

**BEING AN INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY FOR REFUGEE STUDENTS:  
CONCEPTS, METHODS AND TOOLS**

*HIGHER EDUCATION AND RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS*

## Sommario

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A. Higher Education .....	3
International declarations and conventions.....	4
<b>Germany</b> .....	5
<b>Italy</b> .....	7
<b>Sweden</b> .....	8
<b>The Netherlands</b> .....	9
<b>United Kingdom</b> .....	10
B. RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS.....	12
LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND.....	13
Lisbon Recognition Convention - LRC.....	13
Recommendation on the Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation.....	14
- <b>National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC Network)</b> .....	15
- <b>European Network of National Information Centres (ENIC Network)</b> .....	15
Germany.....	17
Italy.....	19
Sweden.....	21
The Netherlands.....	24
United Kingdom.....	25

## A.Higher Education

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## International declarations and conventions

Access to and provision of higher education for refugees finds support in several international declarations, resolutions and conventions including:

- Article 26 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**: Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (UNGA, 1948);
- Article 22 of the **Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**: Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education; and The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships (UNGA, 1951);
- Article 13.2c of the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**: Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education (UNGA, 1966);
- Article 28 of the **International Convention on the Rights of the Child**: Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means (UNGA, 1989);
- Article 5e.V of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**: States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights [...] the right to education and training (UNGA, 1965);
- Article 10 of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**: States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination 11 against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training (UNGA, 1979);
- Article 14.2 of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**: States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right...(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and nonformal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency (UNGA, 18 December 1979);

[Ferede, M. (2018). *Higher education for refugees*. UNESCO, Paris, France]

## Germany

Germany has many outstanding colleges and universities and numerous international students. To come to Germany to study, you will need a corresponding residence permit, i.e., a "residence permit for the purpose of studying" ("Aufenthaltserlaubnis zum Zweck des Studiums") regulated in Section 16b of the Residence Act. If you come from a so-called "third countries", however, you first need to apply for a "Visa for the purpose of studying". A student visa allows you to enter Germany legally and start your studies.

### *For which programmes can I obtain a student visa?*

You can apply for a residence permit when a German university, higher education institution ("Hochschule") or a "Studienkolleg" or another preparatory programme (e.g. a compulsory language course) admits you as a student.

There is also the option of obtaining a residence permit for applying to a university.

### *Where can I apply for the visa?*

If you require a visa to enter Germany, you must apply for it at the German Embassy or Consulate in your home country (or a neighbouring country) and present the required documents there.

Please note that it may take several months to process your visa application.

If you do not require a visa to enter Germany, please register with the Immigration Office at your new place of residence upon arrival and present the necessary documents there.

Whether you need a visa depends on your country of origin. On [auswaertiges-amt.de](http://auswaertiges-amt.de), you will find a list of countries the citizens of which require an entry visa for Germany.

### *What documents do I need?*

A list of all documents that third-country nationals need for a national visa could be found [here](#).

For a student visa, you also need the following documents:

- **Proof of admission from a German university or college (certificate of enrollment) OR a university entrance qualification** if you only want to apply for a visa as a university applicant. A university entrance qualification is a school-leaving certificate with which you can study at a university in your home country.
- **Proof showing your livelihood is secure- you can prove it, e.g., by depositing funds into a blocked account. There must be at least 10,332 € per year in the blocked account.** If you do not have enough money yourself, a third person can make a so-called declaration of commitment for you. You can learn more in our chapter "Declaration of commitment for a national visa".
- **Health insurance coverage**
- **Proof of your German language skills, unless your language skills have already been checked by the university or preparatory college. In principle, you need at least B2.**

### *What happens after I come to Germany?*

**After entering the country, you must visit the Immigration Office at your new place of residence within three months and apply for a residence permit there.** To do so, you must (again) submit the documents mentioned above as well as, in principle, a police registration certificate and a rental agreement. The authorities will check your papers and then decide whether you must be issued a residence permit.

