOCs, tutoring sessions and forums). More information can be found [here](#).
- [Duolingo](#) offers free language courses aimed at **Arabic speaking refugees**. The languages currently available are English, German, Swedish, Spanish and French, also available as an app.
- [Memrise](#) also offers **free languages courses** (app available) in more than 200 languages.
- Some regions may also offer refugees language courses as part of an **integration scheme**; the local council may be able to provide further information about this.

Q: Are there courses available in languages other than the local language, e.g. English?

A: This will depend on the courses offered by the institution but will be of particular interest to newly arrived migrants who may not speak the local language but may well speak English.

Q: *Is there a list of certified translators for document translation?*

A: Institutions often need documents translated into the local language or English and may recommend local certified translators. Alternatively, embassies and consulates may also recommend translators.

Funding and Financial Support

Q: Are there any student fees? How much?

A: This will vary from institution to institution, depending on the country, region/federal state and type of institution/course. This will obviously be one of the major concerns of refugees wishing to study and the information provided by the institution may be links to ministries, local government, regulations on student fees, grants or scholarships.

Please also refer to the FAQ about funding in the [“Welcome to Higher Education” guidelines](#).

Q: Are there any special grants or financial support available at this institution?

A: Some institutions award special grants and details of this as well as details of a contact person should be given.

Q: Does the institution provide any support for migrants with families?

A: If the institution provides support, provide information about the type of help that might be available and/or contact details.

Q: Is it possible to work and study at the same time?

A: First of all, this will depend on whether the refugee is legally allowed to work or whether his/her right to reside in the country is limited to studying.

It will also depend on the methods of tuition the institution offers and the type of work the refugee wants to do. Some institutions may offer part-time courses (evening courses, weekend

courses, etc.) giving students the possibility to work during the week. If the course is a traditional, full-time course, the refugee should be made aware of the course timetable during the week and of any free periods when working might be an option, such as during the evening or at week-ends.

It will also be necessary to advise the student of the total workload, i.e. not only the amount of time spent in classes but the amount of work the student is expected to do outside the classroom. In addition, the refugee will almost certainly be taking a course where the language of tuition is not his/her native language and should allow additional time to cope with this. Settling into a new environment may also mean that the refugee needs additional time. In other words, refugees may need more time for their studies than regular students.

It may also be useful for the refugee to contact the Student's Union or talk to any refugee support groups at the institution for advice.

Q: Is support for finding a job available? Is there a careers office dedicated to refugees?

A: Internet links or notice boards with temporary jobs may be available; careers advice or jobs for graduates may be available in some institutions. Provide details of any specific support for migrants.

Social and Practical Issues

Q: Are any other migrants/overseas students in similar situations at this university? Where can they meet?

A: This will obviously be of interest to migrants and students already studying at the institution from their home country or in similar situations may be able to help the refugee cope better with settling into the higher education institution or to get advice. Larger institutions may have societies or clubs for migrants and may be able to put the refugee in touch with these organisations. The students' union may also be a contact point.

Q: Are there any clubs, sports facilities, etc.?

A: Clubs and sports facilities may be of interest to migrants to help them integrate into everyday life at the institution. Details should be provided and/or a link to the students' union. It is important to make newcomers aware of the rules, local customs and cost of these type of activities

Q: Is there any support for students/migrants to settle in to the university?

A: Support groups for migrants or foreign students may exist at the institution and contact details should be provided. The University of Magdeburg is an example of an institution which has set up a [support system for migrants](#). Some institutions have set up a "buddy" or "bodyguard" system, whereby students who have been at the institution for some time team up with newcomers to advise and support them and to help them settle in during the first few weeks.

Q: Is any support available for finding accommodation?

A: Information about student halls of residence, when and how to apply, accommodation offices at larger institutions, and/or notice boards or links with advertisements for private accommodation should be provided.

Q: What is the student card used for?

A: A student card, which usually has a photograph of the student and includes personal information such as the student's address, course, institution, date of birth, etc., may be used for a variety of things, including identification at exams, access to libraries, printing or copying on the campus, price reductions at shops, club membership.... Details about what the student card at the institution offers and how students can apply for one should be given.

Q: *Where can I get my ITC devices repaired?*

A: If the institution provides support with this, provide details. There may also be possibilities on campus or in the town/city which can be passed on.

Q: *Can I use PCs and/or printers and photocopiers at the institution?*

A: If the institution allows students to use PCs and/or printers at the institution, instructions should be given.

Q: *Who can I talk to if I feel lost?*

A: Support groups, psychological support, the students' union, the International Office, etc. can be mentioned, as appropriate.

