

Introduction

ETB Adult Education Guidance Services (AEGS) in the Further Education and Training (FET) sector provide impartial careers and education information, one-to-one guidance, and group guidance, which help people to make informed educational, career and life choices. FET Guidance supports personal and social development, facilitates understanding of educational opportunities and educational development and supports adults to make informed career decisions in underpinning individual career development.

Expertise in (ETB) Adult Education Guidance Service (AEGS) delivery of Career Guidance support to Refugees, International Protection Applicants and Migrants takes account of psychological issues and social, personal, and educational considerations in supporting all individuals to navigate the Irish system and to facilitate inclusion, informed choice, and career development planning along the lifespan.

Recognising the emergency and refugee crisis for Ukrainians; EU, State and voluntary services have been galvanized to deliver supports. This has generated a flow of discussions, arrangements and agreements coming from a range of sources. It is vital that the Irish policy context and practice implications for FET and (ETB) AEGS is therefore further supported.

As the situation is continuously evolving, this document is intended to offer the **current understandings** regarding the education, training and career opportunities and services relevant to the provision of adult guidance counselling to Ukrainian Refugees in Ireland. It is vital that information is contextualized where appropriate. **NCGE intend to update this document as national arrangements continue to be agreed and announced.**

General Information regarding the Ukrainian Refugee Response in relation to FET and Adult education al guidance service provision:

- Ukrainians are entitled to Temporary Protection, an exceptional measure to provide immediate and temporary protection to displaced persons from non-EU countries and those unable to return to their country of origin. On March 4th, 2022, the European Union invoked [this directive](#). It applies when there is a risk that the standard asylum system is struggling to cope with demand stemming from a mass influx risking a negative impact on the processing of claims. Temporary protection gives you immediate right of access to work, housing, social welfare, healthcare, education, training, and other supports.
- On March 25th, Dept. of Education established [Regional Education and Language Teams \(REALT\)](#), stating that the regional teams will be hosted and administratively supported within the ETBs and will lead a network of other key agencies, including [Tusla Education Support Service \(TESS\)](#), [NEPS](#) regional personnel, [NCSE](#) regional personnel and Management body local nominees working together with local schools. While it is understood that the key agencies will work together in a holistic manner to bring added value and efficiencies to the process of supporting Ukrainian children, the primary role of REALT is to build on existing regional education support structures and the initial focus will be on assisting families in securing post primary school places.

- On May 3rd, Minister Simon Harris (DFHERIS) announced the establishment of a “[National Student and Researcher \(NSR\) Helpdesk](#)” to assist Ukrainian students and researchers seeking to continue their higher education studies in Ireland. Minister Harris has stated that the National Student and Researcher (NSR) Helpdesk will be supported in its work by a National Steering Group. The National Steering Group will be hosted by Maynooth University will assist the needs of third-level students and researchers fleeing the war. It will be staffed by six people seconded from HEIs around Ireland and will operate for an initial six months, funded by DFHERIS. Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris has today (3 May) announced the establishment of a National Student and Researcher (NSR) Helpdesk. **Those seeking assistance can contact NSRHelpdesk@mu.ie or call +353 (0)1 474 7788.** This will first facilitate students who have made direct contact with third level institutions. The helpdesk will be fully operational for all students in mid-May.

General resource points:

- [Ireland's response to the situation in Ukraine](#) (gov.ie)
- [Social Welfare supports for those arriving from Ukraine under the EU Temporary Protection Directive](#) (DSP)
- [Employment, childcare and education](#) (DoT)
A range of measures have been enacted that are significant to local practice for Guidance Counsellors across the lifespan, and especially for the [\(ETB\) AEGS staff](#) who have been placed as “frontline” of Education and Training Boards support to Ukrainian refugees.
- [Ukraine Response](#) (Irish Refugee Council)
The Irish Refugee Council provide up to date general information for Ukrainian refugees. On April 8th the IRC [called for clarity](#) on registration of asylum applications for asylum seekers already in Ireland.
- The [Euroguidance Network](#) is delivering webinars to support guidance professionals from all over Europe in supporting refugees, with a particular focus on Ukraine. You are invited to register to attend. Upcoming webinars can be seen [here](#) and subsequent recordings [here](#).

Career guidance counselling for adult Ukrainian refugees in Ireland:

After Department of Further, Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) naming (ETB) AEGS as “first point of contact” for Ukrainian refugees, NCGE has received a considerable number of queries from (ETB) AEGS staff seeking information and clarification on a wide range of education, training, entitlement, qualification, and career issues for persons arriving to Ireland.

It is to be noted that the information provided is changing regularly, as contemporary issues and contexts become evident.

To ensure all refugees nationally are treated with respect and equity, we have therefore researched information as is currently available and populated to this document.

