

FAQ Regarding Refugee Higher Education Program (RHEP)

Education is essential in preparing young refugees to rebuild their lives and to enable them to contribute their skills and knowledge to their new environment. UNHCR believes that refugees have high potential to grow as competent personnel for the hosting community. The Refugee Higher Education Program (RHEP) purports to provide the basis of self-reliance for those who reside in Japan and are unable to enjoy sufficient rights and benefits because of their backgrounds as refugees and language barriers.

Here are some frequently asked questions that may provide more information relevant to you, as a refugee, or your institution, if your university is interested in participating in the Program:

Q1. What is the Refugee Higher Education Program?

The Refugee Higher Education Program (RHEP) was established by UNHCR in partnership with a number of universities in Japan, to grant scholarships to those who are recognized by the Program as refugees and with limited or no financial means, to receive a 4 year undergraduate education offered by participating universities in Japan. Currently, most of the refugees in Japan have no option but to forgo the idea of pursuing higher education, primarily for financial reasons. Accordingly, the employment opportunities for those refugees are severely limited compared to others who have completed some form of higher education. This Program would provide essential opportunities for refugees to study and gain qualifications that would go a long way towards empowering them to make contributions to both the host community as well as the community of their country of origin.

Each year, seven refugees are selected and recommended to the participating universities

Q2. Which universities may I apply to?

As of June 2015, the Program has established partnerships with the following four universities:

Kwansei Gakuin University	3 positions (Japanese Degree Program: 2 positions; English Degree Program: 1 position)
Aoyama Gakuin University	1 position (Japanese Degree Program)
Meiji University	2 positions (Japanese or English Program)
Tsuda College	1 position (Female candidates only, Japanese Degree Program)

Q3. May I apply to more than one university?

A candidate is permitted to fill in more than one university of his or her choice at the time of the application for the Program. However, if a candidate is selected for the Program, he/she must choose one university to which they wish to be recommended by the Program. Additionally, it is not possible for a candidate to apply to both Japanese and English Degree Programs because their examinations are set on the same date.

Q4. I am not confident that my Japanese ability is sufficient enough to understand Japanese courses at university. Is it possible for me to graduate only by taking English courses?

At the Faculty of International Studies of Kwansai Gakuin University and at the School of Global Japanese Studies of Meiji University, English courses are offered. If a candidate wishes to complete an undergraduate degree which can be achieved by taking English courses, he/she should consider these two universities.

Q5. What are the eligibility criteria for the Program?

To be eligible for the Program, all of the following requirements must be satisfied.

A candidate:

- Must be a refugee or a person recognized by the Japanese government to be a person in a similar position to a refugee, with a valid residency permit;
- Must have successfully completed, or be due to complete by March of the admission year, a twelve year course of formal education in Japan or overseas, or be deemed by the relevant university to have an education level at least equivalent to that of a person who has completed such a program;
- Must be a person who due to financial reasons would have difficulty in completing a higher education program in Japan;
- Must be regarded as having the capacity to complete with satisfactory academic performance an undergraduate degree that is in principle, a maximum of four years in duration. The candidate also must have understood the objectives of the program and be committed to studying diligently.
- Must and have Japanese (equivalent to N1) or English (equivalent to the A level certificate of UN Association's Test of English) language ability sufficient to take undergraduate classes at a university, and have ability to maintain sufficient academic performance.
- Meet other criteria specified by the university (refer to Application Guidelines).

Q6. Is there an age limit to the Program? Is a working adult eligible?

There is no age limit to the Program, thus, a working adult is eligible. In the past, the Program has granted scholarships to candidates of various ages.

Q7. I came to Japan as a refugee but am a naturalized Japanese citizen now. Am I eligible to the Program?

The Program is available only to non-Japanese. This is because the purpose of the Program is to provide educational opportunities for refugees, who are not eligible for other scholarship programs targeted at Japanese students and exchange students.

Q8. My parent is a refugee. Am I, as a child of a refugee, eligible for the Program?

A child of a refugee is eligible for the Program. Such a candidate will be asked in the interview what circumstances he/she faces with regard to social or financial difficulty due to his or her family background. Additionally, the candidate will be required to submit a supporting document issued by a local authority which proves his/her family background, such as his or her parent's certificate of alien registration.

Q9. I am currently applying for a refugee status in Japan. Am I eligible for the Program?

No, a candidate must be a legally recognized refugee or in a refugee-like situation, meaning he/she is a convention refugee; for example an Indochinese refugee, or an individual who has been granted humanitarian status as a result of his/her refugee application. This is because the purpose of the Program is to support refugees residing in Japan.

Q10. I completed previous education in my country of origin, but I am unable to prove the fact because of the impossibility to obtain supporting documentation. What can I do?