**A residence permit for the purpose of studying is usually issued for one to two years.** If you cannot finish your studies within this period, your residence permit will often be extended. **During your studies, you can work a total of 120 full days per year.**

**A residence permit for student applicants is issued for nine months. During this time you are not allowed to work and have to find a place to study.**

### *What happens after I graduate?*

If you would like to stay in Germany after completing your studies, **you can apply for a residence permit to look for a job or a residence permit as a qualified professional.**

For further information about studying in Germany, please see:

[University System](#)

[University Application](#)

# Italy

## University: opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees

In Italy, there are various university programs that are designed for foreign students, especially refugees and asylum seekers. Some of these programs are free and can be followed remotely. There are also special programs for refugees. Find out which universities are doing these courses.

In Italy, the right to education is guaranteed by law to everyone legally residing in the country. Therefore, the university is also open to Italian and foreign students.

To study in Italy, **the foreign student must be able to regularize the legal situation by obtaining a study visa if abroad, and then a residence permit for study reasons.**

If you are a citizen of a non-European country **you need a visa to enter Italy and a permesso di soggiorno (residence permit) if you want to stay in Italy for more than 90 days.**

The permesso di soggiorno is a document linked to the type of visa with which you enter Italy. For example, if you enter Italy with a visto di lavoro (work visa), you will have a permesso di soggiorno per lavoro (residence permit for work reasons) or if you enter Italy with a visto per studenti (student visa) you will have a permesso di soggiorno for per studio (residence permit for study reasons).

## Student visa

### Visas can be:

- **Per soggiorno di breve durata (short stay):** with a visto per soggiorno di breve durata (called visto Schengen) **you can stay in Italy for up to 90 days.** This type of visto is mainly for tourists, business trips or cultural visits. **The cost of this visto is € 60.**
- **Per soggiorno di lunga durata (long stay):** with a visto per soggiorno di lunga durata (called visto nazionale) **you can stay in Italy for more than 90 days.** This visto is mainly for work, study or family reasons. **A visto per soggiorno di lunga durata costs € 116, with the exception of visto per studenti which costs € 50.**

On this website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs you can find out: if you need a visto, which documents you need to apply for the visto, its cost

## Residence permit for study reasons

This permesso is given **to allow a person to study in Italy.** It is generally **valid for one year and is renewed every year until the end of the course of study.** With this permesso **the person can also work part-time for a maximum of 20 hours per week.**

It can be converted into **a permesso di soggiorno per motivi di lavoro (work).**

On this portal you can find more information on the different types of permesso di soggiorno and how to request them.

## Sweden

### **University: opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees**

As **an asylum-seeker** in Sweden, you may study at the higher education level if you meet the entry requirements. **Please note that until you receive a residence permit, you'll be required to pay application and tuition fees.** There are other situations that may grant you a waiver.

Having a temporary residence permit **for studies** in Sweden **does NOT grant you** an exemption from fee payments.

### **What should I do to certify my residency status?**

After you submit your application at [Universityadmissions.se](https://www.universityadmissions.se), the admissions system will confirm your status using your Swedish personal identity number. In most cases, you won't need to submit any documents regarding your residency status.

It's possible that our electronic check will indicate that you're required to document your status. If this is the case, you'll receive an email with instructions.

If you receive this email asking you to document your residency status, please submit a copy of the decision you received from the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) regarding your residency. It's important that this document contain information on what grounds your residency was granted.

Information retrieved online at:

[University Admission](#)



## The Netherlands

### Higher professional education (hbo) and university

You can obtain a bachelor or master degree at an hbo course or university. HBO is aimed, in particular, at learning a specific profession, while university is a more theoretical course. When you want to study at hbo or university, the following is important to you:

- Do you not have a Dutch diploma? **You must pass the State Examination NT2-II for all Dutch-language studies. You must pass an IELTS or TOEFL examination for English-language studies.**
- **Your previous education must be sufficient.** If you have obtained a diploma in your country of origin, you can **have it evaluated by International Credential Evaluation (IDW)**. On the basis of this evaluation, the educational institutes determine whether your previous education is sufficient and whether you may even be granted an exemption for all or part of the course. **If you do not have a diploma and/or your previous education is insufficient, you must sit for an entrance examination: the 21+ admission test.** Ask the institution where you wish to attend your course for more information about this.
- **A transition year is a course in which you prepare yourself for an hbo or university course.** You will improve your Dutch language skills and take subjects that are important to your study. You will also get other subjects, such as study skills, informatics, and social orientation. A transition year is also a good opportunity to get used to the Dutch educational culture. Ask the institution or the **Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF)** whether you are eligible for a transition year.

