

# HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORTING REFUGEES IN EUROPE



# GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITY STAFF MEMBERS IN WELCOMING REFUGEES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

#### **About inHERE**

inHERE is a 2-years project co-funded with the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. It aims at facilitating integration and access of refugees in European HEIs.

#### **Overall goal**

In the current refugee challenge in Europe, the social dimension of Higher Education (HE) is concerned with providing opportunities for refugees to participate in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). in HERE strengthens knowledge sharing, peer-support and academic partnership to facilitate integration and access of refugees in European higher education institutions.

#### The inHERE Consortium

UNIMED- Mediterranean Universities Union, Italy (coordinator)

Sapienza University, Italy

University of Barcelona, Spain

Campus France, France

EUA- European University Association, Belgium

UNHCR- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (associate partner)

Website: www.inHEREproject.eu



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# **OUR USE OF THE TERM REFUGEE IN THIS DOCUMENT:**

In the inHERE guidelines, the term "refugee" is used for all migrants having forcingly fled their country, or being displaced within their country or across borders, regardless of their stage in the application process to obtain formal refugee or other protection status.

#### INTRODUCTION

This short handbook is a set of practical guiding tools aiming to help staff members of higher education institutions (HEI) to improve or to initiate assistance activities for integrating refugee students within the university. This is the final outcome of Project inHERE, together with the recommendations, to disseminate the results and lessons acquired throughout the project, as well as to inspire and guide EU and non-EU HEIs in implementing refugees-related actions. Nonetheless, it is expected to raise stakeholder awareness about opportunities and strategies for the integration of refugees in higher education.

With such objectives in mind, and according to the many thought-provoking information, facts, figures, and best practices collected and experienced so far, these guidelines have been set up by dividing refugees-related activities into three main categories, which have been subdivided further into different, but clearly not exhaustive services/activities, implementable by universities in their supportive approach to refugees: 1. Access - dedicated to services/activities that can be implemented to facilitate refugee enrolment to universities; 2. **Integration** – which includes services/activities that can be implemented once refugee students have enrolled in the university to support them throughout their course of studies; 3. **Strategic Planning** – which describes strategic approaches that can be adopted to strengthen the sustainability and effectiveness of access and integration measures. The services/activities described in this guide have been selected and highlighted based upon their occurrence and incidence among those offered by the EUA mapped institutions<sup>1</sup> as well as detected during the inHERE experience<sup>2</sup>. As a matter of fact, the featured services are- or can be- provided at different levels and with countless shades, depending mainly on the commitment of each single HEI with regard to refugees. Therefore, this handbook offers a variety of implementable services, each of which is presented starting from a basic and minimum level of involvement of HEI staff and structures through to a medium level and a maximum or very high standard level of performance and involvement. This approach makes the handbook suitable for all institutions, regardless their level of experience in integrating refugee students.

There is evidence to suggest that the more HEI governance is committed and involved, the larger the number of implemented refugee support activities and the higher the standard of their quality. To take a further step, thanks to all the information gathered during the project, it has been proven that the more a national government is committed and sets out strategies to support and to integrate refugees, the larger and better are the quality services provided by each university. The different services offered, as well as their minimum, medium, or higher level of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> EUA's Refugee Welcome Map: http://refugeeswelcomemap.eua.be/map

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> inHERE Good Practice Catalogue: https://www.inhereproject.eu/outputs/good-pratice-catalogue

implementation, suggest a very stimulating picture of HEIs that can be summarized with the slogan "from a fragmentary to a holistic attitude" in which the fragmental or partial approach is represented by the implementation of services at a minimum degree of involvement and commitment, while the comprehensive and wholistic attitude reveals deep engagement, complexity, participation, and connection of the offered services.

#### FROM A FRAGMENTARY TO A HOLISTIC ATTITUDE:

Rigid → Flexible
Exclusive → Inclusive
Dependent → Independent
One-off → Permanent
Partial → Comprehensive
Unstructured → Structured

#### Instructions for use:

To make the guidelines more interactive and give you the opportunity to "play" with them, we invite you to test yourself before reading these guidelines. In the following section, you will find a self-assessment tool to define where your HEI is situated on the virtual line "from a fragmentary to a holistic attitude".