Examples of European higher education institutions with initiatives to support refugees in higher education

The following higher education institutions all have pages on their websites dedicated to support refugees and migrants who are interested in studying at their institutions. These examples may prove useful for institutions who would like to set up their own initiatives and webpages to support applications from migrants:

- **DE: The Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich** has a page on its website with [information on studying for refugees and asylum-seekers, including FAQs](#).
- **DE: Hochschule Magdeburg:** This institution provides [special services for refugees](#), including consultation, language courses and integration offers.
- **DE: The Freie Universität Berlin** has developed a “[Welcome to Freie Universität Berlin](#)” programme offering qualified prospective students who have had to leave their homeland an opportunity to attend selected courses and participate in selected additional offerings free of charge, thereby preparing to start a degree program.
- **ES: The University of Barcelona** has set up a [refugee support programme](#) that includes some measures to help those fleeing from Syria's brutal civil war. The University estimates that the programme can take in one hundred refugees, help them to settle in Catalonia and enable them to continue their university studies in Barcelona.

Institutions with support initiatives for refugees mentioned in the FAQs are:

- DE: [Stiftung Universität Hildesheim](#)
- DE: [University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer](#)
- DE: [University of Duisburg/Essen](#)
- DE: [TU Technical University Dortmund](#)
- IT: [University of Bologna](#)
- NL: [University of Groningen](#)
- NL: [ICLON](#), Leiden

The [European Commission](#) supports the integration of migrants and refugees in higher education. The Commission funds projects and disseminates successful practices in this field. Language skills and recognition of qualifications are key issues for these groups. It has produced a list of inspiring practices where higher education institutions are helping refugees to get into higher education.

The list is the result of responses to an EU Survey launched by the European Commission on 24 September 2015 among universities and student organisations. It has been further completed following a workshop organised on 6 October 2015 with 25 representatives of Erasmus+

National Agencies, universities and student organisations. The aim is not to be exhaustive, but to share some practices taking place in different parts of the EU. The list can be found [here](#).

“[MORE](#)” is an initiative by [uniko](#), the voice of Austrian universities. Courses aimed at providing a space for reflection to refugees where they can find out whether university studies are an option for the future are offered. It offers orientation in academic and artistic study fields and language trainings. MORE courses are held at every university town in Austria. The 21 universities in Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Leoben, Linz Salzburg and Vienna offer a certain amount of courses to MORE students, some of which are especially tailored for refugees, some are part of a degree program.

Further information can also be found in our [“Welcome to Higher Education” guidelines](#).

Websites and Documents used in these Guidelines

- Council of Europe:
<http://www.coe.int/en/>
- Council of Europe's Lisbon Recognition Convention:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/LRC_en.asp
- Duolingo:
<https://www.duolingo.com/courses/ar>
- European Commission:
<http://ec.europa.eu/>
- European Commission; Erasmus+; EU Programme for education, training, youth and sport:
<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/>
- European Commission; Erasmus+; Online Linguistic Support – Language Courses:
<http://erasmusplusols.eu/online-language-courses/>
- European Commission; Erasmus+; Online Linguistic Support; OLS for Refugees:
<http://erasmusplusols.eu/ols4refugees/>
- European Commission; Inspiring practices: Higher Education helping newly arrived refugees - Recognition of skills, access to HE and Integration of Researchers (September 2015):
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/higher-education/doc/inspiring-practices-refugees-skills-recognition_en.pdf
- Freie Universität Berlin; Welcome to Freie Universität Berlin:
<http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/welcome/index.html>
- ICLON, Leiden, The Netherlands:
<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/iclon>
- Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich; Information for Refugees on studying at LMU:
http://www.en.uni-muenchen.de/students/degree/admission_info/informationen_fluechtlinge/fragen_studium/index.html
- Memrise:
<https://www.memrise.com/>
- More; An Initiative by uniko:
<https://uniko.ac.at/projekte/more/index.php?lang=EN>
- Stiftung Universität Hildesheim; Refugees:
<https://www.uni-hildesheim.de/en/io/refugees/>
- TU Technical University Dortmund; Offers for Refugees:
http://www.aaa.tu-dortmund.de/cms/en/International_Students/Offers-for-refugees/index.html
- uniko/Universities Austria:
<https://uniko.ac.at/index.php?lang=EN>
- University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer; Refugee initiative:
<http://www.hs-emden-leer.de/en/research-transfer/projects/research-and-counselling-centre-for-refugees/fluechtlinge-als-ergaenzungshoerer.html>

- University of Bologna; Unibo for Refugees:
<http://www.unibo.it/en/services-and-opportunities/study-grants-and-subsidies/exemptions-and-incentives/unibo-for-refugees>
- University of Duisburg/Essen; Offers for refugees:
<https://www.uni-due.de/en/refugees.php>
- University of Groningen; Refugees who qualify for higher education:
<http://www.rug.nl/education/hoger-opgeleide-vluchtelingen?lang=en>
- University of Magdeburg; Initiative "Integration of Political Refugees with Academic Backgrounds or Ambitions":
<https://www.hs-magdeburg.de/en/the-university/international/routes-to-the-university/studying-for-refugees.html>

NB: All websites and documents used to write these guidelines were last accessed in July 2017

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