

Westheimer Scholarship: frequently asked questions.

April 2019

These FAQs have been written by [Refugee Support Network](#)'s higher education team in response to questions which are frequently asked by people about the Westheimer Scholarship.

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1. Questions about the Westheimer Scholarship.

1.1 Who are the ‘Schwab and Westheimer Trust’?

The Schwab and Westheimer Trust was established to assist young refugees and asylum seekers in accessing education, especially where there are no adequate alternative sources of funding. You can read about the history and aims of the trust, as well as about the individual trustees, [here](#).

1.2 Who are ‘Refugee Support Network’?

Refugees Support Network (RSN) is a non governmental organisation which works to enable young refugees, asylum seekers and survivors of trafficking to build more hopeful futures through education. The Schwab and Westheimer Trust work in partnership with Refugee Support Network to design, publicise and manage the award process, as well as to provide ongoing support to the scholars. You can learn more about the Refugee Support Network team [here](#).

1.3 What is the Westheimer Scholarship?

The Westheimer Scholarship - named after Ilse Westheimer - was established by former refugees who benefited from welcome and support in the UK when fleeing Nazi Germany. Ilse Westheimer was a very successful social worker, and trainer of social workers. As a result, the Westheimer Scholarship helps young asylum seekers (aged up to 28 years old) pursue higher education in social care, medicine, nursing, or related professions.

The Westheimer Scholarship will pay home tuition fees, and living costs up to a maximum of £11,500 per year. The specific amount awarded will be dependent on the successful candidates individual circumstances, and the successful completion of a detailed budgeting session with Refugee Support Network’s Higher Education Team prior to university enrolment.

1.4 Will I automatically get a scholarship if I apply?

Submitting an application for a scholarship does not guarantee that it will be successful. This is a competitive process and not all applications will be successful.

All decisions by the Schwab and Westheimer Charitable Trust are taken in good faith on the basis of the statements made on the application form, in the interview process, and having considered the referees' supporting statements.

2. Questions about scholarship eligibility.

2.1 Which courses are eligible for a Westheimer Scholarship?

The following courses are deemed eligible for a scholarship

Biology, Biological Sciences, Biomedical Science, Health & Social Care, Social Work, Sociology, Social Sciences, Social Policy, Psychology, Psychological Sciences, Psychology & Cognition, Psychology & Child Development, Social Psychology, Human Biology, Pharmacy, Health, Community & Social Care, Counselling, Childhood studies

NHS courses will not usually be funded, unless in exceptional circumstances. These include;

Doctor or dentist, Chiropodist (including podiatrist). Dietician, Occupational therapist, Orthoptist, Physiotherapist, Prosthetist and orthotist, Radiographer, Speech and language therapist, Dental hygienist or dental therapist, Nurse, Midwife, Operating department practitioner.

2.2 Is there an age limit for applicants?

Applicants should not be older than 28 years of age.

2.3 Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible, applicants must be an asylum seeker [or the dependent of an asylum seeker] who is awaiting a decision or appealing a decision for asylum; a person (or dependent of a person) who claimed asylum in the UK and has been granted limited leave to remain (without refugee status or humanitarian

protection) or some other form of temporary status; or a person with limited leave to remain for unaccompanied minors.

2.4 Can I apply if I do not know what my current immigration status is?

If you are unsure about your current immigration status please speak to your solicitor or to your family members if you are listed as a dependent on a family member's immigration application.

2.5 Will I have to prove my current immigration status?

Successful applicant may be requested to evidence their current immigration status with documentation such as a Biometric Residence Permit, Home Office letters, or a solicitor's letter.

2.6 Can I still apply for a scholarship if I am eligible for student finance?

Applications for help with tuition fees will not be considered if you are eligible for student finance.

2.7 Can I still apply if I have not yet received any offers from any universities?

Applicants should have already been accepted at a university.

2.8 Can I apply if I am an asylum seeker or refugee living in a country outside of the UK?

Unfortunately, if you are a refugee or an asylum seeker living outside of the UK you are not able to apply for the scholarships. To be eligible, applicants must be an asylum seeker [or the dependent of an asylum seeker] who is awaiting a decision or appealing a decision for asylum; a person (or dependent of a person) who claimed asylum in the UK and has been granted limited leave to remain (without refugee status or humanitarian protection) or some other form of temporary status; or a person with limited leave to remain for unaccompanied minors.