NB: If you were not following a course when you turned 18, or if you did not finish it, you are often obliged to still pass your Civic Integration Examination or State Examination NT2.

### Study finance and study costs allowance

Are you following a course or will you start a course next study year? Do you have an asylum residence permit or a permanent regular permit? Are you between 18 and 30 years of age? **In that case you can usually apply for a study finance** (for mbo, hbo, and university) **at DUO** (Education Executive Agency). The study finance is partially a gift (supplementary grant) and partially a loan you have to pay back after your study; the study costs allowance is partially a gift. **Visit the [DUO site](#) to find out whether you qualify.**

When you are older than 30 years and younger than 55 years of age, you can borrow money at DUO for tuition fees or school fees on certain conditions.

### UAF, Foundation for Refugee Students

**The UAF provides guidance to refugees on their study and finding a job. Also if you do not have a residence permit or if you are not eligible for study finance, you may get financial support for the study you will be undertaking, for example tuition fees, language courses, books, and travel expenses.** The UAF can also help you choosing a study and provide guidance during your study and on finding a job. For this purpose, you must register with the UAF as a client. **[Read more about the selection procedure and about UAF.](#)**

## United Kingdom

### Higher education

Both refugees and those granted humanitarian protection are classified as “home students” for the purpose of higher education (e.g. university degrees). That means they can avoid international fees which otherwise apply, and also get student loans, from the moment they are recognised as refugees or granted humanitarian protection (provided they are “ordinarily resident” in the UK).

If you are **seeking asylum**, you are allowed to go to university (unless you have 'no study' immigration bail conditions - please see here for more details), but you cannot access student finance.

### Refugee and Family

In order to qualify for 'home' fees under this category, you must meet all of the following criteria:

(a) you must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and

(b) on the first day of an academic year of the course, you must be:

- a refugee recognised by the UK Government; or
- the spouse / civil partner of such a refugee and you must have been the spouse or civil partner of that person on the date on which their asylum application was made; or
- the child of such a refugee or of a refugee's spouse or civil partner and at the time the refugee made the asylum application you must have been the under-18-year-old child of the refugee or of the refugee's spouse or civil partner;

and

(c) you have not ceased to be ordinarily resident:

- since you were recognised as a refugee; or
- if you are a spouse / civil partner, or child, of a refugee, since you were given leave to remain in the UK.

### Becoming eligible

If you are, or if your parent or spouse or civil partner is, recognised as a refugee after the start of the course, you will be entitled to 'home' fees from the start of the next academic year if you meet the requirements above.

### Refugee Status: where someone gains British citizenship

The Immigration Rules revoke someone's Refugee Status once s/he subsequently obtains a new nationality, eg when a refugee gains British citizenship. If you have, or a relevant family member has, Refugee Status and you are, or the person with that status is, considering applying for British (or any other) citizenship, you should be aware that such an application could

Humanitarian protection and Family

In order to qualify for 'home' fees under this category, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- (a) you must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and  
(b) on the first day of an academic year of the course, you must be:

1. a "person granted humanitarian protection", which means a person:

- who has been granted leave to remain in the UK under the Immigration Rules, on the grounds of 'humanitarian protection'; and
- whose leave to remain is 'extant', or in respect of whose leave to remain an appeal is pending; and
- who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since being granted their humanitarian protection;

or

2. the spouse or civil partner of a "person granted humanitarian protection" (as above), and you:

- were the spouse or civil partner of that person on the date on which they applied for asylum; and
- you have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since being given your leave to enter or remain [but ignore this last bullet point for academic years starting before 1 August 2021]

or

3. the child of a "person granted humanitarian protection" (as above), or a child of that person's spouse or civil partner, and:

- at the time the person granted humanitarian protection applied for asylum, you must have been under 18 years old and the child of that person or of someone who was the spouse or civil partner of that person on that date; and
- you must have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since being given your leave to enter or remain [but ignore this last bullet point for academic years starting before 1 August 2021]

**There is no three-year residence test for this category.**

**Becoming eligible**

If you are, or if your parent (or your parent's spouse / civil partner) is, or your own spouse / civil partner is, granted humanitarian protection after the start of the course, you will be entitled to 'home' fees from the start of the next academic year if you meet the requirements above.