It is understood that there may be candidates who are unable to submit the required documentation because he/she fled the country of origin without personal belongings. According to a memo issued in 1982 from the Ministry of Education to universities, "a convention refugee who faces difficulties in getting documentations on the academic background can submit a letter explaining his/her academic background in place of such certificate ...". This position of the government is used as a base by the current participating universities for considering the eligibility of the refugees. In light of the memo, UNHCR and the university can, together, assess if the claimed academic

background of the candidate is appropriate for pursuing higher education.

Q11. How does the selection process proceed?

The general selection process is as follows, but please make sure to refer to the website of UNHCR Japan because details may change every year:

Selection Process:

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| 1) Applications Opens | Around June |
| 2) Application period | Early July to early August |
| 3) Application deadline | Around August |
| 4) Basis of selection | Screening, written examination, and interview |
- a. Screening:
Application period: July to August (all the documents should be submitted by the deadline).
 - b. Written examination:
Date: Early September (tentative)
Venue: Depending upon applications received, the examination will take place in the Kanto or Kansai regions.
Contents: Japanese or English language examination, including short essay composition.
 - c. Interview:
Date: Mid-September (tentative)
Venue: Office of the UNHCR Representation in Japan

Q12. How is the selection concluded?

Decisions as to the candidates to be recommended by UNHCR to the universities will be made by a selection committee consisting of UNHCR representatives, representatives from educational institutions, refugee assistance organizations and/or representatives from language education institutions. The final decision will be made by the relevant partner university.

Q13. What is covered in the scholarship?

The decisions as to whether the scholarship should be granted or not, and the amount of the scholarship will be grounded on the relevant university's regulations. As a general rule, a refugee recommended by the Program must complete all courses and

examinations required by the relevant university within four years in order to graduate. Tuition and other fees that are usually incurred by students shall be covered by the relevant university in place of the refugee student who satisfies the conditions above. There are cases where the relevant university offers additional livelihood support every month on its discretion (amount and conditions differ per university).

Q14. How many refugees have been granted the scholarships by the Program?

From 2007 to April 2015, 32 refugees have been granted the scholarships by the Program, 16 of whom have already graduated as of March 2015.

Q15. What are the prospects for the refugees after their graduation?

Graduates have chosen various paths, including employment in private companies, proceeding to graduate schools, and becoming entrepreneurs. Refugee students are also provided with internship programs and similar opportunities by major companies and other institutions. Through these opportunities, the refugees can access the job markets and expand their marketability in Japan.

Q16. Is there any support system following entrance into university?

Some of the partnering universities offer students-run tutoring or mentoring systems to refugee students, and there are refugees who are in fact supported by these systems. In addition to the above, the Program started regular counseling assistance to the refugee students since 2014.

References

Selection Criteria:

- Definition of a Refugee: A candidate is a legally recognized refugee or is in a refugee-like situation, meaning he/she is a convention refugee, an Indochinese refugee, or has been granted humanitarian status as a result of his/her refugee application.
- The candidate has no financial means to fund his/her own higher education. The candidate must submit documents indicating the income of all family members who contribute to the household finances, including the candidate's father, mother, and the candidate themselves (e.g. tax-income certificate, statement of earnings). This should be based on earnings from the year before application.

The candidate should indicate the amount of financial support he/she receives from persons under a duty to support, such as relatives (allowance etc.), and if relevant, the amount of scholarship, fellowship, private support, livelihood protection and/or social security payments being received.

- **Entrance Requirements:** The candidate must have completed at least 12 years of primary and secondary education or an equivalent level of education. He/she must demonstrate the level of competence for the high standard of academic performance required to complete the undergraduate course.
- **Japanese Language Proficiency:** In general, a foreign student who wishes to pursue higher education in Japan is required to obtain the first level certificate from the National Japanese Proficiency Exam Board (the “NJLP”). A selected refugee would have satisfactorily passed an equivalent language test, which is designed and assessed by a Japanese language school for refugee candidates.
- **English Language Proficiency:** In general, a foreign student who wishes to pursue higher education in Japan is required to obtain the A level certificate of UN Association's Test of English (“UNATE”). A selected refugee would have satisfactorily passed an equivalent language test, which is designed and assessed by the RHEP.
- **Basic Academic Proficiency:** A candidate must have sufficient academic proficiency in order to complete an undergraduate degree. In general, a foreign student who wishes to pursue higher education in Japan is required to prove that he/she has basic academic skills required for Japanese universities. The candidate must take the Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (“EJU”) conducted by Japan Student Services Organization and submit his/her scores.. In cases where a candidate has previously received education in Japan, requirements differ per university.