If you are an asylum seeker or refugee living outside of the UK, some British universities offer scholarships to international students. You can find out more

about how to apply to British universities and fund your course on the [UKCISA website](#).

2.9 Will the scholarships cover ‘international’ tuition fees?

At present, the trust is only able to pay ‘home’ tuition fees. The trust understand that asylum seekers are classified as ‘International’ students and therefore liable for ‘International’ tuition fees. Therefore, successful applicants must ask universities if they can be considered for a fee waiver in order to pay the ‘home’ rate of tuition fee. Successful applicants can get advice about making this type of request from [Refugee Support Network](#)’s higher education team.

2.10 Can I apply for a scholarship if I have already got an undergraduate degree?

Unfortunately, the Westheimer scholarship is only available to students looking to study their first undergraduate degree.

2.11 Can I apply for a scholarship to fund my postgraduate course?

Unfortunately, the Westheimer scholarship is only available for students studying an undergraduate course.

To fund other postgraduate courses, we would encourage you to speak directly to the university about internal grants and bursaries. There are often postgraduate scholarships available on university websites. We would also encourage you to look at the universities which are part of the Article 26 network or have special postgraduate scholarships in place for asylum seekers and others who cannot get postgraduate student finance (see the lists on [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)](#)’s website and on the [Article 26 website](#)).

2.12 Can I apply for a scholarship if I have limited leave to remain but did not go through the asylum process?

Unfortunately, to be eligible, applicants must have claimed asylum in the UK or have been recognised as a refugee by the UK Home Office. The Schwab and Westheimer Trust are aware of the ongoing challenge (from [‘Let Us Learn’](#)) as to the Article 26/Sanctuary scholarship eligibility of students with Limited Leave to Remain (and therefore not eligible for Student Finance/Home fees) but who are not from an asylum seeking background. Whilst we are sympathetic to the

frustration of individuals in this position, and acknowledge the often 'forced' nature of their migration, the money available to the trust was given specifically to promote and encourage the education of young asylum seekers and refugees. We are, therefore, legally bound by these original aims, and cannot broaden out the scholarship eligibility to include those who have not claimed asylum in the UK.

2.13 I applied to the trust for a scholarship last year but was unsuccessful. Can I apply again this year?

Reapplications are possible from those who have previously been unsuccessful but whose circumstances have changed. Re-submitting an application does not guarantee that it will be successful.

2.14 Can I still apply for a Westheimer scholarship if I have applied for other scholarships as well?

We actively encourage applicants to apply to as many sources of funding as possible. Securing alternative funding does not exclude you from applying, and will not necessarily negatively impact your application. Please note down on the application form if you have applied, or been successful in gaining, another scholarship.

Many universities offer scholarships for those who cannot access student finance on account of their immigration status. All of these have different names but they are often called Sanctuary or Equal Access scholarships. The Article 26 project works in partnership with universities to offer scholarships, which include a full tuition fee bursary and funding meeting some of the additional costs associated with studying. For up to date lists of which universities offer scholarships, please visit [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)'s website](#) and on the [Article 26 website](#). Please also contact [Refugee Support Network](#) for information about further sources of funding.

3. Questions about the application form/process.

3.1 How do I apply for a Westheimer Scholarship?

Eligible applicants should apply using the online application form. Please be advised that we will only accept applications via this online application form.

3.2 When is the application deadline?

The application deadline is midnight on the 27th May 2019. We are unable to accept applications after this deadline.

3.3 Will I be able to save the online application form part way through and come back to it later?

Once you begin, you will not be able to save the online application form and return to complete it later. Therefore, please allow at least 1 hour to complete the form. To help you prepare, you can download a PDF of the form [here](#). However, please be advised that we will only accept applications via this online application form.

3.4 Can I apply on behalf of an eligible student?

Yes, you can apply on behalf of an eligible student. However, you will need to know some specific information about the student in order to complete the online form. In order to prepare the relevant information you can download a PDF of the application form [here](#), and/or refer to the application form [guidance notes](#). Please be advised that we will only accept applications via the online application form.