**Discretionary or limited leave to remain**

You will only be able to access student finance if you are:

- Under 18 years old and have lived in the UK for at least seven years before the first day of the first academic year of your course.
- Aged 18 years and above and have either spent at least half your life in the UK or at least 20 years in the UK prior to the first day of the first academic year of your course.

Information retrieved online from:

Refugee Education Uk

Student Action for Refugee

Uk Council for International Student Affairs

## B. RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

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## LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

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### Lisbon Recognition Convention - LRC

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165), (commonly known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention—LRC) has been jointly drafted by the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The Convention aims to facilitate the recognition of qualifications granted in one Party in another Party. It provides that requests should be assessed in a fair manner and within a reasonable time. The recognition can only be refused if the qualification is substantially different from that of the host country - and the onus is on its educational institution to prove that it is. Each State, the Holy See or the European Union inform either depository of the Convention of the authorities which are competent to make different categories of decisions in recognition cases.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) encourages a flexible approach to the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.

Within the text of the LRC, under Section VII, Article VII in regards to the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, it reads:

*“Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence.”*

**As such, refugees, displaced persons or persons in a refugee-like situation** who have formal education from a recognised and/or accredited educational institution and others who for valid reason and in spite of their best persistent efforts cannot document the qualifications they claim, **should have a right to have their qualifications assessed by a competent authority responsible for its recognition.**

## Recommendation on the Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation

In 2017, Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee adopted the Recommendation on the Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation. In turn, ratifying states are expected to implement measures outlined in the recommendation within their respective contexts.

The Recommendation describes the goal and results of the assessment procedure and factors to be taken into consideration.

The explanatory memorandum to the Recommendation on the Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation puts forward two examples of successful collaboration projects in the field of recognition of refugees' qualifications:

- [REACT - Refugees and Recognition](#)
- [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees and](#)
- [Refugees and Recognition - Toolkit](#)

The Recommendation describes the **goal and results of the assessment procedure** and factors to be taken into consideration. Due to insufficient or a complete lack of supporting documentation, **the goal of the evaluation is to “seek to establish whether applicants are likely to hold the qualifications they claim”**. Rather than basing the evaluation on educational documents, the evaluator has to consider **all the available pieces of information-supplied by the applicant**, by reliable information resources, previous evaluation files, etc. to reconstruct the academic level represented by the available information.

The [Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications](#) contains detailed description of the eight principles for implementation of the fair, accessible and transparent recognition procedures, ten main tools recommended for use in the procedure, and two possible ways of combining the tools in actual recognition procedures, depending on which type of final statement is to be used.

## The implementation of LRC Convention

Two bodies, namely the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region and the European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Mobility and Recognition (the **ENIC Network**) are to oversee, promote and facilitate the implementation of the Convention. The Committee is responsible for promoting the application of the Convention and overseeing its implementation. To this end, it can adopt, by a majority of the Parties, recommendations, declarations, protocols and models of good practice to guide the competent authorities of the Parties. Before making its decisions, the Committee seeks the opinion of the ENIC Network. As for ENIC Network, it upholds and assists the practical implementation of the Convention by the competent national authorities.

### - **National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC Network)**

The **National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC Network)** was established in 1984 with the European Commission as secretariat.

Each Party is eligible to take part in all Actions of the Erasmus+ Programme and appoints their National information centre as a member of the NARIC Network. In this context, the specific National information centres from 34 Parties to the LRC are members, and known as ENIC-NARIC. The NARIC Network meets twice yearly. To support the governance of the NARIC Network, NARICs elect three representatives to the NARIC Advisory Board (NAB) for a two-year mandate.

### - **European Network of National Information Centres (ENIC Network)**

The **European Network of National Information Centres (ENIC Network)** was established in 1994, in close collaboration with UNESCO and the Council of Europe as co-secretariats. It complies with Article X.1(b) and X.3 of the LRC.

