



Refugee Education UK

The Westheimer Scholarship: Frequently Asked Questions.

March 2025

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been written by Refugee Education UK's higher education team in response to questions which are often asked by people about the Westheimer Scholarship. If you have additional questions, please email advice@reuk.org with the subject line "SW Scholarship Question".

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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 Education UK’?

Refugee Education UK (REUK) 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 Education UK to design, publicise and manage the award process, as well as to provide ongoing support to the scholars. You can learn more about Refugee Education UK [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 30 years old) pursue higher education in social care, medicine, nursing, or related professions.

The Westheimer scholarship will pay home tuition fees*, and associated study costs. The specific amount awarded will be dependent on the candidate's individual circumstances and university location.

*The trust will help candidates who are successful at interview to request home fees from their chosen university. The final award of a Westheimer Scholarship will be dependent on successfully getting a home tuition fee offer.

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 this scholarship?

The Westheimer scholarship is available for students embarking on a health and/or social care related course. Eligible Courses could include - but are not limited to;

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, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing.

2.2 I know what my immigration status is. Am I eligible to apply?

To be eligible to apply to The Westheimer Scholarship, applicants must be:

An asylum seeker (or the dependent of an asylum seeker) who is awaiting a decision or appealing a decision for asylum from the UK Home Office;

OR

A person (or dependent of a person) who claimed asylum in the UK and has been granted Limited Leave to Remain or some other form of temporary status such as Calais Leave, Discretionary Leave to Remain, Section 67 leave, UASC leave.

Your status must have resulted from a UK asylum claim (either your own or that of a parent or spouse).

2.3 Is there an age limit for applicants?

Applicants should not be older than 30 years of age.

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 applicants will be requested to evidence their current immigration status with documentation such as an ARC card, Biometric Residence Permit, Home Office letters, or a solicitor's letter. This is to help us understand what support you may be entitled to.

2.6 Can I still apply for this scholarship if I am eligible for Student Finance?

Applications for The Westheimer Scholarship will not usually be considered if you are eligible for governmental loans through Student Finance.

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

Ideally, applicants should have already been offered a university place at at least one university. If you are still awaiting offers, please make that clear on the application form.

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 this scholarship.

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 this scholarship cover 'international' tuition fees?

At present, the trust is only able to pay 'home' tuition fees. The trust understands that asylum seekers are classified as 'International' students and therefore liable for 'International' tuition fees. Therefore, successful applicants will be helped to ask for home fees from their university.

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 to students looking to study their first undergraduate degree.

Individuals studying postgraduate courses can apply for the scholarship supported by the Marks Family Charitable Trust.

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 Universities of Sanctuary 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 the [Displaced Student Opportunities portal](#)).

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**. If you have Limited Leave to Remain - but did not claim asylum, you can find help from '[We Belong](#)'). Whilst the trust 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, Article 26, or Equal Access scholarships. For up to date lists of which universities offer scholarships, please visit [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)'s website](#) and the [Displaced Student Opportunities portal](#).

2.15 Can I apply for more than one scholarship from the Schwab & Westheimer suite of scholarships?

Yes, you can apply for multiple scholarships as long as you are eligible for them. There is a separate application process for different scholarships, but you can copy your answers from one application to another.

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 will be clearly stated on the application form. 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. We will provide a Word version so that you can type your answers beforehand - and copy and

paste them into the online form. Please be advised that we will only accept applications via the online application form.

3.4 Can I apply on behalf of a student?

Yes, you can apply on behalf of a student. However, you will need to know some specific information about the student in order to complete the online form. Please be advised that we will only accept applications via the online application form. In addition, the student's personal statement must have been written by the student themselves.

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 read 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 REUKs higher education team](#) with the subject line "SW Scholarship Application Help".

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.

3.8 What happens to all the personal data that I have included on the application form?

Please note that by completing an application form you are giving your personal data to the Schwab & Westheimer Trust. Refugee Education UK will use this data to process your application on behalf of the Schwab & Westheimer Trust. Please refer to REUK's [privacy notice](#) on our website. Please refer to the Schwab & Westheimer Trust's [privacy notice](#) on their website.

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 with the Schwab & Westheimer trustees.

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

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

4.3 I have not been invited for an 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 cannot access student finance on account of their immigration status. All of these have different names but they are often called Sanctuary, Article 26, or Equal Access scholarships. For up to date lists of which universities offer scholarships, please visit [Student Action for Refugees \(STAR\)'s website](#) and the [Displaced Student Opportunities portal](#).

4.4 When and where will the interviews take place?

Successful applicants will be given the date and time for their interview, which will likely be online.

4.5 Who will interview me?

You will be interviewed by two or three trustees, one representative from REUK's Higher Education team, as well as a former or current Schwab-Westheimer scholar. You can read more about the individual trustees [here](#). You can learn more about the REUK 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:

If the interview is online - make sure you have a good internet connection, and a quiet space.

If the interview is in person, 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 plenty of 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 if the interviews are in person. 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 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.