Once you have assessed the performance of your HEI, please go to Part 3 and compare your status with some of the examples given under each proposed service related to the three main categories. Such examples, at their minimum/medium/maximum level, are meant to be a source of inspiration and to provide cues on what can be done by HEIs to initiate refugee supportive activities or to scale up existing ones. It is important to note that, in many cases, the examples provided at the various levels are not mutually exclusive, but incremental. Naturally, the relevance of the examples and proposed levels is not definitive; their perception can change according to the organizational structure and policy of each HEI. Finally, although these guidelines are specifically designed for refugee integration, many of the services/activities proposed can be extended to other types of disadvantaged or vulnerable learners, thus increasing the impact and scope of the implementable measures.

If you want more examples of refugee supportive activities, simply go to the link below and...enjoy!

https://www.inhereproject.eu/outputs/good-pratice-catalogue

# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Please read each sentence and evaluate how much it applies to your institution by recording a number from 1 to 5 using the scale given below:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
	2	3	4	5

#### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Information for (prospective) refugee students is easily findable on your institutional website



On your institutional website, potential refugee students can easily understand information that are relevant for them



Your institutional website provides comprehensive information for prospective refugee students



#### **OUTREACH/RECRUITMENT**

Potential refugee students have easy access to information on how to enroll to your university



At your university, potential refugee students can count on a dedicated service to help them choose an academic path



#### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Your university makes available comprehensive scholarships for refugee students

Your university has reliable and diversified resources to provide financial support for refugees

 $\bigcirc$ 1

 $\left(3\right)$ 

The financial support that your university dedicates to refugees is sustainable and consistent over time

#### **RECOGNITION**

Your university's enrollment procedures for refugees are flexible and take into account their specific situation

(3)

Your university has set up internal services for the verification and recognition of refugees' previous qualifications

#### PREPARATORY AND BRIDGING COURSES

At your university prospective refugee students have access to several courses tailored on their needs

Attending preparatory courses gives prospective refugee students access to fast-track enrollment procedures

Preparatory courses at your university are open to all refugees

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRATION**

At your university, refugee students receive adequate support with administrative and bureaucratic aspects associated with their academic life

1 2 3 4 5

At your university, refugee students receive adequate support with their studies

1 2 3 4 5

#### **SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

Your university makes efforts to facilitate the socialization of refugee students



Your university helps refugee students to integrate in the society



#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT**

Your university provides psychological support to refugee students



#### **CAREER GUIDANCE**

Your university actively support the integration of refugee students in the labour market of your country



#### **MANAGEMENT**

Your university has solid management procedures for issues related to refugee students



Your university trains its staff and faculty to better integrate refugee students











#### **COLLABORATIONS**

At your university, offices and departments work synergically for the integration of refugee students











Your university fosters collaborations with actors involved in the integration of refugees











#### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Your university recognizes the importance of refugee inclusion in higher education and takes adequate measures for its realisation











# **ACCESS**

# - ACCESS TO INFORMATION -

Access to information remains a major challenge for refugees interested in Higher Education. Universities should ensure that general information about the university and enrolment procedures, in particular, is easy-to-find, up-to-date and inclusive.

Min II	Med III	Max 📲
Information on refugee access to higher education is available inside the section dedicated to international students in the institutional website	A whole page of the institutional website is dedicated to refugee (prospective) students	Information on/for refugee (prospective) students is available/ visible in the homepage of the institutional website
Information is provided in English language	Information is provided in all main EU languages (EN, FR, ES, DE, PT)	Information is provided also in the main languages spoken by refugees
Information provided concerns only refugee enrolment to university	Information provided covers services and programs available on campus that are either dedicated to or that might be useful for refugees	Information provided covers also broader issues, such as asylum procedures, financial support, health, social security, accommodation, etc.

## HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS & SIG -NGO (EL)

Harokopio University of Athens initiated and maintains – together with NGO SIG – a special portal dedicated to the provision of information to refugees, including on education, health and legal aspects:

https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/harokopio-university-of-athens-elstudy-in-greece-ngo

# **ACCESS**

# - OUTREACH/RECRUITMENT -

As pointed out by UNHCR³, refugees tend to be at risk of educational marginalization: nowadays, only 1% of the refugee population enters higher education. Universities should seek active ways to reach out to and recruit refugees, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive educational system.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> UNHCR, "Left Behind: Refugee Education in Crisis". Interactive Report retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/left-behind/

Min 📶	Med III	Max ■■
Information on registration procedures is available on the institutional website and/ or infodays are organized on campus	There is a dedicated desk/office inside the university that provides information on/for refugee (prospective) students	The university collaborates with key stakeholders to bring information outside the university and directly to refugees potentially interested in pursuing academic studies
Refugees can count on a counselling service that addresses them to an academic path – available within the academic offer of the university – based on their aims	Refugees can count on a counselling service that guide them to an academic path – available within the academic offer of the university – not only based on their aspirations but also through an evaluation of their past experience and skills	Refugees can count on a counselling service that, according to their aspirations and through an evaluation of their past experience and skills, addresses them to an academic path considering also study opportunities at offer at other institutions

# UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ (FI)

The University of Jyväskylä has a dedicated desk that offers personal guidance and counselling for adult immigrants who are looking for suitable higher education and career paths.

https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/university-of-jyvaskyla-fi

# UIT THE ARCTIC UNIVERSITY OF NORWAY (NO)

The Arctic University of Norway organizes info days on higher education opportunities for asylum seekers directly at refugee centres located around the region: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/uit-the-arctic-university-of-norway-no

# **ACCESS**

## - FINANCIAL SUPPORT -

The lack of adequate financial resources might represent a major obstacle for refugees intending to continue their studies. To facilitate refugee access to higher education, universities should adopt financial solutions that are diversified and sustainable over time.

Min III	Med 💵	Max ■■	
Registration/tuition f are waived for refugi students		refugee students cover also living allowances (e.g. accommodation, terials, food, transportation, etc.) and extra costs (e.g.	
Financial support for refugees comes completely from fun made available throu national (governmer programs	university inte	omes refugees integrates om the university internal	
The decision to alloce part of the budget to fund scholarships or other forms of support for refugees is taken year-by-year or on achoc basis	allocate a spec for refugee stu ort a given period (e.g., for 5 year	to allocate permanently udents over a special budget for refugee students	

## UNIVERSITY OF POITIERS (FR)

The University of Poitiers provides financial support to refugee students by bringing together different sources of funding and initiatives: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/university-of-poitiers-fr

# **ACCESS**

# - RECOGNITION -

People fleeing from crisis-stricken regions may not be able to provide full - or even partial — documentation of their previous studies. To avoid their exclusion from the educational system, universities are responsible for designing flexible and fair enrolment procedures that take into account refugee-specific needs.

Min II	Med III	Max ■■
Enrolment of refugee students is allowed only whereas previous studies are fully documented	Enrolment of refugee students is allowed even if they can provide only partial documentation of previous studies	Enrolment is allowed also to refugee students who are not in possess of any documentation concerning their previous studies
The university only provides information about the procedure for the verification and recognition of previous qualifications	The university takes care of the verification and recognition of refugee previous qualifications, but it relies on external services (e.g., Enic-Naric network)	University can count on dedicated internal resources for the verification and recognition of refugee previous qualifications
Formal education alone is considered towards the assessment of qualifications or credits	Informal education is bridged toward formal education through specific programs (e.g., preparatory year)	Informal and non-formal learning is also taken into consideration for the assessment of qualifications and credits of refugee students

## NOKUT (NO)

NOKUT has implemented an initiative that provides refugees with the opportunity to get a statement about their higher education even if they do not fulfil the requirements for formal recognition of their qualifications: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/nokut-no

# C.A.P. – CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AT UNIVERSITY OF BARI (IT)

C.A.P. provides recognition of non-formal learning and its translation into credits towards a university course:

https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/c-a-p-centre-for-lifelong-learning-at-university-of-bari-it

# **ACCESS**

# - PREPARATORY AND BRIDGING COURSES -

Language barrier and differences in the academic culture and methodological approach may discourage refugees to pursue higher education studies. Universities should help refugees to bridge gaps through tailored solutions thus facilitating their integration into the higher education system.

