

POLICY PROPOSAL

TITLE: IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF BATH FOR REFUGEES IN THE UK

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REASON FOR CHANGE

Considering that...

1. Last year refugee scholarships were accepted at the university. The campaign for this involved a crowd-fund which raised over £6500, a petition which gained over 1100 signatures and support from the UCU, Unison and Unite. There is significant interest in the refugee scholarship scheme improving.
2. The undergraduate scheme provides no specialised support for asylum seekers/discretionary leave to remain/limited leave to remain. These displaced people do not have access to student finance and face greater difficulties in paying for fees and living costs.
3. At present oversight of Refugee Scholarships has not been officially delegated to an SU officer as part of their role. This responsibility has fallen on the Amnesty Society, which is run by volunteers and as such is affected by significant changes in membership and the composition of the committee on an annual basis.

PROPOSAL

1. Assign the SU policy in support of scholarships for refugees and other displaced people to an SU officer. This SU officer will review the scheme in consultation with the Amnesty Society and other supportive student and staff groups on campus on a monthly basis unless deemed unnecessary by all parties.
2. The SU officer appointed to review the scheme will meet with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Learning and Teaching alongside a trade union officer and an Amnesty society member on a monthly basis, unless deemed unnecessary by all parties, to discuss the scheme and further improvements.
3. Promote the scheme with local and national refugee support groups and other organisations to increase awareness of and engagement with the scheme.
4. Invite Student Action for Refugees (STAR), Article 26 (Helena Kennedy Foundation) and local support groups for refugees and other displaced people to hold meetings, conferences and other events at the University of Bath, and provide assistance facilitating and promoting these events.

RATIONALE

1. The policy will contribute to the SU's value of being inclusive to 'all students'
2. Access to higher education promotes integration for refugees in the UK, and diminishes the threat of poverty and homelessness. This goes alongside the SU's value of 'empowering students to achieve their full potential'.
3. The policy fulfils the Student Union's mission of being a representative channel between students and the University of Bath.

IMPLICATIONS

1. No cost or very limited cost for the Students Union