

8

Education and Training



Asylum seekers in the UK usually have the right to access Education. If you have been given a document which says you cannot study you should seek legal advice as this may be an error. All asylum seekers have the right to access free English lessons.



Learning English

In the UK, you have the right to take classes to help you learn or improve your English. Usually, these classes are called "English for Speakers of Other Languages" or "ESOL".

If you want to go to ESOL classes when you arrive in the UK, you should apply with your local college. Sometimes colleges will not accept new students unless they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for at least 6 months.

NGOs, church groups and other community organisations can also offer free English classes for asylum seekers. You can ask other people in your hotel or search online: 'Free English classes' + (the name of your city).



Going to University or college for further training

Asylum seekers have a right to go to university in the UK if they want to.

To go to university, you must complete an application and be accepted. Some applications are very difficult, and you may need to already have a degree or other qualifications.

Going to university in England and Wales is not usually free, and most people will have to pay fees. In Scotland, some people do not have to pay. When you go to university, you also have to pay your living costs too. This can be expensive, depending on where you go to university.

If you apply to study at university as an asylum seeker you may be charged international fees which are more expensive. As an asylum seeker you cannot access government loans that help to pay for tuition fees and living expenses. If you apply as a refugee or someone with humanitarian protection, then you would be charged the same fees as a UK student and can access the government loans in the same way.

There are some scholarships for asylum seekers and refugees (refugee status or Humanitarian Protection), you can check this link for more information: <https://star-network.org.uk/access-to-university/scholarships/list/>
<https://www.displacedstudent.org.uk/>

Refugee Education UK offers 1:1 sessions to advise you on applying to college or university <https://www.reuk.org/helpforcollege>



Using your Qualifications in the UK

In the UK, you can usually use any degree or other qualifications that you may already have. Depending on where you got your qualification you may need to apply for a "Statement of Comparability". This is an official confirmation that your degree or qualification is the same or close enough to the same degree or qualification in the UK. You have to pay for a Statement of Comparability. At the moment, it costs around £60. If your certificates are not in English, the documents will need to be officially translated and you will need to contact <https://www.ecctis.com/> and send your translated certificates and they will send you the Statement of Comparability. Also to get help with the fees check <https://www.ruthhaymantrust.org.uk/grants>

8

Education and Training



Asylum seekers who are under 18 have different rights to education in the UK. All children have a right to go to school in the UK. This includes children who are refugees or who are seeking asylum.



Going to School

In the UK, all children must be in education from age 5 until age 16. All children must go to school until age 16. Then, they can choose to stay in school or to learn practical skills for work until they are 18. Schools are run by local authorities and they are free to attend.

If you have a social worker or a caseworker you can ask them to help you with applying for schools. If you are a parent with children under 18, you need to register them with a school near to your accommodation as soon as you can. Search the name of your local council + register for school online.



What to expect when I join school?

School staff and teachers will support you in the first few weeks. They will greet you and introduce you to the education system and see what you may need to be able to learn, feel good at school and help you with any challenges you might face - like those with language, for example.

Joining a new school may not be easy for you. But be sure that you will be supported by school staff and a social worker, and they should ensure you have everything you need to start your educational year. Do not be shy to speak about your feelings to teachers or a social worker and they will help you with anything you may find a challenge.



Young people between 16 to 18

You can join ESOL classes provided by college at your area. You will be studying English for 18 hours per week and you may also be able to study other courses. You can check the website of your colleges for info about the courses they are teaching and you can attend an open day - a day where you can go and learn more about the course you would like to study and see if there are any requirements or qualifications you need.



Where I can find adult ESOL classes?

You can register for ESOL classes with a college near you, but there are also different organisations that provide 'ESOL online classes' and you can attend them from home. For example you can contact these organisations:

- www.babelsblessing.org
- cityofsanctuary.org
- conversationsoverboreders.org (online classes from volunteer teachers)

Also, you can contact a refugee-support organisation in your area and they can help you register to ESOL classes.