The ENIC Network:

- upholds and assists with the practical LRC implementation by competent national authorities, Party to the LRC;
- serves as a multilateral cooperation mechanism within the UNESCO Europe and North America region, and links with other UNESCO regions.

Each Party appoints their National information centre as a member of the ENIC Network, and hold one vote. In this context, all National information centres from 54 Parties to the LRC are members, and known as ENIC. The ENIC Network meets yearly. To support the governance of the ENIC Network, the National information centres elect three representatives to the ENIC Bureau (EB) for a two-year mandate.

- **The ENIC-NARIC Networks**

The ENIC and NARIC Networks (jointly known as the **ENIC-NARIC Networks**) cooperate closely in accordance with their respective mandate, with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO as co-secretariats.

Joint initiatives of the ENIC-NARIC Networks' include:

- holding an annual joint meeting to support multilateral cooperation through sharing of qualification-recognition information on policies and practices, and providing an opportunity for capacity building activities. Representatives of non-governmental organisations may also be invited to attend the meeting as observers;
- managing on-line information systems (e.g., ENIC-NARIC.net Web site, listservs, social media) as essential tools to assist the ENIC-NARIC Networks in carrying out their mandate, especially the LRC information provisions;
- participating in consultative processes on international normative instruments, recommendations, declarations, protocols and models of good practice related to qualification recognition (e.g., Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and its bureau, proposed UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education).



## Germany

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### Statements of Comparability

The **Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB)** is the central authority for the evaluation of foreign qualifications in Germany. These include school-leaving certificates, vocational qualifications and academic degrees.

The ZAB issues a **Statement of Comparability for Foreign Higher Education Qualifications** upon request for holders of an academic degree. This certificate helps employers and employment agencies evaluating foreign higher education qualifications. Especially migrants who would like to work in Germany benefit from this service, as there is no responsible recognition authority for every qualification.

The Statement specifies the German qualification to which your foreign qualification is comparable and provides information on the options for continuing your studies, the legal basis of the use of academic degrees and the procedure of professional recognition. The Statement does not give rise to a legal claim.

The Statement is issued in a long and a short version. Both versions will be sent to you together. The short version is intended for use as an enclosure to your application documents and supplies information for the employer or employment agency on the comparability of your higher education qualification to a German degree. You can use the long version whenever more detailed information is required.

Statements of Comparability are issued for higher education degrees obtained world-wide. **The ZAB does not provide Statements for incomplete higher education courses or courses not assigned to the field of higher education.**

**Statements of Comparability cannot be issued for school certificates.**

### Criteria

- A Statement of Comparability cannot be issued in cases of reasonable doubt regarding the authenticity.
- The qualification must have been awarded by an institution recognized as a higher education institution according to the principal criteria in the country of origin.
- For degrees from countries in which the accreditation of courses is mandatory, the completed course of study must be accredited.
- In case of a joint degree involving a German higher education institution, no statement of comparability is required as a German degree has already been awarded.

### Refugees without evidence of their qualification

The Lisbon Recognition Convention was established in April 1997 and came into effect in Germany on 1 October 2007.

Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention offers refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation the opportunity to have their qualification recognised, even in case documents are missing.

This obligation outlined in Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention has already been fulfilled by the Federal Republic of Germany through the adoption of the resolution "**Access and Admission to Institutions of Higher Education for Applicants who are Unable to provide Evidence of a Higher Education Entrance Qualification Obtained in their Home Country on Account of their Flight**" of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs dated 3 December 2015.

The universities of the respective Laender are responsible for the plausibility checks which are recommended within this resolution. **Please contact the university that is responsible for your admission procedure.**

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The Länder acknowledge that **difficulties** may be experienced **through no personal fault in providing evidence**, right through to a **complete lack of documentation**, for access or admission to higher education as a result of flight or as a consequence of political discrimination. In this kind of exceptional situation, a **facilitation of the process of documentation is advisable to ensure equal opportunities**. These facilitation measures are thus compensation for disadvantages due to flight and political discrimination. The Länder declare themselves in favour of a **three-tier procedure comprising**

- the determination of the personal premises according to the residency status,
- a plausibility check of the educational biography with regard to the acquisition of a higher education entrance qualification in the home country, and
- a suitable procedure to validate the academic aptitude as proof of an existing higher education entrance qualification.