3.5 Is there an advantage to submitting my application as quickly as possible?

There is no advantage for individuals who submit their applications first, so please take your time and fill in the form carefully. We do not consider incomplete applications.

3.6 Can somebody help me fill out the application form

In certain cases help can be given to fill out the application form. First, please do see the accompanying [guidance notes](#) for further details about the types of questions and relevant information required in the form. If further help is needed, please contact [Refugee Support Network](#)'s higher education team.

3.7 I do not have access to a computer/the internet. How can I still apply?

Our preference is that you apply using the online application form. You may be able to use a computer/the internet at your local library, college, or community centre. In exceptional circumstances we can post a hardcopy of the application form for you to fill out and return. However, the deadline for returned hard copies is the same as the online application deadline (midnight on the 27th May).

4. Questions about the interview process.

4.1 What happens after I submit my application form?

After the deadline, applications are considered and shortlisted, and successful individuals will be invited to attend an interview to verify the information you have provided in your application.

4.2 How will I know if I have been shortlisted for an interview?

Both successful and unsuccessful candidates will be contacted after the 30th May. Please make sure you include your most up to date contact details in the application form.

4.3 I have not been invited for interview. What can I do now?

We understand that not being invited for an interview will be disappointing and frustrating news.

We would encourage you to explore other sources of funding. Many universities offer scholarships for those who can't access student finance on account of their immigration status. All of these have different names but these are sometimes called Sanctuary or Equal Access scholarships. The Article 26 project works in partnership with universities to offer scholarships, which include a full tuition fee bursary and funding meeting some of the additional costs associated with studying. For up to date lists of which universities offer scholarships, please visit [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)'s website](#) and on the [Article 26 website](#).

Please also consider contacting Refugee Support Networks Higher Education Advice Line for further advice.

4.4 When and where will the interviews take place?

The interviews will take place on Monday 10th June in central London. Successful applicants will be given the precise location at the time of invitation.

4.5 Who will interview me?

You will be interviewed by two or three trustees and one representative from Refugee Support Network's Higher Education team. You can read more about the individual trustees [here](#). You can learn more about the Refugee Support Network team [here](#).

4.6 How can I prepare for the interview?

A bit of preparation can go a really long way in making the interview process as smooth as possible. Some things to think about include;

- Where and when:
You should plan out any travel and accommodation as early as possible. It might be useful to print out a map of the interview location (as well as a Tube map), or save these details into your Smartphone. Try to arrive in good time. Have a contact number or email address just in case you're delayed.
- Be ready for questions:

We want to get to know you better, and we use the interview to do this. You will not be asked any questions that are designed to 'trick' you. Instead, we may want to know what you are good at, what you like, and what your plans are. Think about why you want to study your course and what you enjoy most about your current studies. Some questions may be about what you have written on your application form. Other questions may be about your history, interests, and passions. You will also have an opportunity to ask any questions that you may have.

- Practice:

It is a good idea to have a practice interview with a teacher, support worker, or family member.

4.7 I am feeling anxious about the interview, what can I do?

It is completely understandable if you feel anxious about being interviewed, especially if it is your first interview experience. The interviewers will know that you may be nervous and will take this into account when making their decision. Be assured that you will not be asked any questions that are designed to 'trick' you, instead they simply want to get to know you better and use the interview to do this.

4.8 Can you reimburse me for my travel costs to the interview?

The trust will reimburse reasonable travel costs for interviewees. You will need to submit your travel receipts on the day of your interview (or soon after). You should book your travel ticket in advance. If you need a family member to accompany you, you must inform the trust in advance. Travel costs for accompanying individuals will be at the discretion of the trust.

4.9 I have been invited to interview, but I am not physically able to attend. Can you arrange another interview day, or interview me on the telephone, or via Skype?

Our preference is that you attend the interview in person and make all reasonable attempts to do so. If you cannot physically attend the interview, please inform the trust as soon as possible after invitation.

4.10 How long after my interview will I hear back?

We attempt to contact all candidates within two weeks of their interview with a decision.

5. Miscellaneous questions

5.1 What should I do if my immigration status - or any of my details - change during the course of the application process?

You must notify the Trust immediately if any of your circumstances change during the application process, in particular in respect to your immigration status. It is also important that you update us if you change your telephone contact number or email address during the application process.