

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

2026/27 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.

Student Finance

If you are in the UK with granted limited leave to remain (LLR) or discretionary leave to remain (DLR) as a result of an asylum claim (or for any other reason), you are eligible to apply for the Cambridge Foundation Year. However, **there is a strong possibility that you would not be eligible for government student finance support for further degree study at Cambridge or elsewhere**. You may 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.

If you are a forced migrant (refugee, asylum seeker or someone with Humanitarian Protection status), you are automatically eligible for the programme and do not need to meet other criteria listed on our website. However, you will need to be ordinarily resident in the UK and if you are not, you will not be eligible for the programme.

If you are ordinarily resident in the UK but are not from a forced migrant background, you may still be eligible. Please consult <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/foundation-year#eligibility> for further information on other eligibility criteria.

You will be asked to provide evidence of your eligibility as part of the application process. To prove your status as a refugee, asylum seeker or as someone with Humanitarian Protection 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 an Application Registration Card (ARC) for asylum seekers or a screenshot or working share code for the UKVI eVisa available from www.gov.uk/evisa

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.

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

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. However, we can only accept qualifications that are equivalent to UK A Levels, and some are not.

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

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

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. Advice on this is available in the Further Support section below.

How to make an application

Applications for this programme must be made via [UCAS](https://www.ucas.com) 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 assess your English language skills as well as your academic abilities. This is particularly the case in the admissions assessment and the interview. 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 [guide for refugees and asylum seekers](#);
- [Refugee Education UK](#) provide advice by email or WhatsApp;
- Guidance on fee status and government financial support is available from [UKCISA](#);
- [Displaced Student Opportunities UK](#) includes listings for scholarships, English language courses and preparation for university;
- [Project Access](#) support refugee students in making applications to top universities through mentorship;
- [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)](#) is a national network of students who are working to help refugees in the UK – including offering advice on access to higher education;
- [InsideUni](#) has a support page for refugee applicants;
- [We Belong](#) offer guidance on accessing student finance.

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

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

Details are correct at the time of publication (September 2025) but should be checked against the Undergraduate Study website for the most up-to-date information. © University of Cambridge, 2025.