NCGE therefore present this as a guide (only), recognising that the professional guidance staff of the (ETB) AEGS, and across FET guidance provision, will use professional and local expertise and networks to inform daily practice.

It remains vital to work towards providing nationally agreed, standardized, dependable, and equitable information and career guidance regarding all education and training opportunities and career choices, qualification requirements and options, language acquisition, progression opportunities, professional requirements, and career pathways for all refugees.

Certain issues relate still with regard emerging national decisions, agreements and/or arrangements. Ongoing consideration of which are needed for equitable delivery and to facilitate professional and appropriate adult guidance counselling to meet the needs of this population of refugees.

Information challenges include:

- Funding
 - DSP / Welfare payments & implications
 - SUSI- funding entitlements
- Recognition and understanding of learning, experience and qualifications¹
Irish / Ukrainian / International
- Basic acquisition of language and appropriate Language needs²
 - for FET / HE / Employment
 - ESOL integration of adult guidance with ESOL models (supported by NCGE)
- Understanding specific professional requirements
- (ETB) Guidance Service provision
Including management and (local / regional) cooperation to maximize supports in:
 - managing expectations with refugee clients
 - supporting the individual to overcome trauma
 - supporting the individual to engage the community
 - supporting the individual to fulfill their capacity while understanding and acknowledging their circumstances

¹Stakeholders, organisations and working groups regarding recognition of qualifications

This is ongoing throughout FET and HE, nationally and internationally

- On April 6th 2022, the EU Commission published a [“Recommendation on the Recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine”](#)
- [The Irish Universities Association](#) (IUA) is establishing a “Central Irish Higher Education Helpdesk” to guide students and researchers in relation to applications, English language

requirements, student finance, funding, fees, and grants.

This helpdesk will seek to assist the following categories who are covered under the Temporary Protection Directive:

- Displaced Ukrainian school-leavers who wish to enter Irish higher education in 2022/23.
 - Displaced Ukrainian third-level undergraduate students, graduates or researchers who have recently arrived in Ireland
- Currently, the [Qualifax](#) Team engages with many different organisations and agencies as part of a system that continues to develop and improve the quality of higher education and further education and training qualifications. *See more [here](#).*
 - [NARIC Ireland](#) provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it, where possible, to a major award type and level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). QQI has published [a guide in Ukrainian](#), to its online foreign qualifications recognition service (NARIC). This guide will help those arriving from Ukraine compare their qualifications to similar awards on the NFQ and may assist them in accessing education and employment opportunities here in Ireland.

This guide is also available in [English](#), [Polish](#) and [Russian](#). The [NARIC database](#) currently lists 18 Ukrainian qualifications that are comparable to Irish awards from Levels 3-10 of the [National Framework of Qualifications](#), including school-based qualifications, professional and higher education qualifications. Each qualification is accompanied by other useful links which help explain the context for the qualification e.g. a [country profile for Ukraine](#). For more information go to [QQI supports for displaced Ukraine nationals](#)

- Another reference point that may be of assistance to (ETB) AEGS / FET Guidance Counsellors is the Italian [CIMEA Project](#). The resources provided may prove useful, first of all, for a better understanding of the structure of the Ukrainian education system, as well as to offer support in the evaluation of the relevant qualifications. *These are compared to the Italian system, currently, QQI are working on parallel Ukraine-Irish Qualification Levelling*
- Work is ongoing to further enhance and adapt the [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees](#) to devise a methodology making it possible to assess refugees' qualifications even when these cannot be fully documented; in a format, which provides clear and accurate information about the qualifications and is accepted as a valid documentary supplement by end-users. Additional work is also being undertaken by the [European Integration Network](#), news from the Network can be seen [here](#) and upcoming events [here](#).
- CAO have advised NCGE that when dealing with queries, they have been asking that students in Ireland or coming to Ireland from Ukraine should in the first instance contact the Admissions Offices of the HEIs they are interested in attending. The admissions offices will then give instructions on what application process to engage in - most students will be instructed to apply direct to the HEI rather than to CAO.

²Guidance queries regarding English language skills

These are consistent with experience of collaborating with refugees from other parts of the world.

- Recognising the role of adult guidance services working in collaboration with (ETB) ESOL Coordinators and ESOL Tutors.
 - Having awareness of English language requirements for engagement across all education and training levels
 - Considering options (e.g.) language acquisition through local community education as the person manages their experience and trauma.
 - The development of supports to meet implications of written proficiency for FET, HE, employment, and professional progression.
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Having the required information in this context has been challenging, in meeting the fast pace of developments and the urgency of service provision in the Ukrainian refugee context.

To facilitate (ETB) AEGS in supporting the Ukrainian refugees, clarity is needed and will be subject to developments.