This three-tier procedure in principle ensures that the institutions of higher education correctly exercise their discretionary judgement when taking and assessing documentation pursuant to § 24 ff. VwVfG [German Administrative Procedure Act].

### Recognition of indirect credentials

If the documents required to prove a higher education entrance qualification cannot be submitted in original or as a copy, **at least one other document can be presented in place of the original documents or certified copies that indirectly proves the alleged higher education entrance qualification.**

Examples of such documents are a **student ID card, examination certificates or course record books.**

The indirect credentials must be submitted as an original document or a certified copy.

### CIMEA

Since 1984, **CIMEA**, on behalf of the Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research, has been operating in the sector of recognition of foreign qualifications as the national center belonging to the ENIC networks - European Network of Information Centers on Academic Recognition and Mobility and NARIC - National Academic Recognition Information Centers, as required by the Lisbon Convention on the recognition of qualifications, ratified in Italy with Law 148/2002.

**CIMEA**, via its own service of statement of comparability and certification of qualifications - **Diplome** - produces, **free of charge**, “**Statement of Comparability**” of foreign qualifications for persons with refugee status, subsidiary or international protection holders and detainees.

CIMEA has also sponsored and activated the **National Coordination for the Evaluation of Refugee Qualifications (CNVQR)**: an informal network of experts from the administrative sector who operate inside higher education institutions and who deal with recognition of qualifications, to share evaluation procedures, problem cases, sources of information and methodological practices in cases of evaluation of qualifications held by refugees, **even in cases of little or no documentation**.

CIMEA started the trial phase of the **Academic Pass of Refugee Qualifications** that, through the development of an innovative procedure, **allows the evaluation of qualifications held by refugees also the case of missing or partial documentation**.

### Diplome

Through the Diplome - CIMEA for Refugees portal, it is possible to get in touch with the CIMEA experts through an “**Information Request**” and request the “**Statement of Comparability**” for a qualification obtained abroad. To do this, the user concerned must create his/her own account on **CIMEA for Refugees portal**.

In order to issue the Statement of Comparability free of charge, **the interested party must upload all the documents relating to the academic path followed**, which can be consulted for each country, in the “Required Documents” section of the personal account, **together with proof of the protection status obtained in Italy** (Residence permit with evidence of refugee status). Please note that each registration on the Diplome portal is only linked to the one personal account of the holder of the qualification. No evaluation will be processed through intermediaries.

**For those who are still waiting to obtain international protection or who have been awarded a different status**, it is possible to access the CIMEA services **by creating a personal account on CIMEA Diplome page** or through one of the Diplome pages dedicated to Italian universities that have an agreement with CIMEA, the list of which can be consulted at the following page.

**[Click here to access CIMEA for Refugees Diplome page.](#)**

EPQR: EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION PASSPORT FOR REFUGEES

The EQPR project is active in Italy: The *European Qualifications Passport for Refugees* is a special international tool developed **to assess refugee's qualifications for which there is insufficient or missing documentation.**

It is a standardized document that explains the qualifications a refugee is likely to have based on the available evidence. **Although** this document **does not constitute a formal recognition act, it summarizes and presents available information on the applicant's educational level, work experience and language proficiency.**

The evaluation methodology is a combination of **an assessment of available documentation** and the **use of a structured interview.** Thus, the document provides credible information that can be relevant in connection with applications for employment, internships, qualification courses and admission to studies.

Applicants need to create an account on the **EQPR IT Platform** in order to proceed to the EQPR assessment.

## Sweden

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### Evaluation of foreign qualifications

The **Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR)** evaluates foreign qualifications in order to provide support for people looking for work in Sweden, people who wish to continue studying. The credential evaluation carried out by UHR aims to describe the foreign qualification in a recognition statement that can be used for these purposes.

We can evaluate your qualifications **if you are from an EU/EEA country or have a Swedish residence permit, work permit or valid LMA card**. If you are in Sweden and **waiting for a decision by the Swedish Migration Agency, please submit a copy of the email confirming that your application has been received**.

