



Refugee Education UK

# University support for students previously studying in Ukraine

Analysis of HEI survey:  
initial expressions of  
interest April 2022

# Introduction

The survey sought to collate expressions of support and opportunities for students from Ukraine from universities in the UK. Thirty five universities responded to the survey, as well as one academic bridging project (OLive), one alternative online HE provider (New School of the Anthropocene), and an international HE pathway education provider (Into University). Of the HEI respondents, two were Welsh, four were Scottish, with the remainder located in England.

The survey was undertaken prior to the UK government's announcement that individuals in the UK via the Ukraine visa schemes (Homes for Ukraine, Ukraine Family Scheme, and Ukraine Extension Scheme) would be eligible for student finance and be treated as home students for fees purposes in England. The survey also preceded any announcement of phase two of the Home for Ukraine scheme. For that reason, many respondents emphasised the speculative and contingent nature of the offerings.

## 1. Support for Ukrainian students arriving through Homes for Ukraine scheme

The first section of the survey collected expressions of support that universities would consider providing to students arriving through the Homes for Ukraine scheme - i.e. students whose hosts were not directly connected to a university. It focused on both non-degree programme education support, and degree level support.

### 1.1 Non-degree programme education support

Sixteen universities indicated a willingness to allow students to audit relevant courses, and 17 universities suggested they could offer free access to online courses. A significantly larger proportion of universities - 25 respondents - indicated that they would be able to offer free academic English courses.

However, the number of places available for students on these non-degree support packages ranged dramatically. Seven respondents indicated that their institution would only be able to provide for up to ten students. A further seven universities indicated that

they would be able to offer provision for over 100 students. The remaining respondents made offerings falling somewhere in between (see table below).

<b>Approximately how many Ukrainian students would you consider offering non-degree programme support to?</b>	
<b>Associated RQ</b>	
1-10 students	7
10-20 students	8
20-50 students	4
50-100 students	0
100+/ unlimited places	7

A number of universities commented that they were seeking to provide support through twinning agreements with specific Ukrainian institutions rather than as a general offer to all Ukrainian students.

## 1.2 Degree-level support

Universities were asked to indicate whether - and in what circumstance - they would consider admitting Ukrainian refugee students onto full degree programmes. The majority (71%) of respondents suggested that September 2022 would be the earliest that they could offer degree level programmes to incoming students.

In order to facilitate degree level support, the majority of respondents (67%) indicated that they would be willing to offer tuition fees waivers to arriving students irrespective of their fee status. By contrast, 29% of respondents indicated that they would only be able to offer fee waivers at home fees levels. Almost half of the respondents (48%) said that they would be able to provide free accommodation to students as part of their academic support package.

Of the universities that were able to give an estimated number of places for Ukrainian students, 16 said that they would be able to offer supported places for up to ten students; two universities said that they could offer supported places for up to 20 students, and three universities said that they would be able to offer supported places to up to 50 students.

The majority of universities indicated that the type of support and number of places available for Ukrainian students to receive degree level support would be influenced by the government's decision around fee status and funding eligibility. A number of universities also referenced the need to fundraise for any degree level support package.

*“What we can offer depends on donations we receive. We are working with large donors, who are interested in offering fee waivers, especially for home fees.”*

*“We are trying to secure funding to consider a range of options”*

Five universities specifically indicated that whatever support they put in place would not be exclusive to Ukrainian students.

## 2. Universities acting as a host through the Homes for Ukraine scheme

The second section of the survey sought to ascertain the willingness of HEI's to source hosts from within their communities , or - alternatively - to act as corporate sponsors (under phase two of Homes for Ukraine).

Thirty-nine percent of respondents expressed an interest in sourcing hosts for the Homes for Ukraine scheme from within their community although most were unsure how many they would be able to source. Fourteen percent of universities clearly indicated that this was not something that they were interested in, and the remainder were unsure.

A similar number of universities (32%) expressed an interest in acting as a corporate host through phase two of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Of these universities, the majority (ten respondents) were already in discussions with their local authority about this. However, most respondents were unable to answer this question without further information. Since analysing this data, REUK has facilitated introductions between DLUHC and a number of universities wishing to further explore this route.

**Our institution would like to be a host directly (committing to accommodate students) if and when the Homes for Ukraine scheme expands to allow that.**

Yes	32%
No	14%
Maybe	54%

### 3. Process

The third section of the survey sought to confirm technical and process details of offerings of support.

The vast majority of respondents (97%) suggested that they would be willing to accept **students transferring onto degree courses** if the student had already started their studies at a Ukrainian university. However, respondents indicated that there would be entry requirements for transferring students including academic and English language prerequisites.

Only two universities stated that they would be unable to **process direct applications (bypassing the UCAS process)** from Ukrainian students for September 2022 entry. Seventeen respondents indicated that they would be able to accept direct applications, with 18 indicating that they were unsure at this stage.

#### Are you able to accept/process direct applications from Ukrainian students for entry September 2022 (bypassing the UCAS process)?

Yes	17
No	2
Maybe	18

The responses indicated that there was a desire amongst universities to assess students' academic level internally if they were unable to provide up-to-date copies of academic transcript or proof of previous qualifications. The majority of universities stated that they would consider using the UNESCO European Qualifications Passport but would need further training and information about this.

#### Should an applicant unable to provide full or up-to-date copies of their academic transcripts or proof of qualifications would you still be able to consider their application?

Yes, we would be able to assess their level independently	33%
Yes, we would accept the UNESCO European Qualifications Passport	6%
We may accept the UNESCO EQPR but would need further training to do this	55%
No, we would not be able to assess their level independently	6%

Eighty-nine percent of universities indicated that they would have the **ability to test English language proficiency outside of the IELTS system**. Seventy-six percent of universities said that they would be willing to revise their English language requirements

on the proviso that English language support - such as pre-sessional English language support - would be given to students. Some universities commented that whilst pre-sessional English would be available to help students reach the required level, Ukrainian students would need to show that their English language was of a sufficiently high standard to meet the course entry requirements prior to enrollment on the main degree programme.

## 4. Additional Information

Seventy-five percent of the universities who responded to the survey had existing scholarships offerings for students from forced migration backgrounds (who are unable to access student finance because of their immigration status). A smaller number of respondents - 46% - were already accredited as a University of Sanctuary, with a further 23% working towards this accreditation.

Some respondents detailed the context-specific support given after the Afghanistan crisis in August 2021 - this included a limited number of full and partial scholarships, the reimbursement of visa and flight costs, the provision of free university managed housing for the student and their immediate family along with a dedicated student advisor, plus additional support for childcare and legal fees

## 5. Next steps

Refugee Education UK, Student Action for Refugees and Universities of Sanctuary are working together to create a new portal to significantly increase visibility and accessibility of the new and existing offers of support for refugee and asylum seeking students. This portal will bring together scholarships and opportunities for students from any country who are seeking asylum in the UK, or who have been granted any form of refugee status or leave to remain - including those from Ukraine.

A representative from one of these three organisations will be in touch with all survey respondents with information about how to feature opportunities - once they are no longer expressions of interest, but concrete offers - on the portal.



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