Min III	Med III	Max III
Access to courses is guaranteed only to refugees who have already initiated their application process at the university	Access to courses is guaranteed to refugees and asylum seekers who meet the requirements to enrol in any university	Access to courses is available to refugees and asylum seekers including those who will not enrol to university
Free online language courses (e.g., Erasmus+ OLS program) are made available to prospective refugee students	Prospective refugee students can attend for free in-person language courses and/or academic classes (in any discipline) as auditor	In addition to language and/or academic classes, prospective refugee students have access to courses on soft skills such as academic writing, IT, academic culture, etc.
Prospective refugee students receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the course	Refugees who attend classes as auditor can be admitted to a relevant degree program	Prospective refugee students can be admitted to a relevant degree program and redeem credits towards a degree once enrolled

# UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES OSNABRUECK (DE)

The guest auditor programme of Hochschule Osnabruck allows refugees to attend courses of up to 10 ECTS per semester for free. The credit points obtained can be recognised towards a university degree:

https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/university-of-applied-sciences-osnabrueck-de

## CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY (HU)

Central European University organises weekend courses for refugees on language and academic skills. It also offers a full-time, fully-funded preparatory course that prepare refugee students for BA and MA degree programmes in European universities: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/central-european-university-hu

# INTEGRATION

# - ACADEMIC INTEGRATION -

For refugee students, it might be very difficult to find their way around a new academic environment. To reduce the risk of dropouts, universities should provide adequate academic and administrative support and guide refugees throughout their entire course of study.

Min III	Med III	Max ■■	
The university orga occasionally an information session dedicated to newly enrolled refugee st	a buddy progra assist refugee s with all adminis	m to count on a dedicated tudents desk to receive support with the administrative ic issues and bureaucratic aspects	
Refugee students of participate for free classes on academi and soft skills (e.g. language, IT, acadel writing) throughout university years	seek study support of their mentors (in their mentors)	port from access to a dedicated that act as one-to-one tutoring	

## UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES OSNABRUECK (DE)

Hochschule Osnabruck has activated two tutoring programmes to help students integrate in the campus

https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/university-of-applied-sciences-osnabrueck-de

# INTEGRATION

# - SOCIAL INTEGRATION -

Universities are not only academic environments but also important agents of socialization. Therefore, universities should foster societal integration and cultural exchange among individuals while actively promoting the integration of refugees within the local community and society at large.

Min III	Med III	Max ■■
The university organizes a networking event for international students at the beginning of the academic year to familiarize with the campus and get in touch with students and faculty members	The university organizes, throughout the year, social and cultural events to foster cultural exchange and integration on campus	The university, in collaboration with local stakeholders, organises social and cultural activities involving refugees and the local community
The university provides basic information about services for refugees that are available both on campus and outside the university	The university organizes info-sessions about administrative/legal aspects of everyday life also dedicated to refugees	The university sets up a dedicated desk to support refugees with administrative/legal aspects of everyday life

## **ZUKUNFTSMACHER GUG (DE)**

Through the charitable organisation Zukunftsmacher gUG, refugees teach elders in senior citizens residences to use digital techniques and media. Moreover, the association organises arts and music events involving refugees: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/zukunftsmacher-gug-de

# INTEGRATION

# - PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT -

Refugees might be an especially vulnerable group, due to previous stressful events and the hurdles of starting a new life. Universities should play a role in helping refugees to overcome psychological barriers that might jeopardize their academic performance and integration.

Min III	Med III	Max III
The university provides information on where to seek psychological support outside the university in its website and/or on specific leaflets	Refugees can access for free psychological support provided by students of Psychology Department	The university activates a dedicated desk on campus that provides free professional support by university scholars and/or in collaboration with external associations (e.g. the red cross)

## COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID (ES)

The Complutense University of Madrid provides free psychological counselling through the University Clinic of Psychology:

https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/complutense-university-of-madrid-es

# **INTEGRATION**

# - CAREER GUIDANCE -

Refugee students might not be familiar with the work culture and environment of the host country. Universities should provide tailored support to prepare refugees for – and ease their transition to – the labour market.