### Documents to upload in your application

- Degree certificate/diploma in the original language and translated where necessary.
- A degree certificate is a document that shows the qualification awarded. Please remember to also enclose the reverse side of the diploma.
- Official transcript – a list of the courses that were included in your degree/qualification. In the original language and translated where necessary. The personal official transcript should state:
  - the subjects included in your degree
  - how long you studied each subject (credits)
  - the grade you received in each subject
  - whether you wrote a degree project (not for Upper-secondary education)

### Translations

If you have documents issued **in a language other than English, French, Spanish, German or a Nordic language**, they **must be translated**. The translation must be done **by an authorised translator** to Swedish or one of the above languages.

[Find a translator via Kammarkollegiet](#)Open

If you are registered with Arbetsförmedlingen, it is possible to have documents translated for free.

### **Online application**

You apply for an evaluation of your foreign qualifications and upload your documents in the **online application tool**

### **No documents from your foreign education?**

If you've completed your education programme with a degree but **are missing documentation of this (education document such as transcript and diploma)**, UHR may still be able to assess your qualification.

**You need to submit other documents and information.** This applies to post-secondary foreign qualifications.

### **For whom does this apply?**

It is possible to assess your education even if you don't have complete documentation if:

- You have a completed post-secondary education from a country other than Sweden at a recognised higher education institution/education provider.
- You cannot obtain your formal education documents, such as a degree certificate and transcript.
- You have good reasons for why you can't obtain your education documents. This could be for example because you're a refugee or that you completed your education in a country at war.
- You're prepared to put a lot of time into describing your education in a detailed manner based on the form and other documentation, according to instructions.
- Please note that if your application is incomplete, or if the information you provide doesn't match the knowledge UHR has, your case can be closed without you receiving a description of your qualification.

### **Apply for an assessment**

1. Complete the form **"Background Paper - Description of foreign qualifications" (PDF)**. If you're not familiar with certain terms or expressions, it's fine if you describe things in your own words.
2. Be sure to complete the entire form and save it to your computer
3. Create an application **here**
4. On the application, fill in your personal data and information about your qualification. You can also upload your required documents.
5. Upload the following documents:
  - passport or other document with your personal data
  - education documents (if you have them)
  - the form for a background paper that you completed (step 1)
  - other supporting documents that are required instead of education documents, for example: certificate from studies and/or work experience; photographs; academic papers/degree projects; membership cards from student organisations; or other documents that show you've studied.

The assessment can lead to a **recognition statement** for your qualification or a **description of your qualification**. This depends on what documents and information you provide in your application, as well as UHR's knowledge and reference material on education from the country where you studied.

With a **recognition statement** of a foreign qualification, **we've assessed at least one official education document and recognised your degree with information on what it is comparable to in Sweden.**

With a **background paper**, **we haven't been able to review all official education documents, but we can describe your qualification from the information we do have.** A description of your qualification contains information on what Swedish qualification the education your supporting documents say you have is comparable to.

**Here is example of a recognition statement and description of a foreign qualification (in Swedish)**

You can use a recognition statement and a background paper **as a basis for applying for a job, continuing your education or before an eventual validation of your skills.**

## The Netherlands

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If you're a refugee and would like your credentials to be evaluated in the Netherlands, below you will find a summary of the key information you may need.

### **Steps towards requesting credential evaluation**

To have your credentials evaluated, you need to take the following steps:

- Step 1:

Obtain a residence permit;

- Step 2:

Receive the 'Integration requirement notice' (Kennisgeving inburgeringsplicht) letter from DUO;

- Step 3:

Submit a request to the **Credential evaluation information centre (IDW)** for:

- a credential evaluation (**if you hold documents**), or
- an 'Indication of level of education' (Indicatie Onderwijsniveau) (**if you don't hold documents**).

**You don't have to pay for these requests.**

**You need to enclose the 'Integration requirement notice' letter with this request.**

The IDW will post your credential evaluation or 'Indication of level of education' to you within four weeks of receipt of your request.

