



Refugee Education UK

I have received an offer to study at university but I have no funding... what should I do?

If you are not eligible for Student Finance, and you haven't managed to secure any other funding for this coming academic year, here are some ideas for you to consider.

1. Check to see whether the university who has offered you a place provides any scholarships for students who are not eligible for Student Finance because of their immigration status. These are sometimes called Sanctuary Scholarships, Equal Access, or Article 26 awards. A list of the universities who offer these scholarships can be found on [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)'s website](#) or on the [Displaced Students Opportunities Portal](#).

If the university does have this type of scholarship it is likely that the application deadline has already passed. If this is the case, **you could email the scholarship team to ask whether the scholarship was successfully awarded for the coming academic year. If it hasn't, make a request to be considered as a late applicant.**

2. Contact the university which has offered you a place, explaining why you are not eligible for student finance and **ask if they would consider waiving (cancelling) your fees.** It is unlikely that they will do this, however it is always worth trying.

Write to the university explaining that you have been offered a place on a course, but that you have discovered that you are not eligible for student finance. Without going into personal details of your immigration case, tell them a bit of your story – where you came from and how you have made great progress in your education since arriving in the UK. You should explain why you want to study at their university and what it would mean to you. Ask if they would meet with you to discuss ways of making it financially possible for you.

3. If you are being charged 'International' tuition fee rate, but are confident that you could afford to pay the lower Home tuition fees (£9250) from your own funds, **write to the university to request they use their discretion to charge you this amount.** Contact our [advice line](#) for more information about how to write this request.
4. If you are care-experienced (meaning that you are or have been looked after by the local authority in the past), it would be worth finding out if your local authority has any duty to support you financially towards university. Read this [factsheet](#) or

contact Become's [free helpline](#) for more information. You may also be able to apply for an accommodation scholarship through the [UNITE Foundation](#).

5. If you only need a small amount of extra funding in order to begin your studies, please find a list of possible sources of funding [here](#).

Remember, **we would strongly advise you to only begin a university course this academic year if you know how you plan to fund the entire period of your programme.** If you start a course and can only pay a small amount, you may quickly get into debt, with serious consequences.

If you are still unable to find a way to take up your place for this academic year, do not lose hope...

You may need to consider deferring your place or re-applying for university next academic year instead. This may be very disappointing, but the journey is not over, and you can start making plans now. Here are some things you should think about in order to secure for funding next time:

1. You should think about re-applying to 5 universities for the next academic year as early as possible. You should only apply to universities who offer scholarships for asylum seekers and those who cannot access student finance due to their immigration status. There are over 80 universities who have these scholarships. A list of these universities can be found on [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)'s website](#) or on the [Displaced Students Opportunities Portal](#).
2. If you do re-apply to 5 universities (and the scholarships they provide), you should also apply for a scholarship from a private charitable organisation. See below for some suggestions:
 - [The Westheimer Scholarship](#)
 - [The Scholarship supported by the Marks Family Charitable Foundation](#)
 - [The Ralph N Emanuel Scholarship](#)
 - [The Claus and Mary Moser Scholarship](#)
 - [The Black Heart Scholarship Programme](#)
 - [The Mohammad al-Haj Ali Scholarship Award](#)
3. If you have been in the UK for a long period of time (over 7 years), you may qualify for Student Finance due to your long residency. [WeBelong](#) is a national charity who may be able to help you find out if you are eligible. You can contact them [here](#).
4. If your status changes whilst you are waiting – such as if you get refugee status or humanitarian protection – you may have become eligible for Student Finance. Contact our [advice line](#) to check.

Making the most of a gap year

And there are opportunities you can take to make sure that you don't waste the time whilst you wait. Whatever you do now - whether it is more study, work, volunteering or something different - will all help towards a future university or university scholarship application.

Study

There are some university preparation courses designed specifically for displaced students. For example;

- [OLive](#) - 12-week programme offering online courses on how to get to university, English, digital creative writing, and more.
- [The Compass Project](#) - offers workshops on how to plan for, and enter, university.
- [RefuEAP](#) - an online programme for students needing to improve their academic English skills.
- [Kiron](#) - offers free online courses and job-readiness programmes to improve a range of professional skills.
- [University of the People](#) - free, online degree programmes offering courses in business administration, health science, and computer science.

There are also a number of websites that allow you to enrol into free courses or university modules that you can study online. You can find two examples [here](#) and [here](#).

Get in touch with the [King's Trust](#) who offer mix of activities or courses to develop your skills and confidence.

Depending on your age and previous qualifications, you may be eligible to do a free academic course at your local Further Education college ([FE](#)). This might be a lower level course than you really want, but it will allow you to keep studying whilst you wait. Get in touch with our [advice service](#) for more information.

English language

You can always invest in your English language ability whilst you wait to re-apply to university. Look for local courses, such as free English classes offered by charities or by language colleges. Or, if you have not already taken GCSE English, you may be able to for free at an FE college.

Volunteering/work opportunities

You could try to look for volunteering opportunities, or employment opportunities (if you have the right to work). If you do have the right to work, contact [Breaking Barriers](#) or [Refugee Employment Network](#) for help finding a job.

You can also search for other educational opportunities on the [Displaced Students' Opportunities Portal](#).