Min III	Med III	Max ■■
Refugees can access internship positions on campus to familiarize with the work culture of the host country	The university has a dedicated office that offers career guidance services such as CV development, jobhunting, etc.	The university activates collaborations with local companies to provide refugee students with internship opportunities

## **UNIVERSITY WEST (SE)**

University West offers internships for newcomers and asylum seekers allowing them to practice Swedish, get to know how the university functions while at the same time receive valuable work experience:

https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/university-west-se

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

## - MANAGEMENT -

Refugees, as other groups of non-traditional learners, require special support and dedicated solutions to guarantee they can enjoy equal opportunities and a fair treatment. Universities should ensure that they can provide an adequate management of all issues related to the inclusion and retention of refugees in their institution, taking into account their unique circumstances and specific needs.

Min II	Med III	Max ■■
University provides ad-hoc solutions only upon specific requests concerning refugee issues	The university trains its staff in order to make existing offices able to provide adequate support to refugees	The university sets up a dedicated welcome office for refugees that provides an integrated and comprehensive support in all aspects of their academic and social life
The university trains its staff on bureaucratic/administrative aspects related to the integration of refugees in the institution	The university provide specific training to its staff to integrate an intercultural approach in their daily management	The university trains scholars on specific pedagogical approaches relevant for refugees

## COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID (ES)

The Complutense University of Madrid provides comprehensive support to refugees through a dedicated office and the adoption of a Refugee Welcome Plan: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/complutense-university-of-madrid-es

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

## - COLLABORATIONS -

There are many different challenges posed by the inclusion of refugees. To tackle them efficiently and maximize the impact of their action, universities should capitalize on all their existing resources while creating synergies with external stakeholders.

Min III	Med III	Max III
The university fosters collaborations and synergies among different offices of central administration	The university fosters collaborations and synergies between the central administration and departments	The university fosters collaborations and synergies between the university and stakeholders at national and international level

## DÉMOCRATIE & ENTRAIDE EN SYRIE, GHOSN ZEITOUN (FR)

The initiative brings together universities, NGOs, local authorities and international organization, maximizing the scope and impact of the action: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/democratie-entraide-en-syrie-ghosn-zeitoun-fr

## UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA (ES)

The university of Barcelona implements a comprehensive refugee support programme with the assistance and collaboration of local authorities and NGOs: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/university-of-barcelona-es

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

## - SUSTAINABILITY -

The refugee crisis should be considered as a long-term phenomenon that requires structural and durable solutions. Universities should ensure a long-term commitment and include the integration of refugees in their institutional strategy, contributing to the realization of an open and non-discriminatory European higher education system.

Min III	Med III	Max III
The university recognizes the importance of facilitating the access of refugees to higher education and promote their inclusion	The university adopts a protocol to regulate the access of refugees into the university and to create standardized procedures among university offices	The university includes refugee inclusion as a core element of its strategy, devoting financial and human resources to its realization

# UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA (ES) COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID (ES)

Both University of Barcelona and Complutense University of Madrid are adopting specific protocols to provide tailored and prompt solutions to refugee issues: https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/university-of-barcelona-es https://www.inhereproject.eu/universities/complutense-university-of-madrid-es

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The inHERE project outcomes have gone far beyond the project expectations. The participation, contacts, connections and relations that derived from the implementation of project activities have extended significantly further than expected. University staff members, institutions, private citizens and public officers are available and concerned about refugees-related matters and actions-and from all educational backgrounds and world regions. All stakeholders have demonstrated a specific awareness of the problem and curiosity in learning more about good practice examples of HE approaches and initiatives in a wide range of urgent situations, focusing on refugees and displaced students, and facilitating the identification of successful patterns of integration that have the potential to be easily scaled.

These guidelines will help us better comprehend where we are, what HE networks and HE policy makers are doing- and can potentially do- with regards to strategies to implement to integrate refugees in higher education, therefore increasing the social dimension of the EHEA. They represent an easy-to-read and easy-to-use practical toolkit. They also are a useful means to locate our individual beliefs and practical approaches along the virtual line "from a fragmentary to a holistic attitude" within the institution we represent, but also with regards to ourselves as private citizens.



# HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORTING REFUGEES IN EUROPE



# **PARTNERS**













Learn more and participate at: www.inhereproject.eu