The IDW evaluates credentials according to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

**Did you come to the Netherlands as a refugee? And have you followed a course abroad for which you have no documentation such as a diploma and/or list(s) of subjects? In that case you can receive an Indicatie Onderwijsniveau of your credential.**

**While doing your application, please indicate that you don't have any documents of your education.**

You go to [www.idw.nl](http://www.idw.nl). Via the button "Apply now" and then "Apply for a credential evaluation for inburgering" you can create a Mijn IDW account. You can complete the application entirely digitally. You can fill in all the information digitally and you can upload all documents while you do your application. You can also use your phone or tablet to



## United Kingdom

### **UK ENIC – National agency for the recognition of international qualifications**

**UK ENIC** is the designated United Kingdom **national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills**. They perform this official function **on behalf of the UK Government**.

UK ENIC is a leading information service provider offering impartial, trusted judgement on international qualifications.

Their services have been developed to ensure that the skills, competencies and qualifications of those coming to the UK to work, study, practice or settle are recognised at the appropriate level. UK ENIC also supports every university in the UK, all colleges that admit international students, employers, professional bodies, UK Government departments, and immigration advisers understand more about educational, vocational and professional systems outside the UK.

Operating under contract to the Department for Education (DfE), UK ENIC serves as the UK's information point on the recognition of overseas qualifications. They also provide **the only official source of information on international education systems and qualifications attained from outside the UK**, as prescribed by the **Lisbon Recognition Convention**.

UK ENIC is part of the European Network of Information Centres (ENICs) and the wider ENIC-NARIC network.

The United Kingdom is a signatory of the Lisbon Recognition Convention which obliges the signatory nations to make arrangements for recognising qualifications across borders and to provide information on education systems and higher education institutions. UK ENIC provides these services.

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the UK NARIC recognition agency function has to change from a NARIC (which is an EU-only title) to an **ENIC (the wider European title for national recognition agencies)** in order to meet the UK's continuing treaty obligations under the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Therefore, on 1 March 2021, the UK NARIC agency title becomes UK ENIC, operated and managed by Ecctis Limited..

UK ENIC continues to work with their counterpart ENIC-NARIC agencies in Europe on the ongoing programme, **the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees**.

**To deal with individuals who have missing or partial qualification documentation, this programme uses a structured interview methodology to ascertain qualification and skill levels.**

UK ENIC was a pioneer in developing this interview methodology, and there is now considerable practical experience of using it, 'on the ground'. UK ENIC used these techniques and processes in Syrians in Jordan project, working with Syrian refugees.

**UK ENIC has developed 'statement bundle' services for charities and support groups working with refugees. This gives access to their qualification statements at special reduced prices. To accommodate cases where there is partial documentation, a flexible approach can be taken on document requirements, and explanatory text added to our qualification statements.**

For more information about these support services, the single point of contact is the email address - **[refugee@ecctis.com](mailto:refugee@ecctis.com)**

### **Statement Of Comparability**

This service is for you if you need to **evidence the level of your overseas qualification for employment, study, professional registration or another reason.**

If you need to evidence the level of your degree and your English language proficiency for the UK Home Office, you may need to use the specialist Home Office-focused services, the [Visas and Nationality services](#).

**The Statement of Comparability service is able to evaluate part-completed school qualifications.** This may help people arriving in the UK from overseas who want their children to access A-levels.

High school qualifications in the UK (GCSE) are commonly required by employers and study institutions.

Please include your high school and senior high school qualifications if you need GCSE comparisons to be considered.

You can see an example of a Statement of Comparability [here](#).

### **How it works**

UK ENIC compares overseas qualifications to the UK education system, comparing them to UK qualifications and framework levels. The service does not provide grade comparisons.

You can present your Statement of Comparability together with your qualification documents to evidence the level of your overseas qualification(s). Evidence of high school qualifications are commonly required in the UK, and you may wish to include these as part of your application.

It costs £49.50 + VAT\*

### **What do you need in order to apply**

You should [apply online](#) for the Statement of Comparability. They will need photographs or scans of your:

- **final certificate(s)**
- **transcript(s)**

AND

- **certified translations of your documents if your documents are not in English and you are not going to use our Translation Waiver Service.**

Please note that unless specifically requested, **they do not need copies of the programme specification or your thesis.**

For affordable, high-quality certified translations suitable for UK ENIC applications, we recommend [dialexy.com](#).

Once they have received all of the necessary documents and payment, **they will complete your assessment